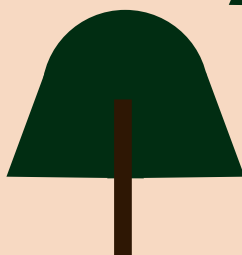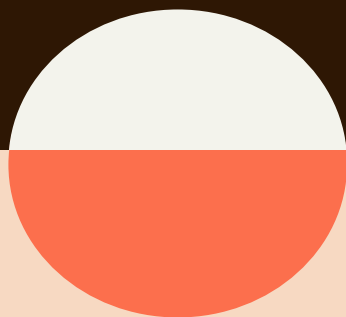# THE POLITICS, SPACES, AND SUBJECTS

OF FOREST CONSERVATION IN COLOMBIA

Darío Gerardo Zambrano-Cortés

PROPOSITIONS

1. Policy making and policy implementation are a battle over meaning-making.

   (This Thesis)

2. Environmental governance leads to new cycles of state dominance and community

   submission.

    (This Thesis)

3. Policy success depends on its psychological appeal.

4. Environmental assessments should engage with emotions, not just facts.

5. A PhD is a precarious journey that often normalizes undercompensated labor.

6. Academic publishing is the most unscientific part of the scientific process.

Propositions belonging to the thesis, entitled:

THE POLITICS, SPACES AND SUBJECTS OF FOREST CONSERVATION IN COLOMBIA.
Dario Zambrano, 29 November 2024

THE POLITICS, SPACES AND SUBJECTS OF FOREST CONSERVATION IN COLOMBIA.

DARÍO GERARDO ZAMBRANO-CORTÉS

THE POLITICS, SPACES AND SUBJECTS OF FOREST CONSERVATION IN COLOMBIA.

DARÍO GERARDO ZAMBRANO-CORTÉS

Thesis
submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of doctor
at Wageningen University
by the authority of the Rector Magnificus
Prof. Dr C. Kroeze
in the presence of the
Thesis Committee appointed by the Academic Board
to be defended in public
on Friday 29 November 2024
at 10:30 a.m. in the Omnia Auditorium.

SUMMARY

This thesis follows the development of policies for controlling deforestation in Colombia from 2015 to 2022. It enquires about the changes that REDD+ (Reduction of emissions by deforestation and forest degradation) triggered on the governance of rural forests, and subjects. Current literature argues that REDD+ still takes a dominant space in global and local forest politics, despite its ambiguous and sometimes conflicting results. An argument why REDD+ has pervaded is that it manages to shapeshift according to local conceptualizations of nature and governance, and supports historical struggles over power. The thesis considers the ambiguous concept of REDD+ to be determined in the entwinement of the environment with the political. By utilizing Michel Foucault's notions of governmentality, political rationality, and technologies of the self, the thesis shows across five chapters that REDD+ is an instrument that is manifested in practices, discourses and knowledges that allow different powers and actors to self-perpetuate and to gain agency.

The introduction chapter sets out the problem statement, research questions, and research strategy in line with the above. The second chapter offers empirical detail about how social actors draw from four political rationalities to define the purpose, means, and social problems that REDD+ should address. The third chapter shows REDD+ as an explicit force assembling a conservation frontier in the northwest of the Colombian Amazon. Similar to a resource frontier, the conservation frontier portrays the Amazon region as exotic, violent and in need of intervention, while reigniting old conservation conflicts and frustrating actual conservation targets. The fourth chapter presents three cases where REDD+ and other forest

conservation projects became the means by which peasant, afrodescendant and indigenous peoples assemble their collective subjectivities. The three different empirical chapters all show how environmental practices and discourses are the vehicle through which social movements strengthen their political power and self-government. The discussion chapter finally highlights that REDD+ brings the opportunity to reimagine subjects, spaces, and politics.

The thesis concludes by arguing that REDD+ is prone to reinforce local power structures and old forms of governance. This is because its local acceptance depends upon the historical claims of local actors and on existing forms of governance. Due to its political nature, REDD+ is prone to conflict, either by creating new ones or by exacerbating existing ones. The conclusion stresses that this conflict is not exclusive to REDD+, but rather a historical feature of forest governance. The conflict mostly reflects the frictions of old and new meanings and the friction that comes with the reconfiguration of power. While the thesis highlights the contradictory, conflictive and messy nature of forest governance, it also concludes that practitioners should embrace such features as a healthy manifestation of disagreement. The role of practitioners is then to transform such conflict into inclusive and legitimate forms of conservation.

RESUMEN

Esta tesis hace seguimiento al desarrollo de las políticas de control de deforestación en Colombia desde 2015 hasta 2022. Investiga los cambios que REDD+ (Reducción de emisiones por deforestación y degradación forestal) ha desencadenado en la gobernanza de los bosques y sujetos rurales. La literatura actual sostiene que REDD+ aún ocupa un espacio dominante en las políticas forestales globales y locales, a pesar de sus resultados ambiguos y a veces conflictivos. Un argumento de por qué REDD+ ha prevalecido es que logra adaptarse según las conceptualizaciones locales de la naturaleza y la gobernanza, apoyando a su vez luchas históricas por el poder y de autoorganización.

La tesis basa sus premisas en la naturaleza indeterminada de REDD+, que está sujeta al entrelazamiento del medio ambiente con lo político. Al utilizar las nociones de Michel Foucault sobre gubernamentalidad, racionalidad política y tecnologías del yo, la tesis muestra a lo largo de cinco capítulos que REDD+ es un instrumento que proporciona prácticas, discursos y conocimientos que permiten a diferentes poderes y actores autoperpetuarse.

El capítulo de introducción expone la declaración del problema, las preguntas de investigación y la estrategia de investigación, tras lo cual el entra en resultados empíricos. El segundo capítulo detalla cómo los actores sociales se basan en cuatro racionalidades políticas para definir el propósito, los medios y los problemas sociales que REDD+ debería abordar. El tercer capítulo muestra a REDD+ como una fuerza explícita que ensambla una frontera de conservación en el noroeste de la Amazonía colombiana. Similar a una frontera extractiva, la frontera de conservación retrata la región amazónica como exótica, violenta y

necesitada de intervención, reavivando antiguos conflictos de conservación y afectando negativamente los objetivos de conservación. El cuarto capítulo presenta tres casos en los que REDD+ y otros proyectos de conservación forestal se convirtieron en el medio por el cual campesinos, afrodescendientes e indígenas ensamblan sus subjetividades colectivas. Los tres capítulos empíricos muestran cómo las prácticas y discursos ambientales son el vehículo a través del cual los movimientos sociales fortalecen su poder político y autogobierno. Finalmente, el capítulo de discusión destaca que REDD+ ofrece la oportunidad de reimaginar sujetos, espacios y políticas.

La tesis concluye argumentando que REDD+ tiende a reforzar los poderes locales y las antiguas formas de gobernanza porque su aceptación local depende de las reivindicaciones históricas y las formas de abordar la gobernanza. Debido a su naturaleza política, REDD+ es propenso a generar conflictos, ya sea creando nuevos o exacerbando los existentes. La conclusión enfatiza que este conflicto no es exclusivo de REDD+, sino más bien una característica histórica de la gobernanza forestal. El conflicto refleja principalmente las fricciones de significados y la reconfiguración de poderes. Si bien la tesis destaca la naturaleza contradictoria, conflictiva y desordenada de la gobernanza forestal, concluye que los profesionales ambientales deberían abrazar estas características como una manifestación saludable del desacuerdo. El rol de los practicantes es, entonces, transformar ese conflicto en formas de conservación inclusivas y legítimas.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

AGRADECIMIENTOS

Finalmente, quiero agradecer a mi familia, que me apoyó en los años más inútiles, oscuros y desoladores de mi vida. Gracias a mis padres, quienes me transmitieron su innecesario afecto por la academia. Les dedico esta tesis y les estoy muy agradecido por su apoyo. Y gracias a Erika, quien fue la chispa en el fondo del pozo.

CHAPTER 1. THE RISE OF CONTROLLING DEFORESTATION AS A POLICY DOMAIN.

Forests and deforestation are at the forefront of debates on global environmental politics i.e. (Arts et al., 2019; Buizer et al., 2014; Hein et al., 2018; Weatherley-Singh & Gupta, 2015. The conversion of tropical forests to other land uses, leading to deforestation (i.e. loss of forest cover) and forest degradation (i.e. loss of forest quality) account for up to the 21% of anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (IPCC, 2022). Given the importance of tropical forests' role in climate change as both source and sink, the increase of carbon dioxide emissions points to stopping forest conversions as a potential solution to stabilize the global average temperature below 2ºC (Griscom et al., 2017; Scott et al., 2018).

Over the last 14 years, global efforts to control deforestation have been spurred under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). REDD+ has been in the center of negotiations. REDD+ stands for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. Large forested areas of the tropics such as the Amazon, Congo and Indonesian forest have been targeted to pilot these initiatives. REDD+ envisages shared global action on climate change by allowing industrialized countries to compensate developing countries for reducing carbon emissions from deforestation (Angelsen & McNeil, 2012).

REDD+ results from long negotiations on both the technical and political components. The initial idea was that RED, reducing emissions from deforestation, would compensate developing countries reducing emissions from deforestation with funds from a global carbon

market (Angelsen & McNeill, 2012; Pistorius, 2012). Later on, negotiations included other activities such as biodiversity conservation, sustainable management practices and reforestation and restoration of degraded lands (the D+) (Haug & Gupta, 2013).

For accessing funds, countries need to provide evidence of addressing drivers of deforestation, allocate responsibilities at the national level, create an architecture for results-based payments, forest reference levels and a system of monitoring, reporting and verification for achieved benefits and to report safeguards. Safeguards are broad recommendations to encourage co-benefits such as poverty alleviation, enhancing biodiversity, improving forest governance and protecting other environmental services (Decision 9-15, Conference of the parties 19). The safeguards aim to align national institutions with REDD+ aims by respecting local communities' rights, encouraging participation and informing decisions.

Following the initial enthusiasm with REDD+, a very complex instrument evolved (Cadman et al., 2017; Duchelle et al., 2018; Fletcher et al., 2016; Loft et al., 2017; Minang et al., 2014; Sunderlin et al., 2014). Implementation of REDD+ requires generous up-front payments, political reforms, and strengthen technical capacities (Arts et al., 2019; Di Gregorio et al., 2015; Fischer et al., 2016; Korhonen-Kurki et al., 2012). Nonetheless, a lack of payments from the financial agreement and from carbon credits of a global market delayed REDD+, and receiving states had to explore different sources of funding. This pushed towards a development-aid financing instead of market-based incentives blurring the potential of

changing behaviors and the contribution of the activities of controlling deforestation to climate mitigation (Angelsen, 2017).

The beginning of REDD+ implementation has been significantly impeded by the uncertainty associated with funding. Practitioners have perceived REDD+ to be impractical or infeasible largely because of the erratic nature of funding (Pasgaard et al., 2016). Furthermore, the intricate process of monitoring, reporting, and verification has been demonstrated to be economically burdensome and challenging in practice, as found by Ochieng (et al., 2016). Finally, the comparison of opportunity costs vis-à-vis alternative economic pursuits, such as timber and agriculture, has proven to be a formidable obstacle to surmount (Rakatama et al., 2017).

Problems in REDD+ implementation also stem from the complex political economy of each country that is seen as requiring deep institutional reforms (Brockhaus, di Gregorio, & Carmenta, 2014; Di Gregorio et al., 2015; Korhonen-Kurki et al., 2014; Loft et al., 2017). For instance, frequently, the primary drivers of deforestation are not addressed in countries because it is either politically sensitive or expensive (Di Gregorio et al., 2015b; Korhonen-Kurki et al., 2012; Pasgaard et al 2016). Most times, REDD+ aims have to compete with other economic sectors and actors interested in maintaining business as usual activities, such as mining, cattle or cash crops (Brockhaus et al., 2016; Minang et al., 2014). Also, REDD+ requires complex communication and institutions among levels and across scales of administration to coordinate enforcement and implementation (Fujisaki et al., 2016;

Ravikumar et al., 2015). This is complex to do as, for example, forest management relies on specialized ministries and coordination lies in separated agencies (Bastos Lima et al., 2017; Fujisaki et al., 2016).

Beyond of the international politics, REDD+ has sparked a reconfiguration of tropical spaces and politics. Tropical countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Indonesia and Democratic Republic of Congo have been successful in attracting international finance from multilateral and bilateral results-based programs and voluntary carbon markets (Delacote et al., 2022). This funding brought monetary resources to tropical countries and also imaginations of the exuberance and importance of tropical rainforest for climate change mitigation. For instance, the Amazon Forest in South America and the peat forest in Indonesia have received attention and finance not only because of its large scale and importance for climate and biodiversity issues, but also as they were perceived as emblematic forests from a Global North perspective. Scientific data and the work of NGOs and media have underscored the megadiversity of these forests, their destruction, and the necessity to halt the deforestation for climate change mitigation. Altogether this resulted in special global attention on the tropical humid forest.

REDD+ impacts extend beyond the realm of international politics and economics. REDD+ entails a novel mode of governing the forest, envisaging a profound change in the relations between society and ecosystems. First, this implies a shift in understanding forests as sources of GHGs, visualizing and prioritizing them based on their carbon sequestration capacities.

Second, this shift relies on changing behaviors, consciousness, and minds of forest dwellers, both those who have considered forest as natural space to be exploited and those who consider its non-invasive use or its intrinsic value. It is imperative to note that this undertaking has not unfolded seamlessly; on the contrary, the implementation of REDD+ has contributed to the exacerbation or emergence of new conservation conflicts.

The Paris Agreement in 2015 opened a new chapter for REDD+. With a promise of funds of $100 billion per year to 2025 and a flexible structure, the agreement opened the possibility of materializing in line with the particularities of each country. REDD+ has evolved and diversified within and outside the UNFCCC amidst the ideas and discourses of global environmental management. As a result, there is no single version, but multiple manifestations of REDD+ ranging from pure payment for specific ecosystem services to more holistic landscape approaches (Arts et al., 2019; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2016; Corbera & Schroeder, 2017; Nielsen, 2016; Okereke & Coventry, 2016; Streck et al., 2016; Turnhout et al., 2017).

1.1. GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL META-DISCOURSES

REDD+ cannot be understood as a standalone phenomenon. It is related to existing and changing meta-discourses. Specifically, REDD+ presents a mixed discourse that draws from old articulations, such as sustainable development and neoliberalism. These articulations, or meta-discourses, are broad narratives on how to address environmental problems and show a prolonged permanence and influence on environmental governance.

Global environmental meta-discourses are well described in the literature. "Ecological Modernization", "Green Governmentality", and "Civic Environmentalism" are three broad overlapping categorizations of environmental discourses (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2006; Di Gregorio et al., 2015; Dryzek, 2013; Hiraldo & Tanner, 2011; Nielsen, 2014; Vijge et al., 2016). Ecological modernization (EM) discourses conceive the market pivotal to reach sustainability and economic growth (win-win solutions). Technology, markets, and cost efficiency are the means for achieving it (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2006, Dryzek 2013, Nielsen 2014). Some storylines found in ecological modernization draw on the neoliberal ideas of deregulation and commodification (in this case of carbon) (Arts & Buizer, 2009). A reflexive version may advocate for multi stake-holders initiatives, the involvement of citizens to mobilize polycentric governance and reach accountability, which overlap with civic environmentalism discourses (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2016).

The second group of discourses, Civic Environmentalism (CE), recognizes winners and losers of sustainability transformations (trade-offs) and advocates for equitable distribution of costs and benefits, promoting environmental justice and a bottom-up approach to environmental problems (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2006, Hiraldo and Tanner 2011). Storylines in Civic Environmentalism revolve around global justice debates: they discourage colonial practices of exploitation of the global south and aim to include other forest values apart from carbon (Dryzek 2013, Nielsen 2014). They envision institutions to pipe benefits to communities and design safeguards to protect peoples' sovereignty rights and avoid exploitation (Nielsen 2014, Di Gregorio et al. 2015, Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2016).

7

Legitimization and accountability are central to these group of discourses, but also shifts in consumption patterns, deregulation, and non-market policies (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2006, Di Gregorio et al. 2015).

The last group of discourses refers to Green Governmentality (GG), whose core is the expert-based management of nature (Nielsen 2014). Here, the forest is defined by its carbon content, sequestration capacity, and thus, it tends to depoliticize environmental problems (Di Gregorio et al. 2015b). In GG, experts are necessary to monitor, standardize and manage carbon stocks, to prevent risks and secure flows of benefits (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2006, Dryzek 2013). As knowledge and various forms of expertise are authoritative entities within GG, storylines envision assistance, capacity building and standardization through laws and protocols (Vijge et al. 2016). Sound science becomes the legitimizing instrument to justify specific technocratic policy solutions to the distribution of domestic costs and benefits (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2006, Hiraldo and Tanner 2011). A more reflexive version incorporates elements from other metadiscourses like collaborative aspects of monitoring or good governance standardization and protocols (Nielsen 2014, Vijge et al. 2016)

The meta-discourses have influenced the evolution of REDD+ in global and national arenas. At the global level, REDD+ has evolved amidst the struggles of groups of actors to institutionalize a particular view on the aims, arrangements, and architecture (Pistorius 2012, den Besten et al. 2014). The meta-discourses have been tracked to permeate national REDD+ design and the public debate of policy shape and implementation (Bastakoti & Davidsen,

2017; Gebara et al., 2017; Luttrell et al., 2013; Milne et al., 2016; Ochieng, et al., 2016). In numerous countries, the discourse of EM has dominated the public debate on REDD+ formulation (Di Gregorio et al. 2015). However, powerful coalitions, such as state actors in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, international organizations in Brazil and Cameroon, or a mixture of them in Vietnam, have dominated the media debate. Coalitions and shared articulations supported by variegated actors have reinforced storylines such as triple wins, acquisition of funding from developed countries and the idea of a global responsibility towards climate change (Brockhaus et al. 2014).

1.2.   REDD+ POLICY PROGRESS IN COLOMBIA

Colombia, situated in the northwestern corner of South America, stands as a preeminent global example of ecological richness and biodiversity. Colombia is regarded as the third most biodiverse country, hosting the largest amount of bird species. The Country is characterized by unique and contrasting landscapes boasting a high level of endemism, mostly plant, insects and amphibians. One of Colombia's most renowned ecological regions is the Amazon rainforest, covering approximately 38% of the country's land area and hosting 67% of Colombian forest (MADS-IDEAM, 2014). The Andes Mountains traverse Colombia's western flank, offering a multitude of high-altitude ecosystems, including cloud forests, paramos, and alpine meadows. The Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean encompass mangroves, coral reefs, and rich marine life. Finally, the east plateau of Llanos extends to Venezuela and constitutes the largest grassland in South America. Colombia's ecological regions and biodiversity complement its cultural diversity, hosting 115 Indigenous cultures and nearly

four million of afrodescendant peoples. Such status underscores its status as a global conservation priority and this status has received international attention for climate mitigation.

Colombia engaged very early in REDD+ negotiations and ideas. As a tropical country with a significant proportion of forest and a fraction of the Amazon basin, Colombia has had a key position to attract funding. In addition, local NGOs had an enormous role in brokering the early ideas on policymaking; large NGOs like WWF, TNC, and locals like Natura, allied and installed the "Mesa REDD+". "Mesa REDD+" was an ad hoc think-tank to promote the instrument in Colombia among policy makers.

Colombia also was one of the first countries to apply to the early funding for REDD+. One of the first funds was The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility from the World Bank (FCPF). For that, Colombia presented the Readiness Plan Idea (Note R-PIN) in August 2008 and signed the Readiness Plan Grant two years later, after several revisions and visits to ensure policy reforms. In parallel, the Colombian Forest Carbon Monitoring System—SMBYC —was set up in 2009 thanks to a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. Monitoring system is one requirement to implement and receive funds for REDD+. In consequence, Colombia has devoted more than a decade to the monitoring system resulting on the first countries to submit to the UNFCCC the reference level at the Amazonian biome (MADS-IDEAM, 2014).

In 2015, Colombia signed the Readiness Preparation Grant agreement after delivering the final REDD+ proposal. In that year, the UN-REDD+ program arrived in the country and funded

activities related to stakeholder engagement and the design of the National Strategy. In 2016, Colombia signed a result payment program with the governments of United Kingdom, Norway and Germany, which targeted the Amazon region. The agreement resulted later in the Amazon Vision program, comprising activities of National Parks enlargement, sustainable cattle activities and law enforcement. In total, US$49 million have been already disbursed in 2016, which has funded the Ministry of Environment, policy formulation, constitution of teams, and workshops for policy makers and rural communities to understand the instrument (Gómez et al., 2016)

The governance and functioning of the National REDD+ strategy are, however, still opaque to this date. Early coordination was encouraged by the FCPF through a participatory body (Mesa REDD+) and further institutionalized by national policy. The Mesa REDD+ was promoted as bottom-up coordination body engaging actors from rural associations to national ministries. However, it lost the character of a multilevel negotiation space with each year becoming an occasionally held information event.

This change started early on, when Amazonian indigenous organizations pushed discussions on REDD+ out of national Mesa REDD+ towards regional venues. With funding and reference levels focusing on the Amazon Region, REDD+ thus became an exclusive Amazonian enterprise. The Amazon Vision program became, internationally, equivalent of Colombia's efforts to reduce deforestation. Furthermore, the Mesa REDD+ lost its initial bottom-up coordination character when a special commission (CICOD) was sanctioned in 2017 by

engaging national ministries and authorities from high deforestation municipalities. The CICOD disappears a year later and with it, the potential decision-making space for rural governments. The CICOD became the CONALDEF, an enforcement coordination body that included the army and the national attorney office and environmental institutions. Hence, from the initial attempt to make REDD+ a national participatory policy, the governance arrangements of REDD+ turn to became more regional focused and less nation-wide and localized endeavor.

1.3.   FIVE POLITICAL PERIODS OF REDD+ IN COLOMBIA

Looking deeper into the development of REDD+ in Colombia, five political periods can be discerned. The first one, between 2008-2010, where REDD+ was still immature, was viewed as an international commitment with no local application. A second period ranged from 2011 to 2014. It was characterized by an unprecedented La Niña Phenomenon (2010-2011) that affected 3 million people in rural areas with heavy rains and flooding (CEPAL & CEPAL, 2012; Euscátegui, 2011). The event contributed to a risk-avoidance and economic growth narrative underpinning policy making in this period, which is also found in the government presidential roadmap documents (CONPES). By then, controlling deforestation and REDD+ were framed in terms of disaster and risk control; and climate legislation emerged in terms of adaptation.

A third period starts in 2015 with the Colombian peace agreements. After fifty years of armed conflict with the FARC-EP, a political armed group, the Colombian government accompanied the demobilization of the group with political and land reforms. Environmental protection

articulated the visions of a just land reform and the economic opportunity that peace accords envisioned. The peace-building agenda in 2016 then merged with REDD+ as a four-win solution, e.g., bringing economic opportunity, conservation, climate change mitigation and, again, peace. REDD+ by then was framed as a reconciliation opportunity, a mechanism of rural transformation (Government of Colombia, 2013).

The fourth period starts in 2018 and ends in 2022 with a new presidential period. The high stakes of peace implementation, the financial commitment with international partners, and deforestation increasing, turn the period in the eye of the storm of an agitated political and public life. Controlling deforestation while increasingly disconnecting from the international vision of climate mitigation acquired new connotations of REDD+ in relation to biodiversity conservation. Headlines during this period were connected to catastrophic images of deforestation, resulting in lawsuits and even military campaigns. Although the forest monitoring system has been in place since 2010 and has shown a decline in national deforestation, the issue of deforestation as a policy problem has gained significant political attention during this time (MADS, 2017).

A fifth period starts in late 2022 with the election of President Gustavo Petro and continues to date. Although the new Colombian president has a strong environmental agenda focusing on energy transition and equitable environmental protection, deforestation disappeared from the public agenda of the media, politicians, and civil organizations. Servers of the forest monitoring system were shot down, military operations were canceled, and media have

stopped publishing reports on deforestation. This happens while deforestation still occurs in the Colombian's hinterlands as before, linked to (rural) development.

In sum, after almost thirteen years of REDD+ resonating in ministries' hallways and media, results in Colombia are difficult to grasp. This book aims to understand the consequences of REDD+ implementation in Colombia between 2016 and 2021. To this endeavor the book conceives REDD+ permeable to the local political context, this is, the post-conflict agenda, the poor law enforcement, historic land inequality, and the interests and agendas of different actors. In this sense, the book accounts for more than the results and focuses on what REDD+ interventions have produced (Arts et al., 2019).

1.4. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

Despite its limitations and occasionally reported negative outcomes, REDD+ persists as a prominent global instrument and particularly prominent in policymaking in Colombia. Such success has been attributed to the multiple ways in which it is understood and the changes it undergoes during its implementation (Asiyanbi & Lund, 2020; Casse et al., 2019; Milne et al., 2016; Pasgaard, 2015; Ramcilovik-Suominen & Nathan, 2020). Consequently, the results of REDD+ cannot be solely ascribed to the instrument itself and must be analyzed considering its interactions with local structures and dynamics.

As REDD+ transforms while it moves from international to local arenas, it becomes crucial to study this evolving entity. The specific mechanisms by which REDD+ are transformed are,

however strongly debated in the literature. Recent scholarship indicates that the multiple manifestations of REDD+ are connected to diverse locally embedded institutions and histories (Collins, 2019; McGregor et al., 2015; Trench & Amico, 2019), global and national environmental discourses, ideas, and preferences (Bastakoti & Davidsen, 2017; Chien, 2019; Gebara et al., 2017; Rantala & di Gregorio, 2014; Sanders et al., 2017; van der Hoff et al., 2015), as well as pre-existing and evolving power structures (Babon et al., 2014; Brockhaus, di Gregorio, & Carmenta, 2014; Brockhaus, di Gregorio, & Mardiah, 2014; di Gregorio et al., 2015b). Hence, to understand REDD+ and the transformation of its governance premises, more attention must be paid to the interaction of global ideas, discourses, and policy instruments with the local ones.

While REDD+ lands on local venues, it not only disturbs local discourses, but also local landscapes. REDD+ endorses new ways of seeing and appropriating the space where technical knowledge, in the form of geospatial images and technical indicators, legitimizes novel socio-ecological relations (Holmgren, 2013; Kamelarczyk & Smith-Hall, 2014). A carbon-based relation with the forest is implicit in controlling deforestation measurements, which impose a governance agenda at the expense of other ecological and cultural values (DePuy, 2023; Hajdu et al., 2016; Windey & Van Hecken, 2019). Literature on this relational shifting is scarce, but has shown that spatial knowledge legitimizes interventions and masks political struggles over territory, such as land grievances (Astuti & McGregor, 2015; DePuy, 2023; Mulyani & Jepson, 2016).

Moreover, technical knowledge acts as a powerful authority that legitimizes the claims of interventions of state and non-state actors (Astuti et al., 2022; Faxon et al., 2022). Some researchers stated that such claims are hollow as they revolve around profiting from REDD+ finance and speculation on carbon values (Fletcher et al., 2016; Lund et al., 2017). This assertion resonates with the recently edited volume by Cons & Eilenberg (2019). The chapters suggest that climate and environmental change have become an explicit force assembling spaces for management and profiting climate finance, in the same vein as historical resource frontiers. The means and mechanism from which new frontier spaces are emerging with REDD+ remain unexplored.

The transformative premises of REDD+ ultimately depend on changing the ways of perceiving the standing forest as an economic asset. The literature shows that such endeavor is not straightforward, rather REDD+ is in constant transformation. A plethora of research shows how REDD+ is contested, and also used by state actors and social movements to advance their respective political agendas (Asiyanbi et al., 2019; Chomba et al., 2016; Collins, 2019; Gebara & Agrawal, 2017; Nepomuceno et al., 2019). Politics is transformed through REDD+, empowering or disempowering some actors, but also resulting in the emergence of new subjectivities.

The examination of subjectivities, the intricacies and diverse ways individuals perceive, experience, and interact with their surroundings holds significant relevance in the realm of forest governance. Environmental subjectivities emerge within the context of global and national transformations, railed by REDD+ and biodiversity conservation. REDD+ initiatives

aim to disseminate new knowledge and practices, transforming individual understandings and experiences to commit to sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. Environmental subjectivities are increasingly recognized as a contemporary manifestation of and means of power, an aspect that has recently gained scholarly attention (Fletcher & Cortes-Vazquez, 2020; Loftus, 2020; Valdivia, 2015).

Forging subjectivities can serve dual purposes, enabling states to exert power and providing social groups the means to resist (such) power. Literature highlights that subjectivities are often cultivated to legitimize state-led industries, as demonstrated by Nepomuceno's exploration of community based logging in Brazil, and in the mining sector, as exemplified by Noroña (2022) and Van Teijlingen (2016) in the context of Ecuador. In the context of REDD+, environmental subjectivities connect people to the implementer's mindsets and agendas by demonstrating and subsequently routinizing REDD+ practices, as shown by Benjaminsen (et al., 2013) and Mukono & Sambaiga (2022). These cases underscore the transformative power of forging environmental subjectivities. Yet, the cases also show that subjectivities are nourished to resist encroachments of state or market power.

Environmental subjectivities have been increasingly acknowledged as an important aspect within environmental politics (Fletcher, R., & Cortes-Vazquez, J. A. 2020). Governmentality literature has focused on how individuals become market or state subjects, however, the picture is instead more complex. Rather than passive subjects, literature shows that actors

actively engage with and resist to different forms of power to attain political objectives or personal aspirations (Anand & Mulyani, 2020; Bose et al., 2012; Choi, 2020; Erazo, 2010). Therefore, environmental subjectivities and their formation stand as a crucial point in the politics of nature conservation being a mediating process in other social phenomena such as collective action (Carpenter, 2020). Specifically, a gap exists in understanding how subject formation in the context of REDD+ politics and social movements intertwine.

This thesis enquires the transformations triggered by REDD+ in environmental politics by focusing on the changes of spaces (what), the subjects (who) and the processes of change (how). Three research questions guide this dissertation:

- How has REDD+ affected discourses on forest governance? To what extend do those discursive framings influence the practice of forest conservation?
- How are the discourses and practices of REDD+ linked to forest conflicts and the creation of spaces, and what are the intermediary strategies at play?
- What is the role of environmental subjectivities in these processes?

1.5. LANGUAGE, DISCOURSES AND POLICY

Language assumes a pivotal role in policymaking, especially in climate change. As a wicked problem, climate change policymaking faces some key challenges relating to the uncertainty of knowledge of the origin of the phenomena and its impacts, and the complexity and trade-offs relating to the right solution (Pettenger, 2016). Language helps actors to address these

challenges in the policy process with ideas relating to cultural norms, historical experiences, economic interests, and/or ideological convictions (Fischer, 2003; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005).

Policy analysis has increasingly explicitly focused on language to understand institutional and social change (Arts & Buizer, 2009; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2006; Leipold et al., 2019). This language-centered approach focuses on discourses as fundamental systems that order knowledge, being vehicles of ideas and communication in a particular debate (F. Fischer, 2003; Schmidt, 2008). Discourses are series of storylines and contents embraced by a group of actors to persuade and legitimate actions (Dryzek, 2013). Discourses in policy-making have shown to shape knowledge production and collective understandings (van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). They further create shared relations between different entities (Forsyth, 2004); and can mobilize support for an issue through creating a mode of urgency or moral force (Portz, 1996). They also form problems in the policy process (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005); institutionalize experiences, values, beliefs, and norms (Phillips et al., 2004) and build views of citizenship (Ingram et al., 2007)

REDD+ proved to be the result of several discursive phases (den Besten et al., 2014), where each negotiation cycle introduced new discourses, simplifying the complexity of the instrument with a certain discursive "spin". At the national level, local discourses determined what features of the instrument remain or recede in national REDD+ strategies. Such features include what is seen as a driver of deforestation, what are the co-benefits and beneficiaries of REDD+ interventions, or what is seen as effective, efficient, and equitable governance

arrangements (Brockhaus & Angelsen, 2012; Chien, 2019; Hjort, 2019; Vijge et al., 2016; Wood & Doan, 2003).

Analyzes of the politics of REDD+ have demonstrated the key role of discourses in determining REDD+'s thrust and related governance shift (Di Gregorio et al., 2017; Poudel & Aase, 2015; Vijge, 2015). Discourses have shown that ideas of REDD+ permeated national contexts, but had only very limited impacts in terms of policy reforms (Babon et al., 2014; Brockhaus et al., 2016; Chia et al., 2019; Di Gregorio et al., 2015). For instance, the case of Papua New Guinea shows that participation and de-centralized forest governance were supported by the media in that country (Di Gregorio et al. 2015). However, the related national REDD+ policy draft showed a strongly centralized and non-participatory REDD+ approach (Vijge et al. 2016). Despite a public support for forest reforms, a powerful political coalition determined REDD+ as a state-led initiative with little involvement of non-state actors in Papua New Guinea (Babon et al. 2014).

The relationship between discourse and government is critical to understanding the mechanisms through which power operates in a society. Discourse is not merely a reflection of reality, but an active mechanism through which truth is manufactured, enabling those ruling in society to maintain control and influence over those governed. In this sense, REDD+ endorse practices, knowledges, and discourses that attempt to govern people and land, thus becoming a tool of power.

1.6.   REDD+ AND GOVERNMENTALITY

This book explores how REDD+ as a policy idea became a major force in shaping the way people in tropical forest live and act. REDD+ is accompanied by ways of knowing, practices and discourses relating to the idea of forest as carbon harbors that directly impact the organization of society and nature (Astuti & Mcgregor, 2015b; Boer, 2013; Oels, 2005; Rutherford, 2007; Stephan, 2012). REDD+ then may be understood as a governmentality, a tool through which power is exercised (Chien, 2019; Dehm, et al 2021, ; Fleischman et al., 2021; Huynh & Keenan, 2017; Käkönen et al., 2014; Mukono & Faustine Sambaiga, 2022; Nantongo et al., 2019; Sikor & Cam, 2016; To et al., 2017; Wilson Rowe, 2015). This is not novel, as literature is keen to demonstrate that images and ideas of nature and forest have been historically used to govern in new ways people and land (Agrawal, 2005; McElwee, 2016; J. C. Scott, 1998).

The term governmentality derives from the work of Michael Foucault on government and the state (Foucault, 1980). Foucault is well known for his analysis of the operations of assemblages of power-knowledge focusing on how power is constituted in areas such as mental illness, medicine, prisons and sexuality (Dews, 1984). Central to his approach is that discourse determines knowledge and practices as a means to organize and rule society. Based on these accounts, Foucault argues that power is exercised by a particular rationality, a governmentality, that aims to conduct the conduct (Dean, 2010; Lemke, 2002; Miller & Rose, 2008). For this, Foucault argues that power is exercised through knowledge practices that make a subject or a territory visible in a certain way (excluding potentially possible

alternative views), and form corrective pressure on these subjects or territories (Burchell et al., 1991).

REDD+ can be understood as a governmentality. REDD+ endorse practices of forest monitoring, defining safeguards, focusing on biodiversity conservation or climate mitigation, engaging in centralized or participatory governance, or emphasizing economic efficiency that all together render a truth through which society is governed.

1.6.1. Rationalities of governing deforestation

Foucault's works on governmentality stimulated studies to understand how governance and power are interlinked in modern societies (Miller & Rose, 2008). Particularly, the approach developed by Dean's on political rationality is used in chapter two of this book to understand the justifications and logics used by political actors to legitimize a specific implementation of REDD+.

Political rationality is thereby understood as an assemblage of "… plans, forms of knowledge, know-how, visions and objectives of what they [State's authorities] seek to achieve" (pp 42, Dean, 2010). Political rationalities emphasize the justifications and logics that substantiate certain political practices. As such, they look into the problematizations, reasoning, authorities, responsibilities and the course of action imbibed in policy debate.

As REDD+ is implemented within diverse political landscapes, the mechanism is connected to different conceptualizations and reason of actions. The resources and the privileged position of REDD+ in international venues make centered role in international venues makes REDD+ attractive for actors to advance their political agenda or their own professional careers. Multiple actors engage with REDD+ and connect their political ideas to the policy project, thereby (re-)interpreting the meaning of the policy (Milne et al., 2019; Pasgaard, 2015; Ramcilovik-Suominen & Nathan, 2020, Zelli, et al. 2019). Facing the logics, practices and powers of indigenous communities, local governments, international organizations, and environmental NGOs, REDD+ is changing its meaning constantly, providing a platform for the advancement of various agendas.

Using the concept of political rationalities helps to understand the conflicts that REDD+ brings into local venues. The process of meaning making is never free of conflict. Instead, multiple actors compete over redefining REDD+ objectives, operation and benefits (Stripple & Bulkeley, 2015). Political rationalities thus help to disentangle the reasoning actors bring into REDD+, to understand the shape that REDD+ acquires.

1.6.2. The emerging spaces of controlling deforestation

Space is a critical base for unfolding power. Space materializes the ambitions and imaginations articulated by variegated political rationalities. Rationalities employ space as an object of political practice by arranging things and people, deploying a system of regulations, strategies of policing, and demarcations (Elden, 2007). All together, these technologies of

government aim to make space visible in a certain way and organize the conduct of individuals.

Allocation of people in space, act foremost as a technique for changing social relations. Knowledge and discourses, their creation, and circulation are fundamental in shifting relations through new meanings. Maps, inventories, and registries, among others, are deployed to change the meaning of space, its purpose and function as social asset (Huxley, 2008; Kitchin & Dodge, 2007; Movik et al., 2021).

As new meanings are spatialized, conflict of meaning travel from discursive to physical arenas. Political rationalities presuppose a utopian order upon the space they attempt to govern. Attempts to be represented or to escape from that order escalate conflict with local orders or other political rationalities claiming for space. Foucault names such contested spaces heterotopias; places emerged in a crisis, with blurry physical and temporal boundaries, illusory and contradictory because the different orders juxtaposing (M. Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). Most notable heterotopias are resource frontiers, where commodity speculation envisions land in different ways for resource exploitation, and may bring about harmful effects of dispossession and state power violence (Cons & Eilenberg, 2019; Hopkins, 2020).

REDD+ has all the ingredients to cast heterotopias in tropical forests. REDD+ sparked a series of utopias for governing the forest and its people; among them, articulations for making forest governance equitable, effective and efficient. The utopia of REDD+ devised in climate change conferences spurred the reconfiguration of social relations with forest, above all a

relationship characterized by carbon trading and the possibility of creating monetary value from the standing forest (Boyd, 2010). Such alien visions carried by REDD+ contrast with local understandings of the forests, creating spaces of conflict. Technical instruments and discourses were essential in visualizing a space governable by problematizing deforestation (Mukono & Faustine Sambaiga, 2022; Setyowati, 2020).

1.6.3. The environmental subjectivities of nature conservation

For Michel Foucault, the ultimate outcome of power is docile subjects. Advanced forms of power, for him, rely on subtle transformations of people's ways of relating, feeling, and acting (Kelly, 2013). It is through discourses, modes of operation, institutions and practices - the so-called technologies of subjection (M. Foucault, 2019c) - that a regularized and docile individual is forged.

Nevertheless, Foucault's concern on the omnipresence of power lead him to conceptualize it as power games of impositions and resistances. Foucault coined the term counter-conducts to conceptualize the rationalities to resist and outmaneuver power (Audureau, 2003; M. Foucault, 2019a; Leask, 2012). Later, he added that resistance to power also encompasses the technologies of the self, the practices, discourses, modes of operation, and institutions that ensure to form a subject by oneself and own means (M. Foucault, 2019b). Altogether, Foucault's work provides a comprehensive framework to understand the manifestation of power. Power thus is a tug-o-war between modes of subjection and the

modes of subjectivation, in other words between forms of creating subjugated subjects vs forms of creating resisting consciousness and behavior (Audureau, 2003; Dews, 1984).

While individuals have been the topic of technologies of subjection studies, social movements have been the topic of counter-conducts studies. Protests and riots have centered efforts on building collective action to resist imposition of policies, development projects, struggle for legitimacy, and question ruling (Bashovski, 2022; Cadman, 2010; Death, 2016; Odysseos et al., 2016). Specifically, social movements in Latin America have been studied for decades, demonstrating that they self-organize on historical identities of afrodescendant, indigenous and peasant (campesinos) to claim rights, recognition and decision power (Alvarez, 2018; Escobar, 2018; Stahler-Sholk et al., 2008).

Social movements gravitate around collective subjectivity, that is, a shared experience, practices, and relations with external human and non-human entities. For this, a series of technologies of the self are deployed that permit elaboration and circulation of signs, meanings and produce structures of thought, forms of perception and experience that demarcate the boundaries of possibilities (M. Foucault, 2019c; M. C. Foucault, 1982). Such technologies may consist of, but not exclusively, practices, systems of knowledge, discourses, and identity models to strife for or detach from.

All in all, the Latin American social movements studies point out that these movements follow a collective logic. Rather than a byproduct of individual resistance, social movements

utilize multiple strategies to aggregate individuals around a particular subjectivity and pursue social transformation.

1.7. METHODS

In the three empirical chapters, I follow an interpretative inductive approach (Creswell, 2014). This interpretative approach aims to elicit the interconnection of meanings that generate forest governance schemes and practices. In this way, meanings are not attached to a single actor—be it an individual or an organization—but are a shared set of concepts and categories that provide a framework for making sense of REDD+. I recognize the multiple truths and interpretations aiming to identify meanings beyond individual organizations and actors.

The information in this thesis was collected since 2016 throughout my involvement in Colombia's environmental sector. Intense data collection was done between June 2017-August 2017, and from June 2019-December 2019. Data collection entailed in-depth qualitative research (Russel Bernard, 1988) to document and analyze the experiences and perspectives of the practitioners, government, civil organizations and local farmers living where a REDD+ or controlling deforestation measure have been promoted. In total, 39 semi-structured interviews were performed to collect information and opinions regarding: (i) REDD+ effects, development, and history; and (ii) the negotiation and implementation process of REDD+ and the Amazon Vision including the procedures through which decisions were taken, involvement in decision making and places where decisions were taken.

Interviewee sample consisted of officers from national and international organizations, state and non-state, engaged in REDD+ activities; representatives of Afrodescendant, Campesinos and Indigenous organizations engaged in REDD+ related activities or negotiations, the Amazon Vision program, or in the development of forest conservation projects.

Data collection also included participant observation and ethnographic methods. This allowed to gather insights into the politics of REDD+ and controlling deforestation measures (Boswell et al., 2019). I went to a total of 13 events, including local meetings, assemblies, court hearings, presentation of results and workshops of organizations. Public events helped to perform happenchance talks and to understand the language used to refer to REDD+, the attached meanings for success, achievements, practices, caveats, as well its contestation. Ethnographic research and participant observation helped to understand the contingency of the meanings and the positions embraced by state, non-state actors and implementers towards REDD+ and controlling deforestation.

During COVID-19 restrictions data collection was complemented with videocalls, digital ethnography and an archival review. Video calls facilitated access to the testimony of some key actors whereas online events made accessible meetings, presentations of results, policy debates. Literature and archival reviews consisted in policy documents, news, briefings, and reports of projects of state and non-state organizations. Each chapter specifies the type of documents accessed.

When confinement restriction eased, travel to field site was done to locations of Acandi, Choco, and Florencia, Caqueta. This constituted three cases of study used in Chapter 4 to understand collective subjectivities (Flyvbjerg, 2006). All three cases were chosen because of its accessibility to informants, security and consolidated results. Moreover, the three cases encompass three broad social identities recognized recently in Colombian legislation. The cases comprise environmental initiatives from Afrodescendant, Indigenous and Campesinos communities, social groups who historically have been disenfranchised. The Afrodescendant case, Choco-Darien Corredor Biologico, is a model REDD+ voluntary project, being the first one in the country reaching a decade of functioning. The indigenous case, Pilar Indigena, comprises 140 projects proposed by 173 indigenous communities. These projects were also part of the jurisdictional programme of Amazon Vision with early results in 2018. The last case, Finca Amazonia, is a campesino agroforestry project that has been implemented by the Catholic Vicarage of Florencia since 2006, in settlements of four administrative regions of Caqueta in the Northwest of the Colombian Amazon.

In terms of methodologies of analysis, the empirical chapters draw from an inductive understanding of data according to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and the eclecticism of Yanow's approach for interpretative analysis. The analysis consisted of an iterative process of engaging with data (document, interview, observation) in fieldwork, retreating to understand its meaning and going back to fieldwork to collect additional resources to complement its interpretation (Yanow, 2007). The analysis consisted of several stages where codes were defined; later, these were grouped in categories. These categories

are grouped again into themes, a consist storyline that is compared with other themes to find patterns of meaning.

1.8. OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

This first chapter introduced the topic of REDD+ as well as the major analytical framework of governmentality and its terminology i.e. power, knowledge, political rationality, heterotopia, subjectivity, technologies of the self. It aimed to present the research problem, the theoretical position taken up for this book, research questions, and the methods guiding the inquiry of REDD+. In this chapter, REDD+ has been reviewed as a global governance project, the perspectives used to its understanding and the criticism and dilemmas pointed by the literature. The chapter finishes dissecting the governmentality concept, to explain the production of REDD+ spaces and subjectivities.

Chapter two discusses how REDD+ ideas mutate when introduced from the global to the Colombian context. The chapter highlights the multiple ways of understanding deforestation as a key element determining the shape of REDD+ locally. The chapter describes four ways of understanding controlling deforestation which are underscored by historical discourses, problematizations, and objectives and means of action.

Chapter three discusses the Amazon Vision, the jurisdictional REDD+ program, as a frontier-making project. The chapter uses the concept of frontier governmentality to understand the representations and political conflict during the early implementation of a REDD+ jurisdictional program. It argues that in order to seize the financial and political opportunities

opened by REDD+, state and non-state actors enunciate and perform a resource frontier based on the rationale of controlling deforestation.

Chapter four presents cases where environmental interventions are performed by non-state actors. Three cases studies, *Chocó-Darien Biocorridor, Pilar Indigena, Finca Amazonica*, focus on different potentially marginalized rural social groups, afro-descendent, indigenous and peasant communities. The cases showcase collective subjectivities developed by groups facing REDD+ and other environmental projects, serving to nurture political consciousness, navigating new arrangements in environmental governance, and engaging in resistance against external ways of living. The chapter revisits jointly fundamental Foucauldian concepts such as subjectivities, counter-conducts and technologies of the self to analyze the alignment of social movements with the environmental agenda.

The final chapter summarizes the empirical evidence and theoretical contributions. It relates the concepts of political rationalities, frontier governmentality and environmental subjectivities to other scholarly work, focusing on its explanatory capacity and contribution to political theory. The chapter proceeds with revisiting the research questions and the importance of the empirical findings. The final section questions the environmental premises of REDD+, and argues to consider REDD+ as a tool of perpetuation of power. It does this through an examination of REDD+ as a truth-making project where the technologies of power mentioned across the book are deployed to create new ways of understandings, feeling and relating with the forest.

CHAPTER 2. THE POLITICAL RATIONALITIES OF GOVERNING DEFORESTATION IN COLOMBIA

The country of Colombia has been active in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and has committed itself (unsuccessfully) to reach zero deforestation in the Amazon by 2020 (Government of Colombia, 2017). It received funds from the UN-REDD program and from the Forest Carbon Facility Partnership (FCFP) for the readiness phase of REDD implementation (Government of Colombia, 2017; UN-REDD+ Colombia, 2018). Today, REDD+ is widely accepted in Colombia (Rodríguez de Francisco and Boelens, 2015). The REDD+ program in Colombia includes more than 45 pilot and voluntary carbon projects and a large-scale jurisdictional approach in the Amazon. Controlling deforestation has thus become an important administrative domain that is changing forest governance and the way forests are used and conserved in Colombia. The attention for reducing deforestation has moreover merged with the national peacebuilding and REDD+ has helped to fund the post-conflict agenda (Krause, 2020). For decades, forests have been the arena of armed conflict among state, guerrilla, paramilitary and narcotics traffic groups. Nevertheless, from 2016, a peace agreement led to the demobilization of the FARC-EP (guerrilla) resulting in an ambitious narrative of REDD+ as a four-win solution that can bring economic opportunities, forest conservation, climate change mitigation, and peace (Baptiste et al., 2017; Castro-Nunez et al., 2017; Negret et al., 2017; Suarez et al., 2017).

The scientific community has questioned the ability of REDD+ to deliver climate- (Loft et al., 2017; Maniatis et al., 2019), community- (Bayrak and Marafa, 2016; Nantongo et al., 2019; Sunderlin et al., 2017), and biodiversity benefits (Fischer et al., 2016; Mbatu, 2017; Pasgaard et al., 2016). Worse, several studies have shown that REDD+ has exacerbated inequity

(Chomba et al., 2016), dismissed drivers of deforestation (Brockhaus et al., 2021; Skutsch and Turnhout, 2020), and fueled local conflicts on resource and land access (Gebara and Agrawal, 2017; Hoang et al., 2019; Sikor and Cam, 2016). Given the limited and sometimes negative results of REDD+ and its prominence as global instrument, one of the most significant current discussions is why REDD+ has persisted despite of it (Asiyanbi and Lund, 2020; Fletcher et al., 2016; Lund et al., 2017).

Recent literature argues that the persistence of REDD+ lies, at least partly, in the multiple ways in which REDD+ is interpreted and implemented with the local political context (Asiyanbi and Lund, 2020; Turnhout et al., 2017). The specific mechanisms by which REDD+ is shaped in multiple political contexts is however less well known, and recent literature offers a scope of varying answers. Recent scholarship points out that the multiple manifestations of REDD+ are acquired at national, subnational and local levels and are influenced by locally embedded institutions and histories (Collins, 2019; McGregor et al., 2015a; Trench and Amico, 2019), global and national environmental discourses, ideas, and preferences (Bastakoti and Davidsen, 2017; Chien, 2019; Gebara et al., 2017; Milne et al., 2019; Rantala and di Gregorio, 2014; Somorin et al., 2012;; Vijge, 2015), as well as existing power structures and politics (Babon et al., 2014; Brockhaus et al., 2014b, 2014a; di Gregorio et al., 2015a).

Why REDD+ exerts such a big influence on Colombian forest policy, and how it is mobilized by local actors to support their political goals is not well understood. Studies of REDD+ that

focus on the region of Latin America highlight for example how multiple interpretations of REDD+ exist side-by-side, sometimes even in synergistic ways (van der Hoff et al., 2015), and concomitantly criticize implementation strategies of REDD+ that are limited to singular understandings (or rationalities) of REDD+ (Gebara and Agrawal, 2017). These studies moreover argue that the tendency of REDD+ to oversimply local dynamics and complexities should be actively countered if the goal is for Indigenous peoples and local communities to play an important role in the implementation of REDD+ (Schroeder and González, 2019). In Colombia similar dynamics of REDD+ implementation are found by Rodríguez-de-Francisco et al. (2021), who emphasize that more attention should be paid to Indigenous and local communities. Local actors have been described to employ different interpretation of REDD+ to contest and creatively accommodate interventions for suiting their own aspirations and needs (Asiyanbi et al., 2019). This indicates that policy instruments such as REDD+ can be understood as malleable political entities that change across time and space (Shapiro-Garza et al., 2020), which fits literature discussed above that describes REDD+ as being subject to multiple forms of interpretation and implementation practices.

In this article, we adopt a political approach to policy analysis that focuses on political rationalities (cf. Behagel and Arts, 2014). This approach draws on governmentality studies (Dean, 2010; Rose et al., 2006) and considers discourses that move from global to national policy settings as shaping political rationalities that—in addition to being situated in discourse—entail specific problematic and morals of government. Thus far, discourse analysis has been a prominent approach in forest policy studies aiming to analyze political

dynamics (di Gregorio et al., 2013; Winkel, 2012) and the unfolding of REDD+ in national settings along global discourses of ecological modernization, green governmentality and civic environmentalism (Bastakoti and Davidsen, 2017; den Besten et al., 2014; Ramcilovik-Suominen and Nathan, 2020). Governmentality studies that focus on political rationalities have been applied with less frequency in forest policy studies.

In the remainder of this article, we explore how political rationalities have shaped REDD+ policy and practice in Colombia in recent years. Drawing from semi-structured interviews and participatory observations we show that political rationalities draw from previously existing problem definitions, discourses, and moral imperatives to shape how REDD+ manifests in Colombia. The following section describes our theoretical and methodological approach, after which we present our results in which we show how the multiplicity of political meanings and manifestations of REDD+ contributes to its success as a policy. The article concludes by arguing that multiple rationalities of REDD+ guide implementation practice in Colombia and likely in other countries as well. The way these rationalities shape local forest governance should be considered political and bureaucratic at the same time.

2.1.   POLITICAL RATIONALITIES

Our analysis of REDD+ policy in Colombia applies a political rationalities perspective to understand the logics, calculations, justifications and explanations to exercise government (Rose et al., 2006). The political rationalities perspective builds on the work of Foucault, specifically his work on governmentality and how the rationality of government shapes,

guides and affects the conduct of one-self and others (Foucault, 2007). We moreover argue that government by the state is one form of governing, among others, and that multiple political rationalities may exist and overlap. These rationalities are "… plans, forms of knowledge, know-how, visions and objectives and what they seek to achieve" (Dean, 2010). In the context of conservation policy, rationalities entail the notions and concepts that arbitrate the regulation of environment and regulation of people's behavior (Dekker et al., 2020; Sheng et al., 2022). The analysis of rationalities is important because it sheds light on how a problem is defined, what are suitable and acceptable policy options, and who is responsible or blamed for positive or negative policy outcomes.

We utilize Miller and Rose's approach to analyze political rationalities. Miller and Rose (2008) conceptualize political rationalities thorough three characteristics: problematization, discourse, and morals. First, *problematization* is a key characteristic of a rationality and refers to how a problem is conceived of or defined (Dingler, 2005; van Hulst and Yanow, 2016). Rationalities draw ideas, values, traditions, and theories together to diagnose a situation as a problem and to identify its causes (Bacchi, 2000; Hajer and Versteeg, 2005). Via problematization, rationalities define the objects to be governed and the persons over whom government is to be exercised (Miller and Rose, 2008). This is done by labeling and stereotyping, including the use of categories of gender, class, and ethnicity (Fischer, 2003; Hajer, 1995; Ingram et al., 2007). In other words, problematizations associate political subjects with objects to be governed; this is what Miller and Rose (2008) refer to as the "problematics of government".

A second characteristic of rationalities is that they are situated in *discourse*. Discourses are systems of meaning that—when dominant—can prescribe what is possible to say and how society is organized (Faubion and Hurley, 2000). They may prescribe what are legitimate topics of discussion and what is considered "normal" or even "true". Moreover, discourses become sedimented in government institutions when they are dominant over a longer time (Howarth, 2010). Studying the discourses in which rationalities are situated helps to understand how rationalities communicate ideas, what logics of action they prescribe, and whether they either represent or challenge adamant power structures. Accordingly, rationalities involve storytelling to elaborate credible relations and assumptions between different entities (animated and inanimate); they include symbols and rhetorical devices, such as metaphors, to tag an issue to reinforce social perceptions or to highlight new meanings (Fischer, 2003; Schmidt, 2008); and they prescribe idealized schemata for the exercise of power. A myriad of global environmental discourses may inform national discourse (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, 2006; Dryzek, 2013; Hajer, 1995). Discourses are, finally, the domain in which state and non-state actors try to contest and negotiate meaning by linking specific policy solutions to the problem definitions set out by political rationalities(Chien, 2019; Holmgren, 2013; Kamelarczyk and Smith-Hall, 2014).

A third characteristic of political rationalities is that they entail a moral imperative, they express *morals*. Political rationalities define both what is desirable and good, as well as offer an answer to the main question of ethics: "what should be done?". Rationalities express

these morals by outlining tasks and actions, as well as ideals or principles towards which these tasks and actions should be directed (Miller and Rose, 2008). Political rationalities rely on such ideals or principles to imagine a new world order or to maintain an existing one. This implies that rationalities advocate what is good or wrong and outline the space of possibilities (actions) and the possible relations among actors (responsibilities) that are deemed acceptable or natural (Schmidt, 2008). By setting goals, targets and political context, policies that embody such rationalities directly guide the behavior of individual actors. They also prescribe where decisions take place, who has authority, and what is the legitimacy of outcomes (Hajer, 1995).

It is important to note that the three characteristics of political rationalities described above meaningfully overlap when it comes to establishing a political space to act. Specifically, the problematizations that rationalities express are related to pre-existing policy solutions that are available in the discourses in which they are situated. Very generally speaking for example, when a neoliberal discourse is confronted with the problem of deforestation, it will relate a market solution to it, as is also the case for the market rationality we discuss in our results below. Moreover, as rationalities exhibit a specific type of morality, such solutions to problems tend to entail a range of tasks and actions that predefined actors have the responsibility (and/or privilege) to carry out.

2.2. METHODS

Our study focuses on REDD+ development in Colombia, a country positioned in international policy fora as a key partner for its biodiversity and position in remaining forest cover. Our study was carried out in a time period when public consultations on the last draft of the

national REDD+ strategy were under way and REDD+ was actively being shaped. We collected documents, carried out semi-structured interviews, and made participatory observations during key events. The documents encompass the preparation and design of the Colombia's REDD+ National strategy from 2012 to 2018 (Table 1). Additional materials and documents include newspaper and radio items, public presentations, events, laws, decrees that deal with deforestation, texts on safeguards, the implementation of Amazon Vision strategy plans, and material produced by ethnic groups and civil organizations. In this article, the term "ethnic" refers to and copies the legal use of the term in the Colombian constitution to designate five broad ethnicities, of which two of the five are Indigenous and Afrodescendant groups.

Events included summits, congresses, and talks from organizations related to controlling deforestation and done by organizations engaged with REDD+ implementation or project (Table 2). Thirteen semi-structured interviews were done with members of organizations who actively participated, assisted, published or organized events related to the making of policies of controlling deforestation or REDD+ (Table 3).

Table 1 Reviewed documents in Spanish			
Document	Year	Author	Level
CONPES 3700	2011	Government of Colombia	National
National Plan of Adaptation to Climate Change	2012	Government of Colombia	National
RPP V8	2013	Government of Colombia	National
National REDD+ Strategy	2018	Government of Colombia	National
Social and Environmental Assessment GIZ	2017	GIZ	National
National Safeguards Document	2013	Government of Colombia	National
Amazon Vision – Planning Document	2015	Government of Colombia	Regional/National
Readiness Process Summary	2017	GIZ	National/Regional
1st Summary of Results Memorandum of Understanding	2017	Government of Colombia	Regional/National
Amazon Vision Annual Report (REM)	2017	Government of Colombia	Regional
Map of actors and interventions in the Amazon	2017	Climate Focus	Regional
Indigenous plans – Analysis and Recommendations	2016	GIZ	Regional
Design Grievance Mechanism	2017	Government of Colombia	National
Participation Plan for REDD+	2018	UN-REDD+	National
Actors Map for REDD+	2018	UN-REDD+	National
Final Report UN REDD+	2018	UN-REDD+	National
Indigenous Perspectives for REDD+.	2018	UN-REDD+	National
Afro-descendant Perspectives for REDD+	2018	UN-REDD+	National
The challenge of deforestation in Colombia: policy draft	2019	WWF	National
National policy of land consolidation and reconstruction	2014	Government of Colombia	National

Table 2 List of Events	
Events	Date
Presidential Candidates Forum	February 8th 2018
Natura Foundation Congress	May 29th 2018
Environmental Summit Colombia	June 4th 2018
Local Visions of Deforestation in the Amazon	December 5th 2019
Plan of Open Government	December 12th, 2019.January 2020
A week for The Colombian Amazon	February 18th to 22nd of 2020

Table 3 Interviews		
Organization	Number	Dates
International Organizations	3	Bogotá June 15th, 2018, June 5th 2018, February 20th 2020.
Scientific Institutes	3	Bogotá. 2nd April 2020, 18th May 2020, September 29th, 2020
Civil Society Organization	1	Bogotá October 5th 2019
Indigenous Organization	4	Bogotá December 5th, 2019, February 20th, 2020, January 19th 2020, March 7th 2020
National Non-profit Organization	2	Bogotá, June 4th, 2018, May 4th 2020

To empirically identify the rationalities by which REDD+ is implemented in Colombia, we used thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2019), carried out in six phases. The first phase consisted of familiarizing with the documents, this involves an inductive approach for coding, meaning that codes derive heavily from the data instead of deductive approach followed by cited studies on discourses on REDD+ that rely on finding elements within national policy arenas. Second, we qualitatively coded the texts, transcripts and notes at the level of sections and paragraph using in-vivo coding, taken directly from the texts (Saldaña, 2015) resulting in about 200 codes (see Annex 1). In a third phase, we followed Yanow's interpretative approach (Yanow, 1999) to identify artefacts (language, object, acts) that resulted in categories of analysis: problematizations, logics of intervention, authorities and social qualifications. In this phase, we draw as well from the approach of Holmgren (2013) and Hajdu and Fischer (2017) of identifying problem-cause-solution of deforestation/degradation narrative and used them to aggregate the in-vivo codes. With this in mind, we coded again using open coding to interrogate the assumptions, and systems of meaning underpinning the categories of analysis. We reviewed the data focusing on the discourses that actors draw to construct their stories of deforestation. This approach allowed

us to produce six problematizations, twelve logics of intervention, five authorities, and fifteen social qualifications. In a fourth phase, we brought the second and third phase together to outline the different patterns of meaning and association among codes and the context. This resulted in eighteen elements that could be grouped in eight themes, each one demonstrating the different ways (and sometimes overlapping ways) the "story" of deforestation is being told. A fifth phase was used to organize the internal structure of themes into subthemes in line with the Miler and Rose's analytical framework of problematization, discourse, and morals. The framework allows us to disentangle the core political concerns that actors articulated through REDD+. Given the overlap among some parts of the rationalities, the last phase consisted of individualizing and delimiting the rationalities to obtain internal cohesion and external differentiation.

It is important to note that rationalities share problematizations, discourses, and morals. The four rationalities that follow from our analysis are not clear-cut to be found in the field, as different actors draw from one or another depending on the circumstances. The contradictions and incoherencies that remain in the analysis reflect this nature of rationalities. The next section presents our findings for each of the four rationalities. First, we discuss the legal rationality which is preoccupied with seeing deforestation as illegal and as society's scourge. We proceed by presenting the spatial rationality that focuses on the organization and distribution of the forest. Next, we discuss the market rationality that is concerned with the (un)productivity of the forest and economic opportunities of exploitation. Finally, we present the ethnic rationality that foregrounds the recognition and

protection of ethnic communities. Each rationality is explained and illustrated via selected quotations from interviews or documents.

2.3. RESULTS

2.3.1. Legal rationality

2.3.1.1. Problematization
The core concern of the legal rationality is that deforestation is caused by the absence of the state and the "ungovernability" of the forest landscape (Serje, 2012; Zamosc, 1992). In Colombia, the central idea of an ungovernable forest is that illegal activities spawn in forest fringes. Such activities comprise activities of rebel groups, illegal cropping, and squatting National Parks or State's properties, among others. The feeling commonly voiced among forest policy actors during meetings and workshops is that a "lack of governance leads to deforestation". An officer from a state agency mentioned that "...the armed conflict resulted in the impossibility of the state to reach many places, so the illegality abounded among settlers and communities" (June 4th 2018). In Colombia, many of the country's socio-economic problems, including deforestation, were understood to be caused by the guerrillas and the conflict (Tickner and Pardo, 2003). An interviewee comments:

> The official position regarding deforestation is still that coca crops cause deforestation, even when the official information does not support this assertion. Now, with the peace accords, we realized that guerrillas were the environmental authority that dictated the rules of protection, conservation and management...many places indeed are better conserved where the guerrillas exercised control.
> Interviewee 3, February 20th, 2020. International Organization Staff

The quote above strongly contrasts with, but also highlights, the widespread problem definition of the legal rationality that guerrillas cause environmental damage and point to a common point of a vacuum of environmental regulations left after the demobilization of the FARC-EP,

Since the problem for legal rationality is occupation of forest by illegal groups, command-and-control measures and law enforcement led by the state are commonly opted as a solution. In practice, several military initiatives have indeed been deployed to safeguard the environment. These initiatives include the Green Colombia operative, the "Forest bubble", and more recently the Artemisa operatives: an environmental protection task-force that has pursued a rapid military occupation of protected areas to introduce evictions and execute prohibitions (Peasant leaders, December 5th 2019).

The legal rationality mainly envisions to discipline forest dwellers through command-and-control measures, but also via education. Education and capacity-building workshops of environmental regulation and REDD+ are privileged as solutions to cure gaps in knowledge and general ignorance. The Safeguards process gives some glimpses in this thinking: "…people ignore the norms…and its ignorance does not justify breaking the law…" (Camacho and Guerrero, 2017). Hence, illegality and informality are framed as resulting from a lack of knowing the rules. In recent years, when evidence of drivers of deforestation became available, new causes of illegality revitalized the legal rationality and the premise of

ignorance. Activities such as Illegal mining and timber exploitation supported the ideas of deforestation as a legal problem and an education problem.

2.3.1.2. Discourse

The legal rationality relies on and is situated in a wider discourse associated with threats and security. The language of threats can be traced back to conservation discourses of uniqueness. In the last decades of the 20th century, conservation organizations started to use biodiversity databases of plant and animal species to rank mega-diverse countries, including Colombia. The red lists of endangered species and the hotspots of biodiversity emerged as public tools that fostered the idea of uniqueness, endemism and the exceptional nature within a National Park (Humboldt, 2000; Márquez, 2001). This language nurtures the sense of loss and supports calls to act to protect ecosystems.

The security discourse has a long history that traces back to counter-insurgent discourses. Since the 1960s, communist groups in Colombia took up arms and rebelled against the national government in an attempt to gain political power. In the late 1990s, the main political strategy was to diminish the guerrilla's income by reducing coca crops and articulating this as a matter of national security (Tickner and Pardo, 2003). When coca crops spread to National Parks (Bernal, 2007), security and conservation discourses became aligned and formed a win-win solution in which combating coca crops and insurgents served biodiversity conservation as well as national security (Andrade, 2004; Chaves and Arango, 1998).

The following excerpt from the speech of the president at the UNFCCC COP10 illustrates well how REDD+ provided an opportunity to gain global attention for Colombia's effort to both fight rebels and stop deforestation at the same time:

> We need to understand that narcotics is an aggravating factor of deforestation, of climate change, of environmental disorder, killing life, poverty. Therefore, we ask a large compromise of everybody against the production, distribution and consumption of illicit drugs. And Colombian people will maintain the stiff determination until we overcome this scourge. Presidential speech at COP10, 2009.

The global issue of climate change was used to emphasize the environmental damage of coca crops by making a connection between coca and deforestation (Policía Nacional Dirección Antinarcóticos, 2014). International donors were keen to support these efforts and finance the fight against the guerrillas under the banner of global discourses of climate change. The connection of emerging climate concerns and guerrillas were widely reproduced as a then minister of defense can be quoted in a meeting in Washington DC:

> …[guerrillas] clear-cut the forests to sow coca and pour chemical in the rivers so the deforestation and emission of greenhouse gases increases…Now that everybody talks about climate change, it is good that the international community looks at this problem. By fighting the armed groups and narcotics we are fighting global warming…
> Farc son las más grandes contribuyentes al calentamiento global, Ministro de Defensa. ElTiempo, October 17, 2007.

As the quote shows, the minister, who later became president, tied a global responsibility against climate warming with a domestic problem through narratives of threat and securitization.

2.3.1.3. Morals

The goal of the legal rationality is to produce behaviors and subjectivities aligned with law and conservation. The rationality incites subjects, in dispersed and multiple ways, to become active in their own government "in accordance with the law". This is attempted through a combination of violence, militarization of National Parks, education, organizing capacity-building workshops, and exhortation appealing to the mega-diversity of the forest, and particularly the Amazon. The focus on education and capacity-building reflects a dominant conception of forest dwellers as ignorant, with the State as responsible for illuminating the lives of commoners. The moral of the State as provider is supported by international organizations as well, one of which is quoted below:

> There is a lack of awareness that [Colombia] possess 10% of life forms of the planet and that this has practical benefits. Because many ecosystem services are intangible, regular people do not recognize their importance nor do they recognize the relevance of protecting land planning for national reconciliation. […] the absence of a civil and institutional culture that defends the importance the forest for society's benefit calls for the articulation of an educational, participatory and communicative policy that leads to social valuation of the forest.
> Riascos de la Peña and Quintero, 2017, p117

The quote denotes education and capacity-building as the means to align forest dwellers along conservation and legality ideals. Moreover, the State is privileged as responsible for such transformation, a position which government officials we interviewed also confirmed in interviews. This articulation dates back to mid-twentieth century when political parties provided rural assistance to gain votes in the agrarian fringes (Arjona, 2016; Revelo-

Rebolledo and García-Villegas, 2018). In consequence, the rationality suggests strengthening the sovereign power of the State in the agrarian frontier to fight back deforestation.

2.3.2. Spatial Rationality

2.3.2.1. Problematization

According to the spatial rationality, the problem of deforestation is the disorganization of the forest. The chaos in the forest is the result of conflicts in land use, inconsistent policies, and inefficient practices (González Arenas et al., 2018; Government of Colombia, 2019). In this rationality, land use conflicts are caused by the uncontrolled expansion of the agrarian frontier and a lack of clear criteria to allocate activities to specific areas (Presidential candidate speech, February 8th, 2018). The following quotation from a policy document serves as an illustration:

> Land occupation in Colombia has lacked clear state guidance with regards to criteria related to environment and productivity, including the aptitude of the soil for various land uses. This has not allowed for effective land use planning based on sustainable use and proper exploitation of natural resources. Excessive occupancy of fertile and productive soils by extensive cattle rearing, where agricultural and forest use would be more proper, has generated land use conflicts and created negative impacts on agriculture and livestock production, and for the preservation and protection of strategic ecosystem.
> (Government of Colombia, 2014, p15)

According to the quote, technical criteria, planning, and zoning are needed to produce well-ordered and developed spaces. A common image is that without a technical direction, forest margins become spaces of risks, idleness, and poverty and will provide a refuge for political rebels (González Arenas et al., 2018). This problematization depicts human settlement and economic growth in the Amazon as occurring without any technical criteria or expert

prescription, causing enormous pressure and widespread unsustainability. A government

delegate explains:

> People arrived at the agrarian frontier with promises of progress and richness. What
> they found was the immense jungle, poverty, the guerrilla and the absence of the
> State, roads, markets, health, or education. They had to make by themselves the
> roads, markets and health. They had to abide themselves to the guerrillas and the
> doom of the coca to have income. As a consequence of poor soils and ignorance,
> they have to clear-cut more forest. Then everyone does what they want since there
> is no technical criterion to organize colonization
> Government delegate at the Colombian Environmental Summit June 4th, 2018

The quote exposes the assumption that local infrastructure and services are inefficient

because of a lack of technical guidance. Accordingly, land planning and technical criteria

should bring order to chaos, rationality to irrationality, sustainability to exploitation, and

optimization to inefficiency.

Land planning and technical interventions are envisioned as the solution for deforestation

and for social environmental problems by steering different actors and measures towards

the same objective. While the main stakeholders embodying this idea are the technical

governmental bodies such as the National Planning Department and other environmental

agencies, many actors articulate local plans or ethnic planning instruments to express the

need for spatial order. Zoning and planning are needed, according to one peasant leader, to

articulate local state and non-state organizations, and avoid overlap and double efforts.

While the technical argument is widespread, it is also common that rural communities and

local governments voice the inoperability of land planning due to the lack of funding or

adjustment to the local contexts (GIZ, 2014; Government of Colombia, 2017c). Despite this,

land planning remains an axis of the controlling deforestation policy, with many actors invoking it in different contexts; Indigenous groups invoking "planes de vida" [life plans], municipal authorities invoking schemes of municipal ordering, companies with "forest ordering plans", regional organizations with the "Model of sustainable development of the Amazon", and so on. Another example are the recent peace accords and the Territorial Emphasized Development Plans, which prioritize geographical areas of interventions with high poverty, conflict, coca crops and environmental protection.

2.3.2.2. Discourse

The spatial rationality derives from a historical discourse that has articulated forest fringes as 'savage frontiers' or as a 'no-man's-land' (Wylie, 2013); places that are in need of organization. The idea that wilderness should be civilized can be traced back to much earlier European colonial notions of organizing the colonies (Huxley, 2006; Porter, 2016). The *ordenanzas,* regulations during colonial times, imposed a land zoning for making the new world more European, more ordered, and modern (Hernández Peña, 2010; O'Byrne, 1999; Villamil, 2010). Later agrarian reforms used these same ideas to order land and to foster the "organized distribution and rational extraction" in order to make unproductive land productive (Law 2 of 1959, Law 6 of 1945, Law 135 de 1961, Law 30 1988). Several policies of zoning cemented this planning and ordering discourse. For example, in the 1990s, land planning was institutionalized in the Constitution and environmental directions were required to mirror European styles of land planning (Andrade, 2004).

The spatial rationality relies on a technical language that visualizes problems spatially, assembles information to draw boundaries, and reveals the entities to be governed (Li, 2007; Miller and Rose, 2008). The discourse includes ways to evaluate, categorize, and allocate land as productive areas and as conservation areas (Government of Colombia, 2017). Using these categories determines what is or is not allowed. In this discourse, rendering land, technical, to use Li's (2007) phrasing, is necessary "to guarantee an adequate use of land that promotes productive activities in the Amazon region in a sustainable way…". Hence, it pursues "…to identify the State and offer conditions of sustainability and restrictions for the use of resources associated to the forest." (Government of Colombia, 2015, p 35). The spatial rationality suggests that authority lays with the highly skilled experts and the bureaucracy of environmental agencies who legitimize interventions with the use of technical-defined parameters such as land vocation to determine what is the right use of the soils (Santos Yepes Adriana et al., 2018).

2.3.2.3. Morals

The purpose of the spatial rationality is to create a shared and legible vision of forest territories which serves as the basis to align actors and coordinate efforts towards controlling deforestation and conflict resolution. Among the texts analyzed, a lack of strategic documents was highlighted as a problem to overcome. For example, the National REDD+ Strategy :

[The strategy] aims to strengthen coordination of actors and harmonize the planning instruments for integrated management of the territory that contributes to the sustainable use and reduction of deforestation…to create spaces of coordination at national and regional level to articulate with Indigenous and Afrodescendant instruments.
Government of Colombia, 2017, p109

The spatial rationality will thus consider the development and implementation of land ordering plans to be the solution for addressing deforestation. These plans are also envisioned to reduce and avoid conflict; "…[land planning] will ensure that new conflicts of use, occupancy and tenure won't emerge…" (Government of Colombia, 2017, pp. 52). The rationality imagines that the right order of things will harmonize and articulate the disparate constellation of actors across different levels and regions (Government of Colombia, 2015) and that land plans will guide the code of conduct. Drawing boundaries and allocating the right people, activities and things to their appropriate locations would foster correct behaviors and adequate revenues. Hence, the spatial rationality in a larger degree provides directives of right behavior, self-regulation and ethical norms.

2.3.3. Market rationality

2.3.3.1. Problematization

The key concern of the market rationality is the unproductivity of agricultural land, which creates pressure on the forest and results in unsustainable use of land and resources in the forest fringes. Early REDD+ documents clearly manifest this concern:

It is particularly relevant to understand that the current model of agricultural production is highly inefficient, widely speaking. Colombian cattle use nearly 38 million of hectares, which only 20 million are suitable for the production and 5 million are improved grassland…. Hence, it is imperative to have a proper land policy that reduce incentives to the agrarian frontier, to develop technological packages and to incentivize the efficient use of natural resources towards the optimization of the national agricultural production (Government of Colombia, 2013a).

Instead of using forest lands for inefficient and unsustainable activities, the rationality calls for a new green economy focused on the economic benefits of conserving the forest, including the way in which "… [the forest] maintains the national economy through services [ecosystem services] of provision, regulation and support, despite not showing in the national economic accounts…."(National Organization, June 4th 2018) and the promising products derived from biodiversity. The slogan "conserving by producing and producing by conserving" used by governmental authorities denotes the introduction of conservation in economic practices and the management towards an efficient balance of its trade-offs.

The origin of unproductivity and inefficiency, according to the market rationality, is the lack of suitable technology (González Arenas et al., 2018). The Amazon Vision, for instance, portrays the low mechanization and slash and burn practices of the Amazon as inefficient, of low added value, and as obsolete (Government of Colombia, 2015). Hence, traditional activities with low technification are constructed as "non-ecological" (Government Official at public event, December 12th, 2019). This unproductivity is also explained as originating from ignorance of the economic value of the standing forest (Government of Colombia, 2013b). The lack of knowledge on less intensive agricultural techniques and the value of the regulating and supporting services of the forest hinder the productivity. Thus, this rationality

aims to describe forest conservation in economic terms as an economically smart alternative so it can be valued and inserted into the National economy. Mostly, technical actors such as the FAO, scientific institutes, and peasant actors endorse the productivity problem as the cause and justification for forest loss.

2.3.3.2. Discourse

The market rationality draws on environmental discourses to outline the compatibility and necessity of economic growth and ecological protection (Dryzek, 2013). The market rationality in Colombia's forest policy therefore includes elements of market-oriented, neoliberal and ecological modernization discourses that promote green growth by means of voluntary instruments, entrepreneurship, and technology. This discourse is reflected in encouraging policies and programs such as certification, Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), and carbon trading. Moreover, the discourse supports the notion of a business opportunity. For mostly state actors, peace agreements allow access to forest resources that before were unavailable because of war. Thus, the discourse encourages entrepreneurism and investments to establish forest-based industries and boost the national economy.

According to market discourse, the forest becomes an instrument for achieving global agreements and for maximizing synergies among economic and environmental policies and instruments (Government of Colombia, 2000). For achieving a more productive forest, the voice of the market rationality talks about nurturing supply chains, private-public partnerships, PES, carbon tax and communitarian entrepreneurship (Government of

Colombia, 2017). The programme Consolidation of Forest Governance in Colombia (2018) is an example that works through voluntary agreements of non-deforestation, protocols of tracking and controlling timber trade, and responsible consumption of timber.

2.3.3.3. Morals

The market rationality aims to develop industrial plantations and incentives within the agricultural frontier. So it claims to "…foster a model of commercial forest production, profitable and social inclusive, and respectful of the environment" (Government of Colombia, 2017b, p207). Hence, its purpose is to steer commercial reforestation, agroforestry business based on conservation, and to maintain ecosystem services. Recently, the Amazon Vision has engaged peasant associations in results-based payments in exchange for maintaining standing forest, introduced loans to reconvert pastureland into agroforestry systems, and promoted the establishment of local associations around production and extraction of timber and non-timber species.

The normative imperative of a market rationality is that the agrarian frontier stops to encroach on forest reserves and that the forest needs to be transformed into a new asset of pharmaceutical and agricultural income in accordance with the National Biodiversity Policy (Government of Colombia, 2013b). The urge of scaling up those benefits to the national level can be discerned in the National REDD+ Strategy: "Within the negotiation of international agreements forest products will be promoted and mechanisms will be designed to guarantee a large amount of transactions" (Government of Colombia, 2017, p209). In other words, the

rationality aims to introduce Western economic thinking in forested areas where economies have not fully developed into resilient supply chains. A landmark of the rationality is that the whole Nation would benefit through "…economic cycles which generate taxes and profits that will return in resources to support the quality of life, access to services and social investment.." (Riascos de la Peña and Quintero, 2017). Thus, the National social welfare, e.g., reduction of deforestation, is in hands of the self-interest, calculative minds and efficiency of individual entrepreneurs.

2.3.4. Ethnic rationality

2.3.4.1.Problematization

In this rationality, deforestation is caused by non-ethnic agents, i.e. peasants and other settlers who are not legally recognized as Indigenous or Afrodescendant. The problem of deforestation in the ethnic rationality is that it threatens ethnic rights, affects the territories of ethnic communities, and takes away their sovereignty and the intrinsic knowledge and cultural values associated with the forest and biodiversity. Indigenous and Afrodescendant actors mostly embrace this rationality, but international NGOs also draw from this problematization. Peasant communities were regularly presented as deforesters by Indigenous Leaders during policy meetings, as is visible in the quote below:

> There is an increasing preoccupation that many peasants are invading the [indigenous] territories, saying they are barrens. We need more territorial control; thus, it is important that we receive economic and technical support from the national and international level in order to ensure this space for our communities García Suárez et al., 2018

The problematization also refers to a lack of participation by local actors (Lövbrand and Khan, 2010), which is deemed to bring uncoordinated and inefficient government (GIZ, 2014). During one of the interviews, a government officer expressed the belief that engagement of many actors through participation would lead to better policy outcomes:

> we are conscious that these projects [of controlling deforestation] cannot happen without the participation of the communities. Without them, those who live in the forest, no policy is effective. It is with the communities that we find support for implementation and articulation so we can reach an agreement of the best ways this can be done. With their participation we can articulate with *alcaldias* [local governments], the ministry, police and army how we can control deforestation Interview Governmental Officer, Sep 29, 2020.

The assumption expressed in the quote is that collective decision-making will bring both more legitimate and more effective policy outcomes. In Colombia, participation in decision-making is especially institutionalized via the ethnic rights of Indigenous and Afrodescendant people in the Constitution of 1991, together with several mechanisms for public deliberation and participation in the State's decisions. Among the constitutional rights, ethnic recognition and free and prior consent rights have paved the way for autonomous governance of collective land.

Rather than calling for inclusion of all forest dwellers, the ethnic rationality emphasizes the engagement of ethnic communities, Indigenous and Afrodescendants, within policy-making as a solution for deforestation (National Safeguards Events). This is done by targeting ethnic groups in programs and measures, as well as by appealing to and referencing them in financing. This is for example expressed in 30 workshops that were held with ethnic

communities in preparation of Colombia's REDD+ policy, and the production of two exclusive documents that consign ethnic views and contributions. According to the ethnic rationality, the problem of deforestation can be resolved by "…ensuring the rights and capacities of ethnic peoples…" according with the speech of an indigenous leader during a REDD+ workshop. As a result, the National REDD+ strategy dedicates the first chapter to consolidate ethnic territories, strengthening coordination, maintaining traditional ecological knowledge, and supporting Indigenous and Afrodescendant conservation measures. Aligned with this rationality 140 projects were later negotiated exclusively for Amazonian Indigenous groups as part of the REM program.

2.3.4.2. Discourse

In line with discourses of civic environmentalism (Den Besten et al., 2014), the ethnic rationality draws on discourses of participatory democracy as a means for coordination among market, state, and civil society actors and to ensure engagement of marginalized groups. In addition, the imagery of the noble savage plays a central role (see Figure 1 for an example) in this rationality; the idea of indigenous peoples as peaceful inhabitants of forests who are in harmony with nature, collective, and who are wise, yet also uncivilized and non-Western (Raymond, 2007). The discourse includes elements of cultural diversity, as well as of disappearance and extermination, to construct subjects of protection, aid, and emancipation (Ulloa, 2004).

The imaginary of noble savage is not exclusively used by Indigenous and Afrodescendant groups. Both ethnic and non-ethnic actors employ it; international conservation organizations employ the notion of millennial guardians and "saviors of the earth" to exhort the need of ethnic participation, while Indigenous groups embrace the image themselves as well. This quote by an Indigenous leader is a good example:

> Indigenous peoples must be the recipients of the conservation incentives because their role as ancestral guardians of the jungle, which throughout their knowledge, use and cultural management have favored its maintenance [of the forest]
> ONU REDD COLOMBIA, 2017, p10

In many of the texts analyzed, including those by the UN, FAO, Ministry of Environment and technical bodies, the discourse of the noble savage could be recognized to argue for the central contribution of Indigenous peoples to biodiversity conservation. Discourses of ethnic rights, self-determination and autonomy from an international declaration of Indigenous rights and the national Constitution also permeate this rationality. The main argument is that ethnic communities are entitled to benefit from conservation measures because the overlap of their territories with conserved and forested areas.

The myth of noble savage helps to create external and internal legitimacy. Inclusion of Indigenous groups in the design of REDD+ ensured acceptance of future interventions and gained legitimacy among ethnic communities. Without ethnic consideration in REDD+ projects, ethnic groups can begin constitutional measures to stop REDD+ implementation, thus jeopardizing state revenues from international donors. In a similar manner, engaging ethnic groups helps to gain legitimacy from foreign actors such as donors. For example, ethnic participation has been highlighted to be necessary by Forest Carbon Partnership

Facility (FCPF) as a condition to approve the REDD+ proposal and to disburse funding (Program Document FMT 2009-1, Rev. 5).

Figure 1. The noble savage, an idealized subject belonging to nature, with deep understanding, knowledge and mostly conservation consciousness is depicted in several variations along the analyzed document. This is enacted by presenting illustrations of ethnic characters dressed in autochthon clothes and paraphernalia while on the background endemic species and the exuberance of the forest is represented. Such illustrations portrait cultural diversity and biological diversity overlapping as justification for intervention. Reenactment of the noble savage is limiting as reinforces the power relations that maintained ethnic groups in limited political spaces. Images from (García Suárez et al., 2018; García-Suáre et al., 2018).

The "noble savage" discourse provides a political audience for claims of rights and recognition, but it also reproduces divisions of race and class. Specifically, the way in which this discourse characterizes non-Indigenous forest dwellers maintains the Indigenous subject within the natural realm while it portraits peasant communities as marginalized and rebellious (Guilland and Ojeda, 2012). Thus, the deployment of ethnic discourses by ethnic organizations, NGOs and government officers maintains the relations and categories of power that perpetuate discrimination and negate political access for those who do not fit with recognized ethnic categories.

2.3.4.3.   Morals

The moral ideals of the ethnic rationality endorse self-determination, autonomy and recognition of ethnic groups. These have been recognized as international principles and recognized as legal principles in Colombia. Ethnic organizations in Colombia have actively embraced them as a moral imperative that has organized their political life. Many policy actors, ethnic and non-ethnic, voice these ideals openly in spaces of participation because they allow them to navigate and interpret both national and everyday politics that may affect them. For example, an Afrodescendant leader commented during a REDD+ workshop:

> For this, we recommend taking into account the ethnic and cultural denomination of ecosystems. Moreover, we must contemplate the complex interactions that communities have established with these means of life, from which several knowledges, uses and values have been generated beyond carbon. Perhaps carbon is the less notorious aspect for the communities regarding their relationship with the forest.
> García-Suárez et al., 2018

The quote denotes the politicized interpretation that is made of REDD+. Understanding of nature as cultural knowledge is foregrounded to contrast the tendency to simplify forest as carbon storage and to impose such understanding to the ethnic groups.

Another example of the morals embedded in the ethnic rationality is renaming the National REDD+ Strategy "Forest, Territory and Life" which representatives of Afrodescendant and Indigenous group felt was more appropriate because it was less technocratic and included the forest as a cultural complex. Still, embracing ethnic identity and attachment to the

territory underlines ideals of sovereign and autonomous territories as an Indigenous leader voiced:

> It is time that the Government learns that it is coexisting with more than one hundred nations. The sovereign and independent nations of ancestral peoples that constitute Indigenous peoples. Our struggle is to be recognized as such independent Nations by the Government, with its own economic model, judicial structures and educative systems.
> Indigenous leader at A week for the Colombian Amazon, Feb 12 2020.

Although the ethnic rationality intertwines elements of democratic participation, it emphasizes that groups with particular rights in the constitution and arena, i.e. Afrodescendants and Indigenous peoples, are the target of the REDD+ policy and finance and victims of deforestation.

2.4. DISCUSSION

Our study shows that REDD+ is not shaped in a vacuum but is informed by existing rationalities and the discourses in which they are situated, as other authors have previously shown as well (Bastakoti and Davidsen, 2017; Chien, 2019; Dekker et al.,2020; Milne et al., 2019; Ramcilovik-Suominen and Nathan, 2020; Trench and Amico, 2019; van der Hoff et al., 2015;). As such, REDD+ brings to the fore previous preconceptions about the forest, the role of the state and forest inhabitants. For example, the legal rationality supports anti-insurgent strategies; the spatial rationality leverages monitoring and verification systems to introduce a techno-managerial approach; the market rationality finds commonalities on market aspects of REDD+ to access forest-based resources; and the ethnic rationality finds ground in the participatory premises of REDD+ safeguards for advancing the ethnic political agenda.

Making sense of REDD+ by rooting it in past claims and premises sheds light on its persistence as a policy and offers an explanation for the entrenched business as usual narratives and ideas found in other REDD+ cases across the world (Brockhaus et al., 2021; Monica di Gregorio et al., 2015b; Minang and van Noordwijk, 2013).

A recurring theme in our analysis is that actors may draw from multiple rationalities to navigate the political landscape; they are not limited to one of the four. Consequently, there exist multiple policy themes where rationalities reinforce or oppose each other, shaping the political dynamics that are part of REDD+ policies. In Colombia, we can identify three of such areas. The first policy theme concerns the role of the state. Various global studies find that, in many instances, REDD+ legitimizes and promotes the (re)centralization of forest governance is (Phelps et al., 2010; Vijge et al., 2016). Our findings in Colombia show that the legal and spatial rationalities indeed articulate a strong role of the state in controlling and ordering the forest through various state institutions, including the army, environmental agencies, agricultural offices and land planning offices. Our results also support studies from Colombia that argue that the state's promotion of conservation (i.e., National Parks and ecotourism programs) is increasingly tied to consolidate state power (Bocarejo and Ojeda, 2016; Ojeda, 2011; Revelo Rebolledo, 2019). Nevertheless, this movement of consolidation of state power is countered by ethnic and market rationalities that suggest alternatives to centralization of forest governance. The market pushes for deregulation to increase the authority of entrepreneurs while the ethnic rationality advocates for authority and administrative privilege by Indigenous councils. We thus see the tendency for simplification

in REDD+, as reported on by Gebara and Agrawal (2017), reflected in recentralization tendencies, but we also see it being actively countered via both ethnic and market rationalities.

A second theme that arises in our analysis is that all four rationalities converge in multiple benefits of halting deforestation, thus all aligning with dominant win-win discourses in the environmental domain (Beymer-Farris and Bassett, 2012; Svarstad and Benjaminsen, 2017). As the rationalities show, Colombian forest governance is based on the premise that controlling deforestation could simultaneously bring empowerment, economic revenues, land security, peace, and conservation. While much of the discourse refers to REDD+ as a triple win solution of climate, conservation, and community benefits, what is striking about Colombian forest governance is that it adds peace as a fourth win (Baptiste et al., 2017; Castro-Nunez et al., 2017; Murillo-Sandoval et al., 2020; Negret et al., 2017). In so doing, it has merged peace building and environmental policy agendas, and this combination is seen to be a powerful strategy for attracting international funding. The predominance of win-win narratives has been criticized in the literature because it poorly deals with local political complexities and the obstacles to multiple benefits (Lund et al., 2017; Myers et al., 2018). Obstacles to multiple benefits include reforming land tenure (Larson et al., 2013), the fair distribution of benefits (Luttrell et al., 2013) and tackling the drivers of deforestation (di Gregorio et al., 2015b). Our results show that none of them are currently addressed in Colombian forest governance, other than in the ethnic rationality.

A third theme that is expressed in multiple rationalities is the strong presence of technical and bureaucratic aspects of controlling deforestation. They appear most prominently in the spatial rationality that focuses on using GIS tools to monitor activities and outcomes. The national monitoring system also appears in the legal and market rationalities that see legibility as a condition for stronger control, enforcement and operation of markets (Scott, 2020). Local protocols of carbon assessment are moreover supported in the ethnic rationality as a surveillance tool. This strong presence of bureaucratic and technical elements in all rationalities resulted in the translation of REDD+ in multiple bureaucratic procedures related to permits, land planning documents, the creation of legal enterprises, as well as the monitoring, reporting and verification of policy and project outcomes. Previous studies have criticized a predominance of technical actors and bureaucracy in forest governance for oversimplifying the practice of forest management and for excluding the necessary role of local knowledge, equity and tenure discussions (Dawson et al., 2018; McCall, 2016; Myers et al., 2018; Zelli et al., 2019). However, Lederer and Höhne (2019) argue that bureaucratization can also legitimize community-based and Indigenous peoples' forest management. In our case, the ethnic rationality draws from elements of bureaucracy and technocracy to occupy the spaces provided by the call to control deforestation and to capture their benefits. Nevertheless, the expectation that bureaucratic and technical procedures will prevent or resolve conflict by aligning diverse actors and interests around agreed objectives is likely to be unrealistic because of unresolved past issues, the misalignment of interests, and a historical lack of legitimacy of State's initiatives (Patel et al., 2013).

2.5 CONCLUSION

Engaging with political rationalities helped us to understand the shape that REDD+ is acquiring in Colombia. Our framework provides an approach to explain how different actors mobilize different interpretations of REDD+ to support their political goals and draw on global environmental discourses as well as nationally specific problematization that draw on past forms of government and established ways of thinking to do so. Moreover, we find that a strong moral imperative, either for example harmony in the spatial rationality or recognition of rights in the ethnic rationality, allows actors to advance their political goals.

In Colombia, REDD+ persists as it offers an extension of past forms of government, technocratic planning, and market thinking, and recognizes ethnic communities in line with the Colombian constitution. REDD+ is imperative for stakeholders in Colombia given the political opportunity and the financial resources available. In Colombia's REDD+ policy, the legal, spatial, market, and ethnic rationalities all provide a political space in which various actors can advance their political claims without creating too much conflict between them. In a broader sense, we have demonstrated, as Milne (et al., 2019) suggest, that REDD+ works as malleable artifact for several groups of stakeholders. A remarkable finding is the prominent place that Amazonian Indigenous organizations have gained through REDD+. In Colombia, REDD+ has become an important building block for ethnic identity and rights constituting what Watts (2003) calls a syncretic cultural politics: wielding ethnic identity to produce governable spaces and autochthon ways of development.

Although we have shown how the participation of Amazonian Indigenous organization within forest governance have helped withstand tendencies to simplify REDD+ and have maintained multiplicity of implementations strategies, issues on equity remain. The win-win solutions present in most rationalities and the rush to implement projects progressively have left aside discussion of meaningful participation and fair distribution of benefits for all marginalized, forest-dwelling groups. These issues were seen by implementing organizations as barriers for rapid transition to programs such as the Amazon Vision. As the national discussions gave space to the regional ones in the Amazon, non-Amazonian Indigenous, peasant communities and Afrodescendant groups were sidelined from the discussion and from participation in the national governance project.

As REDD+ continues to be open for interpretation during country implementation, REDD+ allows policy actors and other stakeholders to accommodate multiple meanings to territorialize political claims and, in turn, extend REDD+'s lifetime and its persistence as a policy. It is therefore in the hands of all relevant actors both in- and outside of forest policymaking to (re)construct modes of governing that allow for multiple understandings and that not only make REDD+ implementation effective for multiple goals, but also responsive to issues of fairness and justice.

CHAPTER 3. FRICTIONS IN THE CONSERVATION FRONTIER: THE MAKING OF THE CONTEMPORARY AMAZON FRONTIER.

In 2015, the Colombian Government began an ambitious program to integrate the Amazon region into the national economy. Known as the Amazon Vision, the program supports activities for green rural development, indigenous participation, capacity building and satellite monitoring in fourteen municipalities in the Northwest Amazon. Following the REDD+ mechanism and climate agreements, these activities are fully financed by the Governments of Germany, United Kingdom and Norway who request the Colombian government to demonstrate efforts to reduce tropical deforestation.

The Amazon Vision targets an area with a long history of conservation efforts and associated conflicts. First, the area includes the National Parks of La Macarena, Tinigua, Picachos, and Chiribiquete which have been characterized by a model of "fortress conservation", entailing conflicts with local settlers about land use and titling (Cusack et al., 2021). Second, the area has been home to military conflicts between the Colombian state and the communist guerrilla (FARC-EP). The Amazon Vision arrived at the end of long peace negotiations that resulted in the demobilization of the guerrillas and an agreement for rural and environmental reforms. Third, the Amazon Vision launch can be seen as an epilogue of a preceding period of public policy that was oriented towards economic development based on extractive industries (Baud et al., 2019). Fourth and last, the program embraced the international REDD+ instrument which received high interest at the time (with the adoption of the 2015 UNFCCC Paris Agreement) and became the flagship of national efforts to control deforestation. The conjunction of these four separate developments led to an Amazon Vision

loaded with different and sometimes conflicting ideas about economic development, historical claims of land restitution, hope for the end of armed conflict, and reinforced ideas about forest conservation linked to climate mitigation (Krause, 2020). When both the Colombian peace agreements and the Amazon Vision were at the start of implementation in 2016, deforestation peaked and violence with dissident armed groups reignited (Prem et al., 2020). This coming together of deforestation and renewed violence reinvigorated local conflicts relating to the ways the Amazon should be developed and governed.

Various researchers have noted that the conflicts in the Amazon gravitate around the shifting of power after the guerrillas' demobilization. Researchers have long warned about trade-offs between environmental goals, the objectives of peace agreements, and national development plans (Baptiste et al., 2017; Suarez et al., 2017). Specifically, along with civil society organizations, they argued that peace agreements could pave the way for extractive industries to move in once guerrillas vacated the Amazon region. Acosta García and Fold (2022) argue that with peace agreements the state attempted to reterritorialize the Amazon region through new cycles of commodity production. Related to that, Rodríguez-de-Francisco (et al., 2021) point out that the peace agreements brought speculation on land and agribusiness (mainly palm oil monocultures and cattle) in the Amazon. Hein et al. (2020) however note that the renewed territorialization is novel because it entails the commodification of biodiversity conservation. Altogether, recent literature points towards the idea that national and international agreements of controlling deforestation in Colombia are triggering new dynamics of accumulation, violence, dispossession, speculation of land

and authority shifts. This phenomenon coincides with what we call a resource frontier, following the understanding of Barney 2009, Cleary 1993, and Kelly and Peluso 2015.

The concept of a resource frontier expresses the friction between new modes of production and existing socio-natures (Peluso and Vandergeest, 2020; Tsing, 2012, 2005). Resource frontiers have been characterized by promises of riches and development on one had (Dourojeanni, 1998; Hein et al., 2020; Ioris, 2020; Serje, 2011), and dynamics of violence, dispossession and primitive accumulation of land and resources on the other hand (Kelly and Peluso, 2015; Lounela and Tammisto, 2021; Rasmussen and Lund, 2018). Drawing on this dichotomy of danger and opportunity, the areas and communities living along the frontier are often portrayed as being disorganized, inefficient, indigenous, and backward, while simultaneously holding the potential of prosperity and development if their problematic character can be fixed (Eilenberg, 2012; Geiger, 2009; Serje, 2012). These ambiguous features attached to frontiers have made the Amazon and other frontier areas legitimate spaces of intervention, whether by locals, corporate actors, state representatives, indigenous, or other actors (Hayter et al., 2003; Serje de la Ossa, 2017; Tsing, 2003).

The north Amazon, where the Amazon Vision is active, is not the first neither the last resource frontier in Colombia. Uribe (2017) describes the consolidation of a resource frontier in the Colombian west Amazon emerging as a nationalist project of regional integration. Steiner (2019) describes a similar project in the Pacific coast forest of Colombia, that started with tagua (*Phytelephas* sp.) exploitation and later with banana plantations. Palacios-Rozo

(2010) moreover argues that the complete economic integration of the Andes region happened through developing the coffee frontier and its (international) market integration during the first half of the 20th century. Rausch (2013) furthermore traces of the last attempt of frontier-making in the eastern plains of Los Llanos of Colombia, which is mediated by the oil industry. More recently, the emergence of the cocaine frontier in the fringes of the Amazon has also introduced frontier dynamics in the region (Dávalos,2018; Goodhand,2021; Holmes et al.,2018; Sevilla Soler,1999; Torres,2018).

This article explores the Amazon Vision as a frontier-making project and highlights biodiversity conservation as its constitutive dynamic (Hein et al., 2020; Krause, 2020; Rodríguez-de-Francisco et al., 2021). We argue that the Amazon Vision is creating a new type of frontier, a conservation frontier. We use the concept of frontier governmentality to understand the dynamics triggered by the Amazon Vision. Frontier governmentality is an ambiguous mode of governance motivated by a resource opportunity characterized by practices, materialities and discourses that define and delimit a space as peripherical (Hopkins, 2020). We provide empirical data from ethnographic work to understand how frontierization operates through technologies of peripheralizing and of subjectification producing subjects, objects, and authorities. By using frontier governmentality as an analytic heuristic, we contribute to the debate about concerns that climate and environmental change have become forces that assembles resource frontiers (Eilenberg and Cons, 2019; Fransen, A., & Bulkeley, H. 2024).

3.1. FRONTIER GOVERNMENTALITY

Frontiers have traditionally been understood and researched as the border and product of state power and capitalism. Projects of state consolidation and resource extraction commonly have coincided with, and have been carried out, in the backcountry of tropical nations. Frontiers have been characterized as places of rapid accumulation of capital by elites, and as areas of dispossession of land by others, while entailing a disruption of pre-existing local governance structures and local knowledges (Kelly and Peluso, 2015; Rasmussen and Lund, 2018). Moreover, frontiers are increasingly recognized as an amalgam of materialities, actors, cultural logics, discourses, spatial dynamics, ecologies and political economic processes (Barney,2009 ;Cons and Eilenberg,2019a; Duara,2019; Ioris,2018; Koch,2017; Larsen,2015; Thaler et al.,2019). This means that frontiers are co-produced and ambivalent spaces that dependent on the time and location of made out resource opportunities, implying a clash of intervening states (or corporations) and local politic rationalities (Peluso, 2018, 2017; Peluso and Vandergeest, 2020).

We use the concept of frontier governmentality (following Foucault's notion of governmentality, Foucault 1980) to understand the political dimensions of the co-production of a frontier. Frontier governmentality is a mode of governance that manifests state power and political authority along a resource opportunity (Hopkins, 2020). Frontier governmentality underpins accumulated attempts to govern a place and encompasses particular mechanisms and techniques to exert power and produce territories, subjects and

authorities (Eilenberg and Cons, 2019). Frontiers need active work to be localized (Cons and Eilenberg, 2019; Hopkins, 2020). In this manner, we characterize frontier governmentality by acting through two bundles of frontier technologies: peripheralization and subjectification.

3.2. PERIPHERALIZATION: RENDERING A SPACE GOVERNABLE

Peripheralization, as a bundle of technologies, conceals certain features of a place and highlights others to isolate a place from its surroundings, and enact it as a frontier (Hayter et al.,2003; Tsing,2003). It is through mobilizing characteristics of being unruly, disorganized, inefficient, backward and stateless that places become problematized as frontiers, preparing them to be subjected to a new ruling (Eilenberg, 2012; Revelo-Rebolledo, 2019; Serje, 2012; Uribe, 2017).Peripheralization is mediated by a constellation of technologies like rendering technical, assigning a state of exception, and encapsulation.

First, rendering technical involves the use of technical tools, such as classifications, maps, indexes, and inventories (Agrawal, 2005; Li, 2007), all of which highlight or hide features relevant for intervention (Ioris, 2020; Rasmussen and Lund, 2018). In line with this, interventions generate technical knowledge to proclaim universality and truth, preparing a territory to be governed (Huxley, 2008; Scott, 1998).

Second, assigning a state of exception materializes the ideas of a frontier within a space (Uribe, 2017). A state of exception is a situation in which a government is empowered to engage in policies that it would normally not be permitted to do. In this way, it is empowered

to transform or even abolish local rules and rights, and subjugates the space under state control to capture the benefits of the resource opportunity (Rasmussen and Lund, 2018). A state of exception thereby facilitates the (forceful) introduction of (new) globalized ideas of subjects and objects into frontier regions, resulting in frictions with local rights and laws (Schetter and Müller-Koné, 2021; Tsing, 2012)

Third, encapsulation is achieved by creating demonstration projects and success narratives. Both enclose and transform the reality of a specific place towards a desired object of governance that holds larger promise for an entire (frontier) region. Projects organize time, money, materials, and people to (re-)produce the overall intervention idea (Kerr, 2008). Narrowed down to a specific project, the space enacts the idea while simplifying risks and constraining agency (Asiyanbi and Massarella, 2020; Lund et al., 2017; Massarella et al., 2018). It is through projects that the (state or corporate) center transfers and reproduces the desired representations and narratives to the periphery, and hence manifests and enlarges its power.

Success stories and demonstration projects reinforce frontier narratives by disregarding failures, dissent, and deviations from initial plans (Mosse, 2004; Svarstad and Benjaminsen, 2017). Success stories use selected images of nature destruction to problematize the state of biodiversity and showcase how people, material and ideational resources can be mobilized to fix the problem (Fischer and Hajdu, 2018; Hajdu et al., 2016; Igoe et al., 2010; Li, 2007).

3.3. SUBJECTIFICATION TECHNOLOGIES: GOVERNING POPULATIONS

The second bundle of technologies of frontier governmentality includes those that create new subjects and authorities (Allen, 2013). These technologies are connected to peripheralization as they aim to subjugate a disorderly population, so that new rules and norms are internalized by frontier people and becomes their stewards (Anand and Mulyani, 2020; Bose et al., 2012; Collins, 2019; Cortes-Vazquez and Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2018; Singh, 2013). This internalization is crucial to cement political rationalities, legitimize new imposed authorities (Frederiksen and Himley, 2020; Van Teijlingen, 2016), and reorganize hierarchies of race, gender, and class. At the same time, actors also use subjectification technologies to transform themselves into what resembles (but not reproduces) desired subjects to regain agency. This may support opposition to the frontier logics resulting in possibly ambiguous (power) consequences of subjectification. Subjectification technologies then act as counter-conduct (in our case as counter-frontierism) using agency, critical engagement, negotiation, and tinkering (Anand and Mulyani, 2020; Asiyanbi et al., 2019; Bose et al., 2012; Müller, 2020; Nepomuceno et al., 2019). We identify five subjectification technologies, envisioned initially by Foucault as the micropolitics of power, but extended later to his work on governmentality studies.

First, technologies of discipline employ coercion and surveillance to transform, regulate and improve behavior (Foucault, 2012). Technologies of discipline demarcate the possibilities of action by issuing spatially explicit management plans or laws (Astuti, 2021; Nepomuceno et

al., 2019), or by using violence, fines and death threats to force desirable behavior (Gebara and Agrawal, 2017; Simmons et al., 2019; Society and 2018, 2018).

Second, technologies of education aim to align minds with the frontier logic (Leask, 2012). Technologies of education operate through workshops, capacity building and events of knowledge-transfer to transmit truth, the very manifestation of power-knowledge (Sarmiento et al., 2019). In the Amazon case, technologies of education serve to produce, circulate and distribute knowledge relating to deforestation and conservation as legitimate and privileged ways to act and relate to the forest (Astuti and McGregor, 2015; Boer, 2020; Müller, 2020; Ramcilovik-Suominen and Nathan, 2020).

Third, technologies of participation endorse different ways of decentralizing forest government, for instance, through forest monitoring or different forest management practices (Agrawal, 2005). Technologies of participation engage subjects, often leading to new social relations/affective ties and beliefs, and thus subjectivities (Bose et al., 2012; Singh, 2013). Such ties are fundamental to create legitimacy (Reed, 2008), to internalize ruling, to constitute communities responsible for "their" problem, and to find solutions that enables governing at distance (Janes, 2016). Engagement may however also result in defying ruling powers as it equips subordinated subjects to govern themselves and to depart from external impositions (Gallagher, 2008; Rolfe, 2018).

Fourth, neoliberal economic thinking can be considered a subjectivation technology as well (Oksala, 2013). Neoliberalism creates self-reliant and competitive individuals which maximize profit by taking advantage of economic possibilities (Lorenzini, 2018). Economic thinking is

anchored in subjects by immersing them in markets for goods and services, loans, and banking, and by rewarding behaviors through economic incentives and land titling (Gebara and Agrawal, 2017; Simmons et al., 2019). Contrasting coercion, neoliberalism promises freedom and abound opportunities (Weidner, 2009). Hence, neoliberal technologies incentivize subjects along the frontier to utilize the opportunities that markets offer relating to nature, for instance, via payment for ecosystems services (Kosoy and Corbera, 2010), carbon credits (Oels, 2005; Stephan, 2012), gene patenting (Hayden, 2021; Rajan, 2006), ecotourism (Duffy, 2015; Fletcher and Neves, 2012), and habitat banking (Apostolopoulou et al., 2019; Coralie et al., 2015; Maestre-Andrés et al., 2020).

3.4.   METHODS

This research draws upon ethnographic methods and semi-structured interviews, conducted between June 2018 and December 2020. The interviews aimed to understand elements of frontier governmentality trough the development of Colombia's REDD+ national strategy and the Amazon Vision program (Annex2). The first author conducted fourteen interviews with officers of international agencies, governmental agencies, representatives of civil society, local leaders and indigenous organizations (Table 4). Interviews were carried out at the workplaces, face-to-face, online or during public events. When accepted by the informant, interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed and anonymized.

The ethnographic work involved participant observation of 21 public events and additional happenchance conversations with representatives of civil society organizations (Table 5).

Participant observation was used to understand how activities related to the resource frontier in the Amazon were portrayed and perceived by different public audiences. Such events were held in Bogota, in the municipalities where the Amazon Vision program was implemented, or online. Access to the events was through broadcasting and recordings (in sum, the analysis includes 43 hours of recordings). When possible, mostly before 2020 and the related Covid-19 measures restricting mobility in Colombia, the first author went to the events in person. Attending public audiences and events allowed to access testimonies of actors in the municipalities where projects were implemented. Such testimonies complemented the perceptions of the activities, impact, and values of the program. We followed a purposive sampling strategy to select information rich events and to engage informants from organizations and groups from five stakeholder categories (Table 4).

Table 4. Interviews		
Organization	Number	Dates
International Organizations	3	Bogotá June 15th, 2018, June 5th 2018, February 20th 2020.
State Officers	3	Bogotá. 2nd April 2020, 18th May 2020, September 29th, 2020
Civil Society Organization	2	Bogotá October 5th 2019, November 5th 2019
Indigenous Organization	3	Bogotá December 5th, 2019, January 19th 2020, March 7th 2020
National Non-profit Organization	3	Bogotá, June 4th, 2018, May 4th 2020

Table 5 List of events	
Events	Date
UNREDD+ National Strategy	May 9th 2017
Presidential Candidates Forum	February 8th 2018
Natura Foundation Congress	May 29th 2018
Environmental Summit Colombia	July 19th 2018
Local Visions of Deforestation in the Amazon	December 5th 2019
Nine Public Audiences for the Artemisa Operation	October 15, 16, 18, 29 November 5, 6, 12, 13,18 2019
Plan of Open Government	December 12th, 2019.January 2020
A week for The Colombian Amazon	February 18th to 22nd of 2020
Two Presentation of results Amazon Vision	September 4th, September 10th 2020
Strategic Planning for the Administrative region of the Amazon	November 11th, 2020

The technical reports of the national forest monitoring system (http://smbyc.ideam.gov.co) news reports of the main media outlets (Elespectador.com, Eltiempo.com, semana.com) and the Amazon Vision social media accounts were also monitored to complement the results and to get a context of the interviews and events.

Analysis of data was done through a qualitative interpretative approach. First, the first author read the transcripts, and the field notes multiple times to familiarize with the contents and patterns. The second step was to find meaningful units of analysis. This was done by establishing a timeline and by organizing the data along it as the data comprises events from 1900 to 2016. After organizing chronologically, codes were taken inductively from the texts, notes, and videos. Later, codes were read thoroughly and grouped in broader categories to express common themes resulting in eight themes which also structure the Result Section.

3.5. RESULTS

3.5.1. Peripheralization I: The Amazon as a broken place

Interest in the Amazon as an advancing frontier and in its carbon storage capacity as a resource dates back to international forest and climate change negotiations in the last quarter of the 20th century. Since the 2007 UNFCCC COP13 Bali summit, standing (tropical) forests and the avoidance of deforestation have been increasingly internationally institutionalized as a key solution to mitigate climate change, including economic incentives to protect these forests. It was on the road to the COP20 in 2014 at Lima, Peru, that the Amazon was rendered (even more) as the "the center of the climate discussions" as a WWF officer phrased it in the time. As a huge region shared by nine South American countries, the

Amazon was at the core of negotiations for climate funding coming from bilateral agreements.

The starring role of the Amazon reanimated old narratives of a broken place that is rich in resources. A quote from an officer of the ministry of environment illustrates the narrative:

> We work in the northwest Amazon which is the most biodiverse region of the country, we cannot retell its importance, it is obvious to everyone; the region hosts indigenous people with a diverse culture based on the forest, the number of species of plants and animal is the largest in the world. Nowadays, the Amazon region is the largest region with forest in the country. Now, the northwest part connects with the Andean region, crucial to connect both biomes. Yet, in the last ten years the Amazon has been declining for several factors…, we have also challenges related to poverty and state services [electricity, clean water, health services] not reaching settlements, while there is the production of coca [cocaine, illegal drug], insecurity and armed groups. We must conserve it, protect the biodiversity and the dependent cultures. The green economy is a great opportunity for achieving that…
> [Officer Ministry of Environment, June 10, 2018]

This speech of a ministry officer exemplifies some of the widespread discourses on the Amazon shared by government actors, NGOs, and indigenous groups alike. Namely, that the Amazon is the most diverse place in biodiversity and culture, and the most endangered forested region. A second discourse that is only indicated on the statement, but often found with residents is about conceiving the Amazon as a remote and dangerous place in need of law and regulation. Together, these discourses depict the Amazon region as problematic but with an intrinsic value to intervene for.

Although the problematization and prioritization of the Amazon gravitates around its biodiversity and threats, the information that supports this picture is not without

contradictions. Biophysical data shows that the Amazon is not the richest region in animals

and plants species in Colombia (which is the Andean region) (Figure 2A) nor the most

threatened ecosystem (which is the dry forest in the Caribbean region) (Figure 2B). Rather,

the focus on the Amazon as a place to intervene is influenced through its emblematic status

in global venues. The myth of the "lungs of the world" and its status as a global carbon pool

is pictured in both national and international conferences. This status privileged the region

to be chosen as the Colombian National Reference level to the UNFCCC in 2014 (Figure 3B).
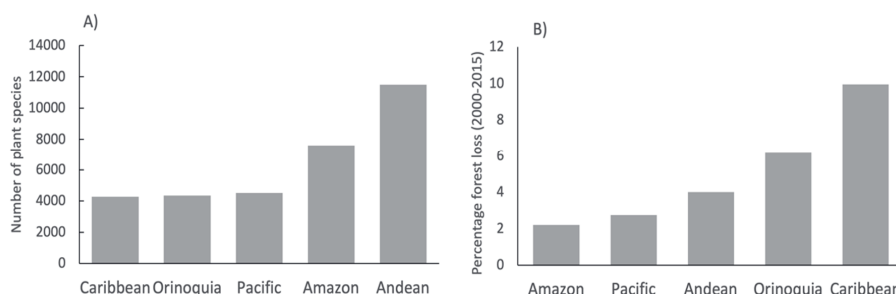
Figure 2. A) Number of registries of plant species in each natural region of Colombia (Rangel, O. 2015). The Amazon, although still very biodiverse, is not the most biodiverse region of the country. B) Percentage of forest lost for each natural region of Colombia during 2000-2015 (http://smbyc.ideam.gov.co, consulted 2019). The Amazon has lost the least fraction of its area for deforestation when looking at the relative shares.

To summarize, frontierization started by articulating the Amazon through new

(environmental) resource values that the climate negotiations provided. Narratives of a place

full of opportunities (relating to climate mitigation and climate finance), but full of problems,

peripheralized the Amazon and rendered it visible as an object for frontier governmentality.

3.5.2. Peripheralization II: (Mis-)representing the region through deforestation

Credible information was needed to highlight features of the Amazon relevant for the climate economy and to legitimize the Amazon as a place for intervention. Such information can render the problem technical by deploying scientific information in the form of indexes, maps and indicators. A first attempt was to map the agrarian frontier. A cartographic project was commissioned to map the agrarian frontier as the areas of potential agricultural exploitation and excluding the areas with special environmental protection for example National Parks, Archaeological sites, ethnic territories, among others (UPRA, 2018). The agrarian frontier has been the fetish of rural planning and target of rural reforms in the last century, either to be expanded to make the land productive, or to detain it to conserve forest as it was more happening in the last three decades. So entrenched is the agrarian frontier in policy making that in 2018 the agrarian frontier map was commissioned to support policies to halt deforestation. The attempt was unsuccessful, as it showed that half the country was a frontier (Figure 3C).

Hence, new technical information was needed, and the nodes of deforestation, the annual deforestation rate, and the early alerts of deforestation served the purpose of showing the Amazon region as endangered. Building these indicators helped to circulate information of the Amazon and raise awareness among public, but also legitimized intervention through the authority of (presumably neutral) science. Constantly, the Colombian government officers emphasized third-party certifications and reliability of the measurements during public events. This apprehension responds to a deeply rooted initial distrust of local actors towards

government metrics as voiced in the early public audiences of the National Strategy to Control deforestation (Field Note 34).

The first indicator used to visualize the Amazon is the annual deforestation rate (Figure 3D). It calculates the national deforestation rate during the last year and disaggregates it in ecological regions: Andes, Amazon, Pacific, Caribe, Orinoquia. In 2017, the annual deforestation rate had an enormous impact on public opinion, showing that forest loss skyrocketed during the year 2016, 65% of it concentrated in the Amazon. The 65% became a magical number even when the number oscillated each year (28%-70% in the last decade). Governmental and non-governmental organizations constantly cited the number during the interviews—thereby omitting the relatively lower share of deforestation when compared to other regions in Colombia (see above, Figure 2B).

The second indicator (nodes of deforestation) appeared as a supporting technical document for the REDD+ National strategy in 2017 (González Arenas et al., 2018). The nodes of deforestation is a national indicator that aggregates detections of deforestation between 2000 and 2015 that occur in short distances (Figure 3E) covering cover 44% of the national detections between 2000 and 2015 (Technical officer, 2nd April 2020). The nodes highlighting six places: node 1 is the Amazon with 28% of accumulated deforestation, node 2 the Andes center (8,3%), node 3 the Pacific center (2,1%), node 4 the region south of the Andes 2%, node 5 the Pacific south 2%, and node 6 the north of the Andes 1,7%.

The nodes aim to render key areas for policy making, but the Amazon node was the one that received most of the attention because of its high value. The Amazon node was used to reassure the policy project and generalize deforestation as occurring intensely in the whole Amazonian region; however, it mostly occurred in the northwest of the Amazon (Solano, San Vicente del Caguan, Cartagena del Chairá, San José del Fragua, San José del Guaviare, El Retorno, Calamar). Moreover, the attention to the value of the Amazon node sidelined that for more than a decade 72% of deforestation occurred outside of the Amazon, and 55,9% occurred outside of the six nodes.

The last indicator is the early alerts of deforestation (Figure 3F). This indicator differs from the others in terms of spatial and temporal scale since the early alerts are point-based occurrences instead of national or regional aggregates. The early alerts are proxy detections of deforestation (each 2 days) accumulated over three months. "They are based on the satellite detections of high surface temperatures in one hectare, some of them related with slash and burn practices, others with natural fires", explained an officer of the monitoring system in an interview (April 2nd, 2020).

The early alerts added the sense of urgency to the initial call to action of the nodes. The early alerts are the most dynamic indicator across the year according to the reports (http://smbyc.ideam.gov.co). Such dynamism captivated public attention during the dry season when human and natural fires skyrocketed, but once it ceased and the indicators highlight other regions outside the Amazon, public attention also extinguished. The early

alerts also became the instrument of command and control measures explained in the following section. They also informed the legal actions of civil society organizations against the state.

3.5.3. Peripheralization III: State authority and controlling deforestation.

In 2017, the representation of Amazon's destruction led to a presidential call for a "shock plan" which endorsed a series of military operations on behalf of protecting the region and the state's new forest assets. Military operations started as scattered and violent command-and-control operations called "environmental bubbles". Further public attention to the indicators and maps of deforestation inspired an NGO to sue the state to accelerate the protection of the Amazon. Consequently, the Supreme Court in 2018 urged the state to deploy measures to protect the Amazon. The Colombian state responded in 2019 with a fully organized military operation called Artemisa Operation.

The Artemisa Operation enacted a state of exception to the resource frontier. Fines, restrictions of the use of chainsaws, eviction of settlers from Natural Parks, and prosecution of peasant families were new measures implemented to control deforestation. Moreover, civil and political rights of peasants and local communities were revoked, and communities were threatened that their operation license (*juntas de accion communal* entitling local decision-making) would be nullified if they did not expose the deforesters.
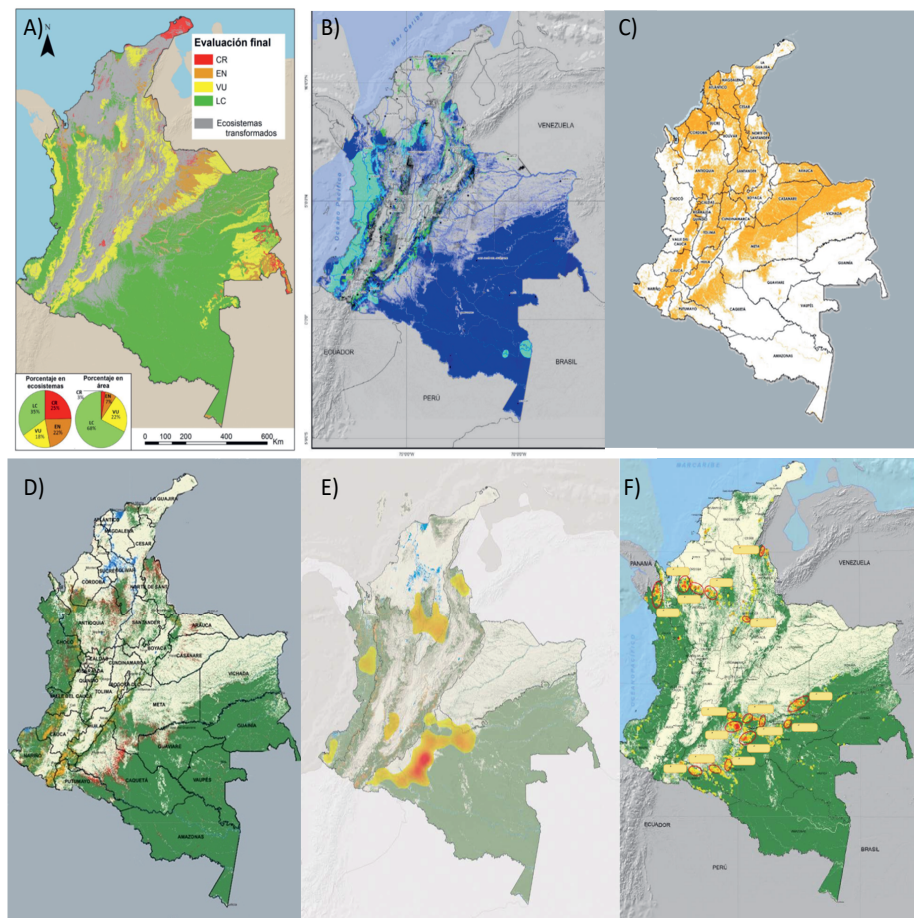
Figure 3. Six ways to understand the frontier. A) *Map of threatened ecosystems of Colombia* (from Etter et al., 2020). Red, endangered, Green Least Concern. Considering the anthropogenic pressure, conservation state, species richness, the Amazon region is the least threatened. **B)** *Estimated carbon content in the Colombian forests.* The darkest color indicates the largest amount (Government of Colombia 2014). The Amazon was established as the monitoring reference level for the UNPFCCC, and this the image was part of the justification for selecting the region as reference level instead of other locations. In 2022, the reference level was updated for the whole national area. **C)** *The agrarian frontier in 2018.* (UPRA, 2018). The agrarian frontier has been the objective of rural reform in the last 70 years. This assessment aimed to direct efforts to control deforestation, but was unsuccessful as policy instrument. As contrary to what was desired by Presidency, it did not discriminated places or highlighted the Amazon**. D)** *Forest Loss during 2018-2019* in red (yellow is with no information). Forest loss can be seen to happen across the country, but forest loss in the Amazon was privileged in media and policy. **E)** *The nodes of deforestation* highlight regions with the highest accumulated forest lost during 2000-2015 in yellow and red. The algoritm and settings privileged aggregated forest loss, but deforestation occurred along the county during the 15 years of timescale. **F)** *Snapshot of the early alerts of deforestation in* the first quarter of 2019. Early alerts of deforestation do not actually show forest loss as it shows fire detections of one hectare. Although fires are correlated with deforestation, the indicator has considerable flaws, inter alia as it is highly variable due to seasonal dynamics. Nevertheless, it was highly influential in the media and used as support in the Supreme Court.

The measures Artemisa Operation left a bitter taste in the affected municipalities. As a peasant leader pointed out:

> …we only want a solution for the land problem in La Macarena [Northwest Amazon] …We were there before the National Parks came…The stigmatization of the peasant movement only marginalizes our call for consent and participation in the measures of controlling deforestation. We see this [controlling deforestation measures] as a great opportunity to be heard, and the rights of collective property to be recognized…It is unjust that whole families are prosecuted, taken to the judge by helicopter, be freed, and return home to find it incinerated…
> Peasant leader, October 15 2019

Peasant associations in the region and social activists criticized the shock plan. They alleged it to be a superficial solution to deeper local social problems, and argued that the brutality of military interventions was unjustified.

Targeting peasant communities and overseeing land claims and civil rights seems to indeed misrepresent the complex political ecology responsible for deforestation in the Northwest of the Colombian Amazon: For example, at the beginning of 2017, scientists argued that cattle rearing and land hoarding were the leading drivers of deforestation (Armenteras et al., 2013; Dávalos et al., 2016), instead of the official narratives of coca crops driving deforestation. Moreover, NGOs emphasize the role of the state in perpetuating the deforestation of the Amazon by incentivizing property occupation and road construction, and through the lack of enforcement of the law against powerful local elites. In 2019, for instance, the governor of the Guaviare region was accused of appropriating state land for the introduction of palm oil and cattle. A year later, the governor and two ex-majors of the municipalities (Calamar,

Miraflores) were fined for promoting deforestation by illegally expanding roads on the Northwest Amazon.

Paradoxically, during the Artemisa operation, fires in the Amazon skyrocketed and thus the early alerts of deforestation (Figure 4). The number of fires more than doubled to 325000 detections in the year 2020, the year of the peak of Artemisa Operation, compared with 2018, before the operation. This number is even three times the number of fires during 2016, the year with the highest hectare loss and when no state intervention had taken place yet. No special weather pattern was registered to increase fires detections during the year of the Artemisa operation (Armenteras et al., 2013). Hence, the attempt to protect forests in the region through military operations only conjured the frontier ghost to materialize. As a self-fulfilling prophecy, the Amazon as a broken place was enacted in a region that was pretended to be fixed.
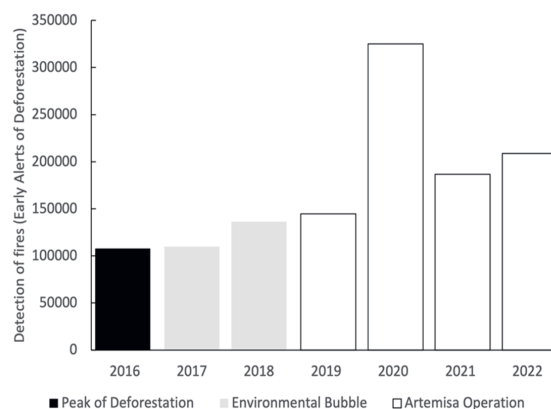
Figure 4. Fire detections 2016-2022. Fire detections peaked in 2020 after Artemisa Operation was deployed by the Colombian State. To contrast, 2016 were the peace agreements and forest loss peaked (indicating that early alerts of deforestation and deforestation are only partially related. (Information from the http://smbyc.ideam.gov.co).

3.5.4. Peripheralization IV: Encapsulating the local histories.

While the State of exception unfolded to problematize the Amazon Region as a place to fix, demonstration activities under the Amazon Vision were conducted to showcase solutions. The Amazon Vision arrived where other conservation projects have passed before. In the last fifteen years, the Colombian Amazon area hosted nearly thirty national initiatives to control deforestation, and another 390 projects related, for instance, to technical help for agroforestry projects, the substitution of illegal crops, and biodiversity conservation (AMAZONIA,2016).

The area is furthermore well known for the strained relations between communities with National Parks and the state. Conflicts with local communities came from establishing three National Parks in the northmost of the Amazon drawing on what has been labeled to be a fortress conservation model (Cusack et al., 2021). In the 1990s, conflict aggravated because of forced eradication of coca crops (used for the production of cocaine), the primary means of subsistence for local communities, and source of finance for local guerrillas. Furthermore, different waves of development projects left distrust and resentment with locals as they felt these were temporal fixes with no lasting effect for deeper social problems.

Despite the large number of problematic experiences in this conflictive region of the North Amazon, the Amazon Vision program insisted on implementing demonstration activities there. Denial of past results, activities and experiences was evident during field work: on one side, implementing organizations were reluctant or unable to provide information on

previous projects. On the other side, locals described themselves as being tired of the come

and go of environmental and state organizations. The resentment from previous

interventions created an atmosphere of distrust about the promised benefits of the Amazon

Vision. This is illustrated by the testimony of a local major:

> At the beginning I expected that the Amazon Vision was another implementer agency [...] but with no results, this generated a lot of discussion in local and national forums then I realized it was the government itself...then I joined the team of Amazon Vision...and *chose that the little things produced by the agreement* [bilateral agreement] among local and national government has to be with compromise and dedication Intervention of a local Major for the Amazon Vision, 2019.

By 2017, the past development projects took their toll. The Amazon Vision's activities were

refused by villagers just as the REDD+ demonstrations had been refused already previously

in 2010. Specifically, in settlements such as La Ceiba, La Cristalina, Brisas, El Triunfo, and

Polanco, people refused to engage with the Amazon Vision and insisted on claims dated

before 2010. The latter comprised legalizing properties within National Parks, the

construction of roads, of production facilities and schools and medical center (peasant

leader). Other communities refused to stop deforesting, as it was needed to maintain cattle,

one of the few economically stable activities in the region (Public Audience, October 16,

2020). Facing this opposition, the Amazon Vision officers offered nearly 200 USD per family

to stop deforesting, which was again refused (Montaño, 2017).

Following the above developments, demonstration projects then moved to locations with

less resistance and where visions of a timber economy were already accepted. Peasant

associations already had plantations (cocoa, rubber or timber) where the first places to

implement demonstration projects, for example, two of the testimonies showcased in media were identified as participants of the initial REDD+ demonstrations in 2010.

Demonstration projects articulated visions of a successful future made through export of timber and non-timber products, and consolidated supply chains along fluvial corridors. Forest development hubs were envisioned in three locations: Orotuyo and Nueva Ilusión in the Caquetá region, and Los Puertos in the Guaviare region. The premise of these projects was to boost the local economy through successful cultivars such as cacao, rubber and other Amazonian products. The imbibed stories of success were crucial to find adherents to the program, even when definite results were yet lacking and risks of cultivars losses or time of return of investment are not clearly disclaimed.

3.5.5. Frontier Subjectivities I: Opportunities for shifting authorities.

Since 2015, negotiations relating to the Amazon Vision favored the OPIAC (National organization of indigenous peoples of the Colombian Amazon) as an intermediate organization between the central government and Amazonian indigenous groups. The status of an umbrella organization, among other factors, privileged them as representatives of the indigenous Amazonian communities. In the Colombian constitution, any project overlapping ethnic territories must have approval of local authorities, otherwise it would be illegal and

thus jeopardize the Amazon Vision implementation. As a result, the OPIAC negotiated spaces exclusively for Amazonian indigenous groups, namely the Regional Amazon desk (Mesa Regional Amazonica) and the Amazon climate change Desk (indigenous officer, 2017). They further negotiated funds directly managed by indigenous councils through an open call to projects. Hence, combining its preexisting political recognition and the promise of speeding up ethnic approvals demanded by Colombian law, the OPIAC transformed the requested participation into an empowering technology for ethnic groups.

The achievements of the OPIAC are historical, but entailed a few concessions. For instance, the OPIAC negotiated to implement the Amazon Vision without Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). FPIC has been the most used legal instrument of indigenous groups to protect collective property against external projects. The OPIAC explained the decision to skip FPIC in the following manner:

> look we know that FPIC is necessary, and we have fought for this right since the beginning of the organization, but you know how much time it takes to develop the workshops for FPIC, we have to coordinate with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Environment, with the communities a date so everybody can go…sometimes it is a headache because we have to make this at least 60 times, that is the number of indigenous peoples in the Amazon… We decided thus, that the FPIC comes from the communities themselves with the response to an open call for projects
> Indigenous officer March 7th, 2020.

The terms negotiated by OPIAC were, however, not welcomed by the CRIMA (Regional Indigenous Council of Middle Amazon). When the Amazon Vision made the first announcements of implementation in 2017, the CRIMA traveled to Bogotá and claimed that

both the National Government and International Donors (Norway, Germany and United Kingdom) misperceived the Amazon as an empty space for their interests, without owners (ElEspectador.com,2017). This conceptualization would void the rights and authority of local councils to decide on executing the Amazon Vision in their territory. As a CRIMA representative explained:

> The OPIAC is wrong regarding their faculties to decide what to do or not in the territory of the CRIMA…Information and capacity-building workshops are not decision spaces; they are not FPIC spaces, as the law states. We participated in information workshops as representatives, but the community did not approve anything. OPIAC is a regional organization, thus, the local councils are the ones that have the right to decide.
>
> Contagio Radio April 28th 2017

The CRIMA received an indifferent response from the implementers, including the OPIAC. The principal argument was that there was evidence of the CRIMA assisting in the workshops of the Amazon Vision. The ministry of environment and embassies stressed that the project had to be continued because commitments towards international partners were already agreed upon (ElEspectador.com,2017). Subsequently, the CRIMA sued the implementers, alleging that the implementation violated their rights of FPIC. In 2017, the supreme court approved the allegations of the CRIMA, and the area of implementation of the Amazon Vision had to be reduced taking out the overlapping territory of the CRIMA. Nevertheless, a year later, the CRIMA itself applied for funds from the Amazon Vision.

3.5.6. Frontier Subjectivities II: Technologies of education

A constant in the Colombian practice of frontier-making has been to transform subjects (Acosta García and Fold 2022). In the beginning of the twentieth century, adventurous state subjects were exhorted to dive into the richness of the Amazonian frontier under the premises of bringing modernity to the indigenous groups (uncivilized savages) and progress to the emerging Colombian Nation (Uribe, 2017). During the middle of the twentieth century, productive subjects were incited to make the idle land of the Amazon flourish through labor and the support of the central State (Molano, 1989; Torres, 2018). At the end of the twentieth century, with the increasing economic liberalism and the retreat of state investments, a now self-forged subject was encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities of the neoliberal economy entering the country (Del Cairo and Montenegro-Perini, 2015; Velasco, 2016). What particularly excels in contemporary environmental rule is the attempt to transform and even undo previous subjectivities. An officer of an NGO explains:

> People arrived (To the Amazon region) with the Andean culture of *tumbar* (clear-cut) and to raise cattle. They realized the carrying capacity of the soil does not sustain high yields here…they have to have a cow each two hectares… or turn to easier activities like the coca crops and they got used to the easy cash… It is a persisting culture that we need to change, that culture of the cattle rancher, the illegal life, a new culture where the forest has a value for the present and future generations, and the peasants appropriate the opportunities of capacity-building and conservation.
> NGO Officer, May 29th 2018

The officer's testimony echoes governmental and non-governmental actors alike, underlining the need to change subjectivities. For governmental organizations, and some

international actors such as the FAO, the main concern is to create self-reliant subjects akin green entrepreneurs "who decides to make the forest a living without chopping it down" (Ministry of Environment Officer December 5th 2019).

Capacity-building workshops and environmental education are technologies of education deployed by the program to address such subject transformations and related changes of culture. An example is the program "School of jungle" (escuela de selva), a certificated diploma that creates awareness towards the REDD+ scheme, about payment for ecosystem services, and builds knowledge on climate change and deforestation. The REDD+ National strategy dedicates a complete program on education. An NGO officer further commented that controlling deforestation presupposes awareness about the benefits of nature [Interview 2019]. Such knowledge is claimed to rebuild long-term relationships of the frontier people with the environment, to "consolidate a *culture* of co-responsibility for care and sustainable use of the forest" (Government of Colombia, 2017).

3.5.7. Frontier Subjectivities III: Indirect and direct ways to make subjects

Indirect disciplinary technologies are seen within the Conservation Agreements, or Incentivo Forestal Amazonico (IFA). Within the IFA, smallholders with standing forest receive a conditional payment dependent on the percentage of remaining forest (around 80 USD per month, about $1-2 USD per hectare). The payment depends on a certification from the monitoring and verification system guaranteeing that owners did not reduce the area of the

forest. As a modern panopticon, permanent visibility by satellite surveillance individualizes landowners to induce a sense of being watched. This not only assures that landowners internalize the appropriate behavior but also assures reproducing the logic of the frontier governmentality.

The Green Financial Incentive (GFI) is another example of subjectivation technology. It includes a subsidized loan, up to USD $7000 for 7 years, for each peasant family. It targets locations of low forest cover and aims to finance new farming practices and technical assistance. The activities and assistance focus on the production of sustainable cattle ranching, rubber, cacao, and Amazonian fruits. The program waives half of the loan when there is proof that no deforestation took place on the property during the first 7 months and when the payment of the loan is done timely.

Both IFA and GFI train the formation of self through practices that instill habits, capacities and skills, along economic incentives. Here, (facilitated) markets replace the state and embody its functions of regulators of economic activity and welfare. The instruments encompass broader measures to create an economic subject by introducing microcredits, banking, and supply chains, mostly new for locals who "lacked participation in the national economy" (Field Note 28). The Amazon Vision thus connects to past attempts to introduce markets and to routinize these within social life: subsidized loans ensure desired outcomes are achieved, mandatory payment routinize good financial behavior, introduction of banking replaces collective values of solidarity and reciprocity. In summary, subjects are fostered to

maximize their own advantage and to optimize their own (families) quality of life rather than the community values.

The Amazon Vision also exerted direct power to transform subjects. Measures such as fines, prosecution and eviction during the previously discussed state of exception acted as disciplinary technologies as they coerced and punished subject's actions. Discipline was cemented later with the criminalization of deforestation punished by jail. These coercive actions for controlling deforestation incited protests, criticisms and reactions from different civil sectors. Most notably, at the beginning of 2020, local reactions to the military operations included the setting of fires within the La Macarena National Park, which lasted for two weeks. The fires in the National Park hardened military operations and allowed the reemergence of a past subjectivity, the rebel and insurgent subject. This subject appeared while conservation was framed as a military endeavor. Weeks after the fires consumed part of the National Park, military operations blamed remnants of insurgency groups and cocaleros (cocaine producers) for causing deforestation. With support of the technical information on the hotspots of deforestation, weekly military surveillance of the region reignited the past armed conflict in the area. Months later, local armed groups in charge of production and distribution cocaine published a pamphlet:

> We do not admit in our area of influence any project of the American States organization, USAID…Amazonia Mission, Gilbert Austria, Amazon Institute of Research…their objective is to operationalize the counter-insurgency policy from the gringos aiming to evict settlers and owners… We call to not participate in these projects because the agencies operating these counter-insurgency policies will be declared a military objective
>
> Pamphlet published in April 2020 in Social Media by FARC insurgents.

3.5.8. Frontier Subjectivities IV: Technologies of participation

Local participation envisages to change subjects by " raising awareness of the value of the forest" [Major of Cartagena del Chaira, 2019]. Engaging in projects of ecotourism, community planning and monitoring, and agroforestry is the means to transform consciousness and practices. Such subject transformation is the main topic of the success narratives spread in the media. It is depicted in testimonies of peasants that worked as coca farmers (*cocalero*), and whose life was transformed by engaging in sustainable projects and conservation. A local farmer recounts:

> We arrived forty years ago planting coca crops, we used to deforest and clear cut to saw grass and coca...then it brought us many problems...Then after being deforesters, we decided to not deforest more and plant cocoa...we had before 400 ha and now we live happily in 15 ha. ...Our future is to conserve the environment. That little land we have is to conserve its nature, land and oxygen...
> Institute Sinchi Broadcast, September 2019

Most of the testimonies, from forest monitoring, agroforestry, or ecotourism projects, depict the transformation of the *cocalero* subject into a conservationist one. However, the testimonies do not represent transformations resulting from the intervention of program, but showcase people that were already engaged with these projects before the Amazon Vision arrived. They reproduce the resource frontier by providing a picture of the Amazon Vision "as it already happening", and by showing economic results. Various locals not engaged before in governmental programs saw the Amazon Vision as the state finally arriving at their doorstep or, as a villager says, "as the only institution coming here" [OROTUYO

representative 2019]. In this way, they enacted the frontier imaginary of the state as a provider of hope and order.

3.6.   DISCUSSION

In this chapter we described how the Colombian state attempts to exercise power in the Amazon region through biodiversity conservation. We present the Amazon Vision as a deployment of frontier technologies to fill the power vacuum left after the peace agreements. We use the concept of frontier governmentality to understand how the technologies of peripheralization and subjectification mediate such exertion of power.

Our results show that the region is peripheralized by translating global discourses and images of pristine nature to the Amazon region. Images of a threatened region are circulated and supported by technical indicators highlighting the deforestation occurring in the region, while underreporting on similar phenomena in other natural regions. The circulation of such images reinvigorates the Amazon myth and makes it legible and resourceful for the climate economy. In this sense, peripheralization technologies create a deforestation episteme: a system of knowledge and ultimately a regime of truth from which society mobilizes representations and practices towards the Amazon and its population. As Kröger (2021) argues, such an episteme demarcates what is seen and what is tolerable to happen in the space of the frontier. Hence, the mobilization of imaginaries and discourses of pristine nature, uniqueness and danger, essential for modern capital accumulation from nature

(Smith, 2022), positioned the region in a strategic place for policy interventions (Porto and Superti, 2022).

Frontier governmentality not only creates a physical place but attempts to create new subjects aligned with the logic of neoliberal conservation (Igoe and Brockington, 2007). We highlight the multiplicity of actors (re)making the Amazon forests and reshaping the resource frontier "at a moment when forests' virtues as carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots draw massive flows of capital and justify remaking socio-ecological relations across the globe" (Devine,2020, p913). The ethnographic work demonstrates that the frontierizing project is not totalizing but, in some cases, resisted and accommodated to balance power and to push back. We find this is actually the essence of (conservation) frontiers: they involve an intermediate governance regime, a place with contested meaning including a half-baked dream not yet realized but becoming – and together an opportunity to shift forest governance (Tsing, 2005). Specifically, our analysis of the Amazon Vision hints to the ways in which is a socially constructed moment/place becomes rather fluid: legitimacy is constructed, and subjectivities are negotiated and accommodated within the making of the frontier.

We argue that the conjunction of the technologies portrayed in the results and the frictions between different actor (subjects) that come with them constitutes the physical and social manifestation of a conservation frontier. The conservation frontier emerges from the friction between new modes of production and socioeconomic relations and old ones. The most evident friction crystalizes in deforestation, the clash between the old practices of cattle

ranching, forest clear-cutting, and land hoarding against the new practice of maintaining standing forest (Dávalos, 2018; Dávalos et al., 2016, 2014). Moreover, frictions emerge as a result of attempts to make subjects of the climate economy clashing with local attempts to resist such state subjection. Such frictions relate to land tenure on territories contested between state claims and local settlers within National Parks; they relate to legitimacy also drawing on remnants of old tensions between rebel groups and the Colombian state, but they even develop within the same group such as among distinct indigenous organizations regarding their role in implementing the Amazon Vision.

Frictions do not come out of the blue, they are often expressions and continuations of past attempts at frontierization. We found that the conservation frontier reactivates discourses about poverty, insurgency, lacking investment, backward technology, and a mis-educated population which relate to previous frontier-making episodes (Pokorny et al., 2021). Failed illegal crop substitution and eradication programs, past agrarian and colonization reforms, and decades of internal war, all exert their toll on the modern conservation frontier and add to its form and ambiguity (Ramírez, 2019; Sevilla Soler, 1999). Ballvé, (2020) articulates this well in his discussion of paramilitary violence in the northwest of Colombia, recognizing how remnants of past frontierization haunts modern frontiers, inflicting unpredictability when they are reinvigorated.

By using a governmentality lens, we were able to understand the multiple ways that power is deployed in the micropolitics of frontiers. Our work highlights how frontier governmentality is a special form of exercising state and corporate power (Barney, 2009; de

Jong et al., 2017; Eilenberg, 2012; Ioris, 2020; Lund, 2019; Peluso and Lund, 2011; Revelo Rebolledo, 2019; Woods, 2019), and we add empirical data to highlight a contemporary naissance of the conservation frontier. (Barney, 2009; Beckert et al., 2021; Hastrup and Lien, 2020; Hayter et al., 2003; Hecht and Rajão, 2020; Kaartinen, 2021; Kröger and Nygren, 2020; Moore, 2000). By focusing on frontier technologies, we were moreover able to contribute to the increasing literature that recognizes nature as a means of exercising power across history (Collins, 2020; Fletcher, 2017; Kosek, 2006; McElwee, 2016; Mills-Novoa et al., 2020; Peluso and Vandergeest, 2011). This power includes ways to foster particular subjectivities as well as ruptures and forms of resistance that unfold by creating such subjectivities (Anand and Mulyani, 2020; Asiyanbi et al., 2019; Cortes-Vazquez and Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2018; del Cairo Silva, 2012; Nepomuceno et al., 2019; Raycraft, 2020; Tammisto, 2021; Van Teijlingen, 2016)

3.7.   CONCLUSION

The rising concerns regarding climate change have placed the Amazon region at the forefront of global environmental discussions. This urgency propels the efforts to stop deforestation in the Colombian Amazon which intersect powerfully with the implementation of Colombia's national peace agenda and continued practices of militarization within the country. Despite the good intentions of NGOs and media towards safeguarding the Amazon, the urgent calls for action to conserve the region have inadvertently ignited local conflicts and compromised its ecological integrity.

The enforcement of deforestation control projects reveals the intricate power dynamics at play, including the exclusionary implementation of development processes, the prioritization of securitization and militarization agendas, and state authorities favoring technical solutions over political negotiation. This approach has exacerbated conflict, particularly in areas where the Amazon Vision program has been applied, aggravating historical wounds.

The militarization of conservation efforts is not novel (Duffy, 2022), nor is framing climate change as a security issue (Warner and Boas, 2015). These trends, including militarization in Colombia (Corredor-Garcia and López-Vega, 2023), typically present political issues as urgent matters, prompting security solutions such as militarization. This article illustrates how securitization tendencies reach local scales through national discourses. If such narratives of urgency, exoticism, and civilizational superiority persist, it is unlikely that the conservation frontier will differ from other resource frontiers. Such narratives oversimplify the complexities of deforestation and rely on centralized administrative approaches that have historically harmed Amazonian peoples and landscapes.

The findings of this study also highlight the potential of the conservation frontier to have more positive impacts. Actors engaged with environmental and green discourses have new opportunities to position themselves effectively within a biodiversity-centered economy. Emerging rules, roles, and responsibilities foster dialogue between Andean municipalities and Amazonian actors, civil society groups, and conservation organizations. Notably, new REDD+ savvy public-private alliances have formed, combining interests in protecting local

livelihoods with those interested profiting from carbon economies. This demonstrates the transformative potential of the climate economy, not only in environmental terms but also politically for rural groups. While contentious, the opportunities within the conservation frontier may shift projects to protect the Amazon from metropolitan endeavors to projects that recognize and incorporate the struggles of Amazonian communities.

CHAPTER 4. FOSTERING COLLECTIVE SUBJECTIVITIES: TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF AND RESISTANCE IN COLOMBIAN COMMUNITY FOREST INITIATIVES

In the last two decades, state power in Colombia has become increasingly entangled with discourses and practices of environmental protection. The development of national strategies and policies for biodiversity conservation, the maintenance of ecosystem services, and the mitigation and adaptation to climate change are features of a new policy context where environmental measures work at the interface of state and society. At first sight, the role of environmental discourses in redetermining and reinforcing state power in Colombia appears odd, given decades of preeminence of national development models that are based on extractivism, agroindustry, gold mining, and hydrocarbons (Ariza et al., 2020; Hernández Vidal, 2022; McNeish and McNeish, 2018; Sankey, 2018; Svampa, 2019; Vélez-Torres, 2014).

This holds even more true as these development models have led to the militarization of territories, the expropriation of land, and even the abolition of constitutional decision-making rights on behalf of the nation's interests (Higginbottom, 2005; Kaufmann and Côte, 2021; McNeish, 2017; Oslender, 2008; Sankey, 2014; Thomson, 2011; Vélez Torres, 2014; Vélez-Torres, 2016). There are, however, analogies between the old extractivist- and the new environmental strategies of the state. National parks, ecotourism, and biofuels, among others, have been used by the state to exercise control over forested and natural landscapes. The implementation of such strategies has been criticized for promoting a model of neoliberalization of nature (Krause, 2020; Montenegro-Perini, 2017; Ojeda, 2012), causing dispossession (Devine and Ojeda, 2017), and even for reproducing violence (Bocarejo and Ojeda, 2016; Ojeda, 2013).

The rise of environmental politics in Colombia has not only allowed the state to reposition itself in the political arena. It has also provided an opportunity for social movements to gain recognition and power in matters of governance and decision-making. In the last decades, environmental protection has bolstered social movements' agendas and has helped communities to build new relations with their landscapes (Del Cairo and Montenegro-Perini, 2015). Moreover, the adoption of environmental discourses and practices by social movements have helped them to pursue their alternative development agendas connected to bottom-up decision-making, with an emphasis on welfare distribution and decentralized economies (Escobar, 1998). Accordingly, environmental politics in Colombia increasingly shapes political dynamics between state and local communities today.

A critical aspect of environmental politics is the making of environmental subjects (Bocarejo, 2014; Del Cairo et al., 2018; Revelo Rebolledo, 2019; Valencia Ramírez, 2019; Zárate Acosta, 2021). Critical studies have pointed out how forest and nature have been used historically by states to exercise and rebuild power (Agrawal, 2005; McElwee, 2016).More recent inquiry focuses on the making of environmental subjects (Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez, 2020; Loftus, 2020; Valdivia, 2015). Studies in this field illustrate how subjects are fostered to support notions of state-led conservation (Raycraft, 2020) and extractivism (Frederiksen and Himley, 2020; L. J. Jakobsen, 2022; Van Teijlingen, 2016), and to nurture particular ways of responsibilities in water, forest use and climate change(González-Hidalgo and Zografos, 2017; Hommes et al., 2022, 2020; Mills-Novoa et al., 2020, Owusu-Daaku and Rosko, 2019). These studies find that environmental subjectivities may reproduce discourses of privilege

and exclusion but can also support local collectivities and politics of identity (Hickcox, 2017; Nepomuceno et al., 2019; Robinson, 2021). This suggests that with an increasing environmentalization of power, new collective subjectivities are emerging that can reshape local politics (Anand and Mulyani, 2020; Asiyanbi et al., 2019; Bose et al., 2012; Cepek, 2011; Choi, 2020; Müller, 2020). Multiple collective subjectivities thus swarm the political landscape as environmental policies intersect with history, gender, class and ethnicity, redefining power and interactions of society with nature in the process (Landy et al., 2021; Lau and Scales, 2016; Nightingale, 2011).

In Colombia, insight in the making of environmental subjects is key to understandi environmental politics (Del Cairo and Montenegro-Perini, 2015; Guilland and Ojeda, 2012). Guilland and Ojeda (2012) for example illustrate how the formation of a green peasant subjectivity based on ecotourism supports anti-narcotics state policies in Colombia. Similarly, del Cairo and Montenegro-Perini (2015) demonstrate how subjectivities are made and remade in the Amazon to legitimize state institutions, and Garcés Rallo (2022) and Valencia Ramírez (2019) show how the identity of the rural settlers in the Northwest of the Amazon is being transformed by engaging with practices and discourses of biological conservation. Alternatively, environmental subjectivities are also found to support political resistance in Colombia. Ulloa (2013), for instance, details how indigenous movements and environmental movements come together in political movements around ethnicity and environment.

In this article, we analyze the relation between social movements and environmental conservation in Colombia by exploring how environmental subjectivities are formed. Although there is an increasing recognition of the role of collective identity fueling social movements in Latin America (Flórez, 2014; Rodas et al., 2016), the literature on indigenous, peasant, and afrodescendant movements in Latin America has mostly focused on characterizing their emergence, historicity, recursion, and motives (Alvarez, 2018; Escobar, 2018; Stahler-Sholk et al., 2008), and has only recently recognized environmental subjectivity as one of its building blocks. Moreover, while environmental politics is shown to be one of the constituting elements for local movements (Quimbayo Ruiz, 2018; Ulloa, 2015, 2013), there is so far a lack of studies that investigates how social movements utilize environmental politics to derive their power, especially in the theory and practice of the links between power and resistance within social movements. (cf. Munck, 2020).

In the following, we highlight how environmental politics mediate and co-constitute environmental subjects. We utilize Foucault's technologies of self, i.e. "…the ways a human being turn(s) itself into a subject" (Foucault, 1982, pp 778) to explain collective subjectivities as social structures that follow from - but also may counteract- state and corporate power, through what Foucault calls counter conducts (Bashovski, 2022; Cadman, 2010; Death, 2016; Odysseos et al., 2016). First, we theorize social movements as an assemblage of discursively constituted knowledge and practices to which environmental issues are increasingly central. Next, we introduce Foucault's notions of subjectivity and technologies of the self and add insights from literature on social movements theories to explore how subjectivities are

formed, and how resistance comes about. We then introduce the research methods and three cases in Colombia, after which we report our research results. We subsequently discuss environmental collective subjectivities by highlighting how these are shaped by diverse practices, technologies, and identities. We conclude the article with a reflection on the importance of such subjectivities for environmental politics in Colombia and elsewhere.

4.1. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN COLOMBIA

A social movement is an organized effort by a large group of people to achieve a particular goal, typically a social or political one. Social movements in Latin-American have been the topic of extensive literature for decades. Social movements have formed in response to questions of justice and (rural) inequalities, and have often promoted visions on development alternative to those of the state to tackle those phenomena (Murphy, 2024). In Colombia, social movements have strong ties to historical identities, including being afrodescendant, indigenous, or peasant (campesinos), to claim recognition, rights and decision-making power.

The history of contemporary social movements in Colombia began in the late 1960s with the formation of peasant movements. Those early movements articulated several interests, including tackling economic inequality, achieving land reforms, and recognition of ethnic minorities. While in the beginning they were influenced by anti-imperialist ideologies and coincided with developmentalist reforms in the continent (Veltmeyer, 2020), they soon fragmented because of differences in goals and means. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a rise in armed organizations and unionism which made the fragmentation within the early peasant movements visible. In Colombia, this heterogeneity within social movements intensified following a new Constitution that provided many groups with substantial rights in

1991. The recognition of collective land, and the rights of afrodescendant and indigenous peoples led to a myriad of organizations pursuing different goals and drawing from different resources to attain them (Ramírez and Cobos, 2018, Velasco, M, 2018). The special rights based on general categories of indigenous or afrodescendant identities emanate from state-sanctioned categories, hence ethnic identities are the main if not the only option those groups have to claim special rights and to enact ethnic-based politics.

After adoption of the new Constitution in 1991, Colombia's social movements were characterized by resistance to neoliberal reforms. In the 2000s, action against extractivism-based development was added (Celis, 2017, Smart, 2020). However, such resistance was not equally shared by all movements. Cepek (2018), for instance, shows the ambivalence of the Cofan people whether to support or oppose the oil industry in Ecuador. Equally, Sankey (2017) describes how palm oil generated a schism amongst some peasant organizations in Colombia while Serrano (2023) found the palm oil industry to be viewed as an opportunity for rural livelihoods by other peasant groups. Both Sankey (2023) and Melo (2015) show such differentiation within social movements is influenced by demographic factors such as class, ethnicity and gender.

Over time, social movements have increasingly embraced ideologies and practices of environmental protection to respond to extractivist policies (Acuña, 2015; Villamayor-Tomas et al., 2022; Villamayor-Tomas & García-López, 2021). Environmental protection has furthermore strengthened social cohesion (Gudynas, 1992; Ulloa, 2013) and political

leverage of previously marginalized groups (Montenegro-Perini, 2022; Osejo & Ungar, 2017). The adoption of environmental narratives by social movements shows how they search for means to legitimize their cultures and political claims (Cárdenas, 2014). By adopting environmental discourses, practices and knowledges, social movements add to the repertoire of strategies they have at their disposal to exert political agency (De Luis, 2020). Apart from open resistance to state policies and mobilization of groups, strategies include professionalization (Laurie et al., 2005), bureaucratization (Staggenborg, 2013), judicialization (Sieder et al., 2022), and technification (Ulloa et al., 2021) of daily operations. While some researchers indicate that grassroot movements have been coopted in mainstream policies by adopting such strategies (Dupuits et al., 2020), others argue that this diversification of strategies results from years of experience on how to counter state and corporate power (Erazo, 2011). Vela-Almeida (2020) refers to these as "mirror strategies" that can actually be employed by both state and private sector as well as social movements: states (Buu-Sao, 2021) and (illegal) corporations (Ballvé, 2013) are seen to also copy social movements strategies, adopting discourses and practices on environmental protection and community participation, among others.

4.2. SUBJECTIVITY AND IDENTITY

Subjectivity is central to some of the work of Michel Foucault, who is well known for his analysis of assemblages of power-knowledge (Dews, 1984). Foucault argues that power is exercised by a particular rationality - a governmentality - which aims to "conduct the conduct" of (individual) subjects (Dean, 2010; Lemke, 2002; Miller and Rose, 2008) in favor of dominant (state) interests. As Mills-Novoa et al (2020) explain, subject behavior becomes

the object of governmental intervention when political imaginaries are confined, contained, and neutralized so that new subjectivities become instrumental and constitutive of a particular vision. The formation of subjects, then, is the utmost manifestation of power, expressed through the creation of specific ways of relating, feeling and acting (Kelly, 2013). As the subject entails the possibility of being a certain kind of person, subjectivity debates coincide with a perennial anthropological discussion: what social identity and how it is formed (Banks, 2003; Bentley, 1987; Cornell and Hartmann, 2006; Gomes, 2013; Hale, 2004; Trigger and Dalley, 2010).

The concept of social identity overlaps in many parts with conceptualizations of subjectivity. Both identity and subjectivity are socially constructed and reproduced categories where social identifications are negotiable, historical, situationally dependent, and restricted by power (Chandler and Reid, 2020; Guenther et al., 2006; Jenkins, 2008). In this paper, we differentiate subjectivity from identity by using the latter as an ideal point of reference for a group, whereas subjectivity denotes subject-making practices (Zima, 2015). For instance, Bolívar Ramírez et al. (2006) present several examples how identity is mobilized to position subjects politically. They show how the Andean identity of coffee producer was the point of reference to rebuild a region after a devastating earthquake in 1999; they also show a green peasant identity as the point of reference for peasant associations in the North of Amazonia to become de-stigmatized from the settler-insurgent qualification; another example shows the mestizos (*chilapos*) in the west of Colombia situating their identity and adopting

conservation thinking of afrodescendant ethnicity once they were recognized in the Colombian constitution in 1991.

4.3. COLLECTIVE SUBJECTIVITY

To consider social identity as a topic in governmentality studies entails the study of discursively constituted knowledge and practices that externalize and internalize such subjectivity/identity. Moreover, it involves treating social identity as inscribed with power relations between actors and the need to understand identity as a way to exercise power (Anthias and Hoffmann, 2021; Toha and Pepinsky, 2022).

Foucault argues that the production of subjects is the outcome of a balance between two groups of technologies (understood as assemblages of knowledges, practices and discourses): technologies of subjection and technologies of subjectivation (Audureau, 2003; Foucault, 2019a; Leask, 2012). Technologies of subjection are technologies *of government* that comprehend discourses, modes of operation, institutions and practices that ensure a regularized, efficient and docile individual, and which are exercised over *other* individuals (Foucault, 2019b). In contrast, subjectivation technologies are technologies *of the self* that form a subject by oneself (Foucault, 2019c). Subjects are constituted in the tug-of-war between both the (social) mode of subjection and the (individual) mode of subjectivation (Audureau, 2003; Dews, 1984). Both modes are often present in one single technology, which explains how technologies of government can become technologies of self and vice versa.

The notion of subjectivation is closely linked to the concept of counter-conduct (Cremonesi et al., 2016). As power is omnipresent, resistance to power is also exercised in multiple ways (Foucault, 1982). Foucault calls such resistances counter-conducts, the practices and mentalities of resisting the attempts to be conducted by others (Death, 2010). This not only refers to riots, protesting, agitating, dissenting and occupying, but also to everyday practices of misbehaving, disagreeing, boycotting, transgressing and outmaneuvering impositions with the aim of diverting the totalizing effect of subjection projects (Demetriou, 2016; Savransky, 2014). Subjectivation thus relates to reflexivity, self-knowledge, and discourses as well as practices that orient to self-forming (Cadman, 2010). Recent studies of modern protest movements around the world argue that collective subjectivity has been rising as a new social and political transformation of the subject (Bashovski, 2022; Dunst and Edwards, 2011; Lauri, 2019).

4.4. RESISTANCE AND TRANSFORMATION

The Latin American social movement literature has already explored the formation of collective subjectivities and their political-discursive and transformative practices. In her edited volume, Alvarez (2018) provides several examples of the diverse and multiple ways in which social movements engage with local and global politics. Social movements use collective identities to create, reproduce and challenge social categories, such as citizenship, community, rights, and democracy. Escobar (2018) argues that collective identity based on categories of afro-american, indigenous, or peasant (campesino) identities has been a fundamental part of Latin American social movements and that these identities have provided the steam to attain alternative ways of living. Stahler-Sholk et al. (2008) give

account of the multiple strategies and motives that Latin American social movements articulate to rework relations of power, and to redefine participation and citizenship amidst state developmentalist and democratic reforms. Retamozo (2011) moreover argues that collective subjectivity is the main ingredient for social transformation, which is attached to the ways political subjects are formed through experience, memory and representations. These studies argue that rather than being a byproduct of individual resistance to power, social movements follow a collective logic, utilizing multiple strategies to aggregate individuals around a particular subjectivity and pursue social transformation.

Given the above, technologies of the (collective) self can be considered to gravitate around an ideal identity, which allows subjects to relate to the external world in a unified manner as to either resist and transform state and corporate power, or to be transformed by it. Thus, the construction of collective subjectivity emerges "…within a game of more or less valid, more or less respectable social combinations in which the oppositions old/young, active/passive, rich/poor, above/ beneath combine to form something more or less good…" (Foucault, 2017 p 67). This is to say that the ideal identity is never fully reached, but only aimed for in technologies of the self that employ ambiguity and opposition to shape subjects as distinct from the state, but always with the risk of becoming state subjects at the same time. In the words of Žižek (1988), the collective subject is constructed from the selective negation and acceptance of forms of imposed subjectivities. Resistance to and embracing of imposed identities results in an identity that is collectively pursued as a strategy of power.

In this paper, we consider how collective identities as strategies of collective subjectivation, borrowing from Foucault's technologies of the self, aiming to resist and transform subjection (Zima, 2015). At the same time, we highlight how they may also be captured by state subjection to a certain extent. Used by collective subjects such as political parties, trade unions and governments, and, in our case, rural collectivities of indigenous, afrodescendants and peasants, collective subjectivation entails the creation of shared experience, practices and relations with external entities, human and non-human, usually in reference to an ideal identity such as "the coffee producer" or "the green peasant". Accordingly, collective technologies of the self also include an ethical endeavor, a form of ideal relation with others and the self (Allen, 2013). Ethics provide a basis to attain truth and strive for freedom to "be" sovereign over oneself as a collectivity, and to be "self-possessed", free from subjugating power (Foucault, 2019a, 2017). The envisaged collective truth is related to ethical considerations and principles that have to be internalized and practiced to materialize (Burkitt, 2002).

4.5. CASES AND METHODS

To understand the construction of environmental subjectivities, we analyze three cases related to the implementation of forest conservation and agroforestry projects in Colombia by local communities. The cases are illustrative for how they present distinct responses by local communities to the same environmental policy discourse. These responses emerge in specific socio-economic contexts but relate to larger political projects of the respective

groups that are tied to the identities of indigenous peoples, afrodescendant, and peasant groups respectively.

The first case focuses on the Pilar Indigena, a program implementing 140 conservation measures proposed by 173 indigenous communities across the Colombian Amazon. Indigenous peoples are recognized in the Colombian Constitution as ethnic collectives with, inter alia, special rights of collective property, government autonomy, autochthone education systems, and the right of free-and prior consent (FPIC) for any state and non-state development within their council boundaries. Pilar Indigena is part of the state-led program called Amazon Vision, a jurisdictional REDD+ program. This is a program of result-based payments bilaterally funded by the governments of the United Kingdom, Norway, and Germany. The Amazon Vision program was negotiated to allow indigenous groups direct access to funds via an open application. The case study encompasses several initiatives and therefore a wide range of perspectives that indigenous peoples employ to foster indigenous identity within this program. Projects gravitate around building political capacity of groups, recovering traditions (cooking, handcrafts, familiar agriculture, language) or land planning (including zonification, restoration and definition of property limits).

The second case is a voluntary carbon credit project with an important role for afrodescendant groups. Afrodescendant groups have special constitutional rights similar to indigenous people in Colombia. The Choco-Darien Conservation Corridor private project began in 2010 with an agreement between the US-based carbon credit company Anthrotec

and COCOMASUR, an association of nine afrodescendant councils located in the Caribbean coast region, comprising nearly 13 thousand hectares of forest. The project is seen as an exemplary project because is the first well-known community forestry and REDD+ voluntary project in the region receiving payments.

The third case is Finca Amazonica, a private agroforestry project led by the Vicarage of Florencia, a Catholic church branch extending into four municipalities (Albania, San José del Fragua, Belén de los Andaquíes and Morelia) in Caquetá, an administrative region in the Northwest of the Colombian Amazon. Since 2006, the Vicarage intertwines catholic doctrine with agroforestry systems to nurture an environmental subjectivity based on the life teachings of Jesus Christ and self-recognition as Amazonian peasants. Since the 1960s, the region of Caquetá has been the target of several policies for colonization during different waves of migration from the Andes. These migration policies coincided with national conflicts and increasing demands by drug markets generating a context of land insecurity and political violence. Multiple attempts of the state to intervene in order to tackle poverty, to resolve land insecurity and to improve security failed to reverse the main drivers of these challenges, and ended in eroding trust in state institutions.

Methodologically, this paper draws upon ethnographic research and semi-structured interviews with key officers, stakeholders and members of international organizations, NGOs, local authorities, and community members. Fieldwork and interviews were conducted between June 2018 and January 2023. The 28 interviews aimed to understand the

articulations of peasant, afrodescendant and indigenous within environmental projects. Interviews were carried out partially face-to-face and partially online. Ethnographic field work consisted of participant observation in 17 public hearings and workshops (Table 1) held by civic organizations or state institutions. Such events took place in different settings and places. Where possible, participation was physical; in parts however – also owing to the Covid restrictions – events were followed virtually or accessed through broadcasting or public recordings by organizers. Altogether, 34 hours of recordings were generated while attending such events.

Table 1	
List of Events	
Events	**Date**
UNREDD+ National Strategy	May 9th 2017
Environmental Summit Colombia	July 19th 2018
Local Visions of Deforestation in the Amazon	December 5th 2019
Public Audiences for the Amazon Vision	October 15, 16, 18, 29 November 5, 6, 12, 13,18 2019
Plan of Open Government	December 12th, 2019.January 12th 2020
A week for The Colombian Amazon	February 18th to 22nd of 2020
Presentation of results Amazon Vision	September 4th, September 10th
Strategic Planning for the Administrative region of the Amazon	November 11th, 2020
Dialogues on Deforestation	September 1st 2022

4.6. RESULTS

4.6.1. The Pilar Indigena (Amazon Vision)

The Pilar Indigena comprises several projects concerning forest conservation, sustainable agriculture and non-timber products formulated by Amazonian indigenous peoples under the jurisdictional REDD+ program called Amazon Vision. Amazonian indigenous identity is a central concern in the Pilar Indigena. Among indigenous actors it is common to find assertions that this identity is built upon the Origin Law. The Origin Law refers to the orally transmitted rules that direct land use and food production, culture, the transmission of knowledge, the organization of societies and families, and relations with non-indigenous

actors. Many indigenous actors attribute the subjugation of indigenous communities to the perceived erosion of Origin law. An indigenous official reflects:

> You know… tools, gizmos, the cellphone, crops we didn't know, come from outside and our people started to forget our language, the ways to cultivate, of cooking, the medicines… (Interviewee 04, June 2018)

The idea of recovering indigenous identity and the Origin Law is shared across the indigenous projects of the Pilar Indigena. A core orientation of these projects is to counter identity loss through nurturing self-government and indigenous culture. The premise of the projects is that previous interventions were detrimental to Amazonian indigenous identities. An indigenous leader put it in the following manner:

> NGOs, the state, and other cooperation agencies … bring more problems than solutions and their money remains with them or their collaborators …. This money is for their ideas and hampers our indigenous identity which goes beyond the ways of producing, governing and healing.
> Interviewee 06, June 2018

This indigenous leader is strongly asserting that external interventions came with alien ideas that kept indigenous communities dependent on the state and external agencies. Thus, indigenous authorities looked within the projects of the Pilar Indigena for support for collective indigenous identity: everyday tools for traditional land management, cooking appliances, and support for building a shared sacred place. These materials are key to "…maintain our community cohesive, living and acting as our ancestors… centered in the benefits of the community instead of the individual profit…" reflects an indigenous leader (Interviewee 5, December, 2019)

The Pilar Indigena resulted from negotiations among the state and specially the OPIAC (the Colombian Amazonian Indigenous Organization). By prioritizing autonomous management and collective identity, indigenous organizations aim to achieve their ambitious political program. An indigenous official explains the political objective in the following manner:

> We aim for indigenous nations that coexist with the Colombian state, not that belong to them... ruled by their own government and finance, organized along their own cultures and system of education, a nation with its own collective identity.
> (Interviewee 02, December 2019)

Thus, the quote exemplifies the resistance to state's alienation, and the autonomy pursued by indigenous peoples. However, the collective identity had to be negotiated. Funders asked for the protection of water, forests and sustainable land management practices, thus, indigenous identity was framed in those terms. Indigenous groups are constantly described in the official documents of the Amazon Vision, and self-referenced by indigenous groups, as "natural-carers" - with an "ancestral" lifestyle and "depositaries of ancestral knowledge" as . The Pilar Indigena had to align funders' imaginaries of the Amazon (as threatened forest) with those of 62 indigenous Amazonian cultures to form one single Amazonian (indigenous) identity (Andoke et al., 2023).

Accommodating funder's requests via reshaping identity was not a novel experience. Indigenous identity is the cornerstone of the political struggle of indigenous peoples in Colombia, so identities have had to abide to funders' terms to access funds already in the past (Zambrano-Cortes and Behagel, 2023). Hence, environmental "jargon" is routinely

incorporated in the rhetoric of indigenous leaders, as the below example from an interview

with a leader of the *Andoque* community shows:

> [With the project] we looked to strengthen autonomy and self-government…
> because self-government is part of the conservation of our forest in the Amazon
> and environmental governance (…) The project provided the malocas to each of
> our settlements, a place to share… but also a place to value culture and self-
> government (…).We are our territory, we have a forest to conserve, we have an
> ancestral knowledge and we want that the other civilization, the other science of
> the whites is shared with us because we have ancestral knowledge of inhabiting
> the forest and sustainable use of our natural resource
> Interviewee 20, July 2022

The formation of indigenous identity in relation to state projects is a crucial element for both

the long-term indigenous political agenda of self-determination and the environmental

agenda of REDD+ supporting the Pilar Indigena. To build the Amazonian collective indigenous

identity, a wide variety of projects ha been agreed upon that mix and merge support for

"traditional" activities with technicisms, practices and knowledges of (state) conservation

science. Activities specifically focus on traditional indigenous practices including the

provision of infrastructure, the *maloca* [The ceremonial building], the *chagra* [the small

agricultural form of production], the exchange of seeds, and in a broader sense the role of

women in family care. Several projects intertwine local needs with environmental concepts

and Western notions of community-based enterprises, ecotourism, or forest restoration.

Furthermore, surveillance and capacity building activities are agreed upon to monitor the

sustainable management of the collective land.

The Pilar Indigena narrative emphasizes the protection of indigenous knowledge and

practices as linked to the protection of forest and connects those to indigenous identity.

Testimonies from the projects argue that the aim is to "…go back to roots", to "de-westernize", and to "remember and rescue" the indigenous knowledge and practices lost due to cattle ranching to enable environmental conservation. A woman participating in a special project on the role of women describes this process of reintroducing indigenous practices and hence identity:

> We found that many women did not know about the *chagra (domestic harvest plot)*, they never went to the *chagra* and did not know how to harvest, neither the ecological calendar nor do (they) know (how) to cultivate and process yuca…we also rescued seeds, we have lost many seeds of the chagra due to many factors… With the project I could learn all the autochthone knowledge, the gastronomy and the utensils for it. (Interviewee 24, July 2022)

The above exemplifies how environmental ideas support the re-constitution of indigenous identities and knowledge practices. Cepek (2011) already provided a similar example in Ecuador where conservation projects leverage Cofan peoples ambitions. The projects of Pilar Indigena provided the opportunity to "…recover an Indigeneity long time lost", as a Coreguaje leader explains, and modernize this traditional subject into a political subject that directly connects to national and international environmental policy agendas. In that way, through relating to environmental knowledge, practices and discourses, indigenous identity becomes a powerful concept resonating with Western actors and global political agendas.

4.6.2. The Biocorridor Choco-Darien

The REDD+ project "Biocorridor Choco-Darien" has since 2010 been used by nine afrodescendant councils under the major council called COCOMASUR to create an Afro-American identity related to care of the environment. Already before the introduction of REDD+, state recognition of their collective property in 2005 prompted the COCOMASUR community to make efforts to secure the long-term survival of the newly gained territory. An interviewee describes their political project around afrodescendancy:

> Afrodescendancy was the necessary vehicle to gain rights, so since land was titled to us [2005], it became the axis of COCOMASUR to build upon the ancestral land. REDD+ arrived a couple of years later [2009] and we saw an opportunity to foster the ancestral ways of living tightly with the forest and its sustainable use…People were dispersed by that time because of the armed conflict…so why not return to the land and believe again in living as our ancestors, living autonomously…
> (Interview 25, January 2023).

 "Afrodescendancy" coincided among interviewees as the necessary element to gain land rights, and thus important to nurture further. At the same time, this collective identity was threatened by armed displacement, mining, and cattle ranching. A member of the forest monitoring team reflects that the arrival of REDD+ coincided with the needs of the community to ground collective identity and rights in material means (Interviewee 29). The practices of REDD+ then provided the means to recover such collective identity as another council member recalls:

> After obtaining the collective property, we started to think about ways to leave this to next generations… to conserve forest, water and nature is also to nourish our identity and traditions, the way our ancestors used to value and use the forest… so we saw in REDD+ a way to strengthen our collective project.
> Interviewee 28, January 2023

COCOMASUR hence conceives a long-term project of subject-making through the REDD+ project. This subjectivity of afrodescendant is tied to ancestral ruling and self-recognition, and the conservation of the standing forest. The standing forest is a model that "generates richness from the interaction of nature and people [and not from its exploitation]" (Interviewee 21). This identity aligns well with new environmental policy narratives, and counteracts identities tied to cattle ranching and extractive mining, which are associated

with deforestation, contamination of water and a model of development detrimental to communitarian survival. An interviewee summarizes:

> After land titling we agreed upon all the councils that neither mining nor cattle was welcome here in our territory…industries brought violence, dismembered the community and damaged our legacy, material and spiritual, …we want the forest and the peace that our ancestors inherited.
> (Interviewee 27, January 2023)

This view that collective identity served to resist external actors, state or corporate, is strongly affirmed by other interviewees. The testimony also suggests that state recognition was not enough, but the overall legacy needed material support, "something to fight for" in the words of the Major Council Leader.

In the "Biocorridor Choco-Darien" project, collective subjectivity is supported by modern forest monitoring technologies. As part of the REDD+ project, GPS based mapping and monitoring provided the means to foster the new collective identity, and helped to build the afrodescendant identity:

Our forest has been losing cover each day … our neighbors are cattle ranchers that were clearcutting our forest … with (forest)monitoring we were able to stop the invasion of cattle ranchers and expel small-scale miners external to our community … with monitoring and the technical capacities we were able to demonstrate to the community that defending the forest is also to defend our identity and our rights, and we earn more conserving than deforesting.

(Afrodescendant interviewee 26, January 2023)

The testimony shows that forest monitoring became a self-affirmation tool. For the afrodescendant community, forest monitoring became essential to appropriate the land they claimed to be their own, and to defend it against external actors. Within the REDD+ project, patrolling is done on a weekly basis by the team in charge, in addition, there are community walks in which all members of the community participate. A member of the monitoring team explains:

> We have lost for many reasons the practices of our grandparents of walking two or three days all together through our territory. They walked to assign this land to one person or the other, or to ask why they did this or why they cut the other tree. It was a way to check our collective rules and agreements, and helped to control the autonomy of the territory so other people external from the community did not enter. With REDD+ we recovered this practice. We have a forest team in charge of that, they do it daily and check where we can use some of the forest. We have been supported technically and we have GPS and knowledge to make parcels. …. it is a beautiful exercise to recover bonds and to appropriate the territory, the forest and the water.
> (Interviewee 22, January 2023)

This testimony shows the manifold aims that the REDD+ technical protocols may fulfill. "Monitoring is for defense and to demand", mentioned a major councilor. REDD+ not only works for law enforcement, but is also understood as a tool to nurture a sense of collectivity and to recover traditions tied to an afrodescendant identity in order to build a political subject. Geographic information systems thus legitimize local claims of land rights towards the Colombian government and nurture the self-recognition of the community as consisting of subjects bearing unique collective rights.

In addition to through monitoring practice, the REDD+ project materializes subject making via jobs and income. REDD+ projects pay forest patrols, councilors and administrative teams. This could not happen without translating REDD+ premises into the collective project. As an interviewee pointed out, it was critical for the afrodescendant communities that knowledge and skills remained with them to support their vision of safeguarding traditions and controlling their territory. The entwinement of technology and identity is illustrated by the motto of "making the technical communitarian and the collective technical", in the words of a representative of COCOMASUR, which denotes how technical forestry elements are linked to negotiating environmental subjectivity.

To conclude, REDD+ materializations such as monitoring, reporting and verification sustained the project of nurturing a collective afrodescendant subjectivity. Specifically, REDD+ forest monitoring was implemented in a manner to mimic traditions of land management relevant for the collective endeavor. Identity categories such as the technician, the afrodescendant, and the collective were re-negotiated through mobilizing technological and financial elements of a global environmental framework. The collective subjectivity is therefore key to both maintain land rights vis-à-vis the state and to uphold alternative ways of being, based on a constantly communicated close and traditional relationship to the (standing) forest that also follows modern norms of environmental protection.

4.6.3. The Finca Amazonica

Finca Amazónica is a major project to support peasant movements in the Caqueta region. Since 2006, the regional Vicarage of the Catholic Church intertwines catholic doctrine with

agroforestry systems to nurture an environmental subjectivity based on the life teachings of Jesus Christ and on self-recognition as Amazonian peasant. The identity model moreover follows the apostolical exhortation of Pope Francis "to search and self-incarnate within the Amazon to provide to the church new faces (Christians) with Amazonian traits" (Francis, 2020, 47). This exhortation further explains that Amazonian biodiversity is essential to proclaim Christian values. One parishioner describes Amazonian identity during a ceremony of the Finca Amazónica as follows:

> … regardless of the place you come from … by cultivating and building the Caquetanian identity, the Amazonian peasant … it is something that is not forgotten … that characterizes us, identifies and support us along the way
> (Interviewee 15, September 2022).

In contrast with the cases of the Pilar Indigena and Choco-Darien Biocorridor that aim to recover and sustain a lost identity, the Finca Amazonica seeks to build a new Amazonian identity. This Amazonian peasant identity is built upon migrant narratives and Christian ceremonies. Special masses are built along Christian symbolisms that include everyday objects of peasantry in the Amazon: fire, pilon, hoe, and hat, together with Amazonian flowers, plants and fruits. Peasant imaginaries relating to migration are reinvigorated to build rapport amongst parishioners. The ceremony presents the hard life faced by migrants from the Andean region moving to the Amazon during the mid-twentieth century and the struggles of the following generations. An interviewee recalls:

> I have been here 42 years ... this was only jungle which we started to cut to claim land ... the state provided some money and tools at the beginning but it was insufficient to settle a good land, we found that this was tougher (than in the Andean lifestyle), and with my wife and a child we constantly watched with despair the *jungle* and questioned whether we should return. (Interviewee 18, September 2022)

The new Testament's parable of the Sower and Christ's suffering is used to nurture the collective subjectivity. In anniversary masses, a small road with dirt, soil, and stones is built in the middle of the room to represent the different stages of the parable and also to illustrate the migrant's road lived by generations of settler families. Each stage is accompanied by exhortations to peasant struggles for land and justice; parts of the gospel connects to the Pope's 2015 encyclical on protecting earth (Laudato Si') and the UN's declaration of peasants' rights of 2018. In this manner, the mass not only fosters Christian values, but also supports social mobilization against extractivism and creates an Amazonian identity.

The Amazonian identity aims to counteract the feeling of uprootedness of the peasants. Uprootedness is voiced in diverse ways in social media of Finca Amazónica, and explained by a peasant not belonging to Finca Amazónica:

> You know...they (indigenous people) ... you see them speak ... and you can see this feeling of belonging of something that is inside them ... of attachment to their land ... we in our hamlet we don't see that, people do not care, and everyone is on their own. (Interviewee 14, September 2022)

The uprootedness felt by Amazonian peasants is both historical and contemporary. Historically, political violence that characterized Colombia during the twentieth century

produced displacement and migration of Andean peasants towards the Northwest of the Amazon. Later, during the 1970s, agrarian policies incentivized colonization and settlements in the Amazon under the premises of modernity and progress, leaving poverty and hopelessness behind (Molano, 1989). The peasants arriving in the Amazon hold Andean premises of taming nature to survive, but became overwhelmed by the Amazonian ecology. The Andean productive model of the 1950s of cut and sow did often not succeed in the new environment, leaving first cattle ranching and later coca crops as the only productive model, to the detriment of the Amazonian forest (Torres, 2018).

The collective identity of the Amazonian peasant serves to resist economic models imposed in the region by state and non-state actors. These include the introduction of illegal crops (coca) in the 1990s and the upsurge of political violence, related to the intertwinement among state, para-state, communist guerrillas and narcotraffic which serve as backdrop to social conflict (Acero and Thomson, 2021 ; Rodríguez and Rodríguez, 2018). In the 2010s, resistance raised against Emerald Energy - the State-supported oil company - and by extension against the extractivist economic model.

In the last twenty years, rural movements have organized protest, raids, and mobilizations against state policies of coca eradication and oil extraction, which were in turn characterized by violence and killings, and often failed to settle social conflicts (Rojas-Bahamón et al., 2021). Altogether, this resulted in the state stigmatizing any grassroot-based organization,

wilting trust, and atomizing families (Acero and Thomson, 2021; Ramírez and Ramírez, 2022).

An interviewee summarizes his experience:

> Let me tell you, petroleum has been for years a threat to the Amazonian peasantry. It threatens the water and nature from which we peasants make our daily living. It threatens our community because it attempts to weaken our organizations and unity through death threats, bribes and violence. We have peacefully demonstrated, refused the entrance of oil companies and technicians and all Caqueta joined their voice to protect water and territory, the support of the Amazonian peasant.
> (Interview 16, September 2022)

The uprootedness and community atomization shared among many of the Caquetenean inhabitants is accompanied by a feeling of uncertainty because of armed conflict the unstable income and isolation of some peasants. "We have nothing here, except our families and land" reflects a peasant from Solano, a settlement located four hours by boat from the main city. Hence, the Finca Amazonica appeals to this sense of isolation to create a unity among settlements.

The Finca Amazonica project nurtures the Amazonian peasant identity to counter the sense of isolation and uprootness, for example through small-scale agroforestry projects. These projects aim to promote family-based agriculture by mixing rotary cattle ranching with agroforestry and the use of (non-wood) native forest products. It strives for a peasant identity that builds upon ideas of sustainable use of the land, of local products and community support. A volunteer of the archdioceses explains:

> The idea is that in a small place, the rural family unity, everything is produced, and no one depends on external products. We prove that the model imposed by cattle ranching – that is based on the premise that the Amazon is unproductive and that we have to bring everything from outside – is a lie … we prove that we can produce everything (naming vegetable and fruits) to sustain a family and a dignified life. (Interviewee 19, September 2022)

The small production model of Finca Amazonica resists the state-led models of monocultures (such as palm oil) that have been slowly introduced in the region during the last three decades. Corporate agroindustries are viewed as detrimental to the environment and the rural collectivity because it hampers the self-sufficiency and community cohesion, affirm the interviewees. The ecological principles of production of the Finca Amazonica are positioned against the state and corporate development models. Moreover, they are justified by the Pope's call to take care of the "common house" (Francis, 2015). Christian symbols such as the prayer of "Our Father" are transformed to incite social mobilization and political resistance. A transformed prayer "Ecological Our Father" interlocks parts of the original prayer with exhortations to care for the water, to decry the ecological damages of multinationals, and to call for *buen-vivir* and socio-ecological justice. A chant raised during a national strike, where the vicarage helped to organize peasant mobilizations to the capitals, says:

> Man: Water for life!
> Group: Not for death!
> Man: with Jesus we will open a gap!
> Group: Because water is a right!
> Man: We live, we feel!
> Group responds: Caqueta is here!
> All together: Hey foe, join to the crowd, water is a right, yes sir!
> (Footage Archive of peasant Mobilizations in 2021)

Raids and demonstrations are also an important element to build the sense of community among rural inhabitants and to externalize opposition. The prospective of oil expansion in the Amazon, incarnated in the Emerald Energy Company, is seen as threat not only for the environment, but also for peasants' collective identity. Thus, organized demonstrations are accompanied by Christian rites and sharing of food.

The Finca Amazonica further nourishes collective work by organizing peasant markets and an exchange of native seeds between neighboring villages. Locally produced vegetables and products such as cheese and panela (solidified sugar cane juice) are offered in the local peasant markets. A peasant interviewee refers to this local economy as follows:

> No, I don't sell too much, everything is produced on my farm and I offer panela when I need other products… I have everything and all I get is from the same people of the town. (Interviewee 13, September 2022)

The peasant markets are organized any other day in different municipalities and epitomize collectivity, generosity, and self-organization articulated in the allegory of the common house of the Pope's encyclical "*Laudato Si'*" (Francis, 2015a). The Amazonian peasant identity builds upon solidarity to restore social relations atomized by the armed conflict with the state and driven by large-scale business interests. Collective mobilization moreover protects the common house against oil companies and consumerism that threatens God's legacy on earth with pollution and contamination. Similar findings by Mills-Novoa et al. (2023) show how climate adaptation projects are reworked to counter the advance of the mining sector while van Teijlingen (2016) in Ecuador discuss the adoption of environmental

subjectivities to counter territorializations of extractive industries. In the case of Finca Amazonica the common house, God's creation, is safeguarded once the family, as Christian sacrament, is protected through water, land rights and food sovereignty.

4.7.   DISCUSSION

This paper presented the formation of collective subjectivities of non-state actors within the context of environmental political agendas, focusing on the diversity of practices used and adapted to achieve such collective subjectivities in three cases. In all cases, collective subjectivities were built and nurtured in reference to an identity, either historical, imposed, or aspirational. Specifically, particular versions of indigenous, afro-descendant, and peasant identity were referenced to respond to state policies and the expansion of extractive practices.

A collective subjectivity was achieved by interweaving environmental elements with traditional, legal, and religious elements at discursive and material levels, to create an environmental subject that at times appears contradictory (Jakobsen, 2022). In the indigenous case, indigenous Amazonian authorities support Western imaginaries of both the Amazon and indigeneity (see also Zambrano-Cortes et al 2023), homogenizing the needs and cultural differences within Amazonian indigenous peoples and thus reinforcing existing North-South relations. At the same time, afrodescendant communities use these imaginaries to strengthen or bring back traditional knowledge and practices. And we find that Amazonian

peasants interweave Catholic references to "our house" with their own social histories and political struggles.

The phenomenon where local communities strategically connect "fragments" of historically available national and local identities with globalized discourses and policies is visible in the rich set of subjectivation technologies that were used in the three cases to form new collective identities. These technologies draw on cultural, political, and spiritual practices, including the creation of new (community based) administrative responsibilities to conserve forests, the adoption of new technologies, and the mobilization of political action. For instance, the Finca Amazonica case is illustrative for the skillful cultural and religious rituals the peasant movement has created to align their way of life with a new collective environmental subjectivity. Furthermore, Finca Amazonica illustrates how localized markets and political marches can foster Amazonian peasant pride. In the Choco-Darien case, collective monitoring by rural communities are used to promote a new collective identity, while indigenous projects under the Pilar Indigena combined requests for rescuing traditional practices of cultivating, weaving and social organization with demands for modern technologies. These techniques are in line with the observations of community forest initiatives in India by Singh (2013) and forestry projects around Mapuche territories in Chile by González-Hidalgo and Zografos (2017) that rituals, collective walks, ceremonies, routinized practices of care, and reterritorialization can be used to promote a sense of belonging and environmental attachment.

The cultivation of collective subjects often results in individuals becoming acquiescent to state or corporate interests through techniques of subjection. A prevalent method of implementing these techniques is through participation. As analyzed by Mills-Novoa et al. (2020) and Noroña (2022), participation technologies are designed to produce subjects who internalize the logics and practices of the state. Corporations are equally devoted in transforming subjectivities. For example, Frederiksen and Himley (2020) demonstrate that extractivist corporations deploy modes of subjection through selective participation and state-like roles of provider of public services. Similarly, van Teijlingen (2016) finds that in Ecuador, education plays a crucial role in reproducing modes of subjection and creating subjects aligned with the mining industry. The article further highlights that the transformation of subjects can also occur through the modification of environments, which offer facilities and benefits. These benefits, however, introduce dilemmas, as Jakobsen (2002) discusses in a case in Colombia, between resisting the allure of these benefits, or embracing them and becoming subjected individuals.

This article shows that subjectivation can be used by communities to counter the influence of state and corporate power. While environmental discourses and practices are important to enable collective identity, the subjectivation techniques equally carry elements of subjection to state monitoring and state bureaucracies in them. While the catholic mass of the Finca Amazonica enables the creation of a collective peasant identity, it also excludes alternative identities not rooted in formalized religion. Collective forest monitoring in the case of Biocorridor Choco-Darien moreover became a strategy to claim control over

community territory but was also serves to monitor community behavior within the settlements, likely ostracizing dissent and benefiting the central council.

The disciplining and constraining consequences that come with subjectivation techniques that aim to counter state and corporate power partially can be traced to the historical intersections with identities and institutions from which collective subjectivities are drawn to maintain political relevance and legitimacy (Anthias and Hoffmann, 2021, Bose et al. 2012, Noroña 2022). Collective subjectivities have aligned with colonial powers and central state driven initiatives in the past, as highlighted by the works of Scott (1998) and Agrawal (2005), among others. Erazo (2010) shows the emergence of indigenous-based enterprises – which could be interpreted as indigenous emancipation in capitalist terms – whereas Buu Sao (2024) shows that communal enterprises were run by indigenous groups but led by extractivist corporations. In line with that, Nepomuceno et al. (2019) shows that community-based restoration can serve to legitimize extractive industries in the eyes of local communities.

The ambiguity we find that comes with adopting REDD+ and other environmental discourses to further local aims and interests while reproducing state and corporate practices is reported on more often in environmental conservation (Benjaminsen et al., 2013; Mukono and Sambaiga, 2021). For Colombia, Rodriguez & Boelens (2015) show that payment of ecosystem services has been able to rapidly create consensus amongst diverse social groups, yet it also creates subjects who conform to state ideas and legislation. In a different but

related manner, engagement with REDD+ activities has been found to encourage community members to access the market for wood and other non-wood products more efficiently (Gutiérrez-Zamora et al., 2023; Mukono and Sambaiga, 2022; Setyowati, 2020), and thus to adapt to globalized markets. Arguably, such adaptations to state or corporate schemes come with the risk of undermining alternative subjectivities and strategies. For instance, social movements envisaging alternative trajectories of development and change, and resorting to strategies of direct protest and resistance, may be coopted and constrained. Hence, new collective identities may provide communities with new subjectivities that create access to national and international policies and resources, but at the same time limit their ability to represent diverse voices and perspectives (Dupuits et al 2020), or to outright oppose such interventions.

Notwithstanding the dangers of subjection and cooptation, we argue that "modernized" collective identities provide new leverage points for advancing "old" alternative political agendas through the specific technologies they adopt, including rituals, technologies, and political practices. Teijlingen & Dupuits (2021), Staggenborg, S. (2013), Lederer & Höhne (2019), and Ulloa et al (2021) all argue that bureaucratization, technification, and professionalization of social movements may be risky, but that they also provide alternatives to legitimize collective claims, reach new channels of communication, and can transform long lasting conflicts between the state and rural communities by building upon shared grounds. This also touches on the questions of reciprocity – meaning how states, the international

environmental community, or corporations respond to such identities, in the interplay of various interests and power strategies.

The revitalization and redefinition of collective rural identities – in response or opposition to external conceptions of environment and development – is the common pattern across all three case studies analyzed in this paper. It raises challenging questions about how newly formulated environmental subjectivities rooted in historical rural identities will evolve in the future, and whom, what interests, or what ideas these identities will ultimately serve. Understanding the consequences of collective environmental subjectivation in the interplay of state and international policies with local communities and markets remains a highly interesting endeavor for future research, to which this article offers a modest contribution.

4.8.   CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we have shown that collective subjectivities can be understood as a source of power. This power follows from building collective ways of relating, knowing and feeling with forests, and enables communities to cope with, and at the same time resist to, external pressure and alienation. Colombian indigenous, peasant and afrodescendant people have for a long time related their identities to forest conservation in order to resist extractive industries or large-scale cattle ranching. Environmental projects provide the political setting for this. The collective subjectivities we analyzed operate along a continuum between conforming to policy and state projects and maintaining local autonomy. This ambivalence

of the created new identities, and the tension it brings across, is a key finding of the three case studies.

If the assertion that environmental subjectivities have become the *sine qua non* of politics (Anand and Mulyani, 2020; Asiyanbi et al., 2019; Bose et al., 2012; Choi, 2020; Cortes-Vazquez and Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2018; Erazo, 2010) is correct, the newly formed subjectivities we have assessed hold potential to reshape Colombian politics. Specifically, these subjectivities endorse particular ways of understanding and managing the environment in opposition to extractivism as an exploitative way of relating with nature, but also in contrast to strict conservation and "hands-off" approaches. Building collective subjectivity is therefore not only about a struggle against a state or an economic activity, but also a fight for being, feeling and becoming. Such intricacies point to broader debates in the Latin American context of the politics of knowledge, identity and furthermore the Pluriverse, the multiple and overlapping ways of relating with nature that has been described for this continent (Escobar, 2018a; Reiter, 2020).

The cases analyzed in this paper, finally, shed light on debates about post-development. They are exemplary for the subjectivities that are created around narratives that intermingle environmental protection, local (rural) identities and alternative pathways for development in Colombia and beyond. And yet, many of those initiatives around the world remain unrecognized and are stigmatized through a long history of state-led, hierarchical mode of nature conservation (Alvarez and Coolsaet, 2020, Lenzi, et al 2023). In Colombia, for over three decades, many similar initiatives to the ones analyzed in this paper have emerged. The

Colombian government is currently advocating for a transition from an extractivist to a bioeconomic model of development, which does include conservation. The subjectivities mapped in this paper provide multiple possible connection points for such a state vision, including a vision that recognizes the various alternative ways of relating with nature expressed by the environmental identities observed in this paper rather than trying to replace them through state subjugation. These localized movements thus provide a potentially powerful reference point for conservation and sustainable resource use in opposition to larger drivers of capitalist development.

To conclude, collective environmental identities evolve in response, and dialectical with, superordinate environmental and development projects. They can be deployed as a strategy of resistance but may also serve as an access point for localized environmental development that recognizes non-state subjectivities. The creativity that has enabled the construction of those collective subjectivities, their being rooted in socio-cultural history and land use traditions, and their ability to respond to major state or business-driven discourses and policies of exploitation, gives confidence that rural environmental subjectivities in Colombia can and will play a significant role in Colombia's struggle for more sustainable development pathways in the future.

CHAPTER 5. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND FINAL REMARKS

Since 2012, Colombia has witnessed a progressive transformation in its governance structures, aligning with global trends in environmental politics. Similar to other developing nations, participation of international aid agencies and climate-focused entrepreneurs entered the country to promote bioeconomic models of development. The premise of such models is to capitalize on the nation's rich biodiversity while preserving its standing forests.

Recognizing that controlling deforestation is a global responsibility, preventing deforestation of tropical rain forests has been a prime aim of international donors in the last decade (Qin et al., 2022). Given such financial prospects, the Colombian government has encouraged both REDD+ voluntary certification schemes and bilateral carbon trading initiatives. Public and private support has fostered the dissemination and endorsement of these mechanisms pursuing the enhancement of sustainability. Amidst these processes, developing and implementing REDD+ in the Colombian context has however resulted in some counterintuitive outcomes, posing questions on whether the instrument either predominantly serves entrenched power structures or whether it can reform forest governance.

This thesis investigated the outcomes of REDD+ from 2015 to 2022 in Colombia in the light of both national and local political discourses and politics. Given the challenges and shortcomings shown in the literature regarding its stated goals, including underperformance, unforeseen outcomes, and failing to deliver (Arts et al., 2019; Corbera & Schroeder, 2017;

Loft et al., 2017), this thesis considered the ambiguous and conflicting results of REDD+ in local dynamics.

This thesis draws upon Foucault's philosophical insights into the notion of power. The original contribution to knowledge is to present REDD+ and its conflicts as a manifestation of a power struggle. Power reconfiguration is discernible in the contested definition of benefits, objectives, and solutions that the instrument brings about (Chapter 2). The processes of defining and enforcing conservation targets (Chapter 3) and defining subjective consciousness and collective identity (Chapter 4) through nature conservation embody power reconfiguration.

To understand REDD+ as a manifestation of power, I (re-)used several concepts from Foucault's works on governmentality. Scholars have employed Foucault's work under different terminologies such as environmentality (Agrawal, 2005), eco-governmentality (Valdivia, 2015), environmental governmentality (Fletcher & Cortes-Vazquez, 2020), environmental rule (McElwee, 2016), or green governmentality (Rutherford, 2007). This literature offers insight into how states have justified interventions in society by utilizing forests and the environment. To develop this idea in Colombia, and to make it accessible for analysis, I apply Foucault's notions of political rationalities, frontier governmentality and collective technologies of the self to the empirical material collected for this thesis.

This thesis asserts that forest conservation is a mean, not the end, of societal transformation. By using Foucault's elements of governmentality and technology of the self I attempt to explain the contradictory meanings, spaces, and subjects incited by REDD+ in Colombia. I argue that state and forest communities have used activities of controlling deforestation to extend power. This implies the use of knowledges and various strategic practices to exercise control over land and people.

Across the empirical chapters, REDD+ outcomes showed a recurring pattern, depicting it as a tool that is entwined with conflicts. The thesis shows that conflicts of REDD+ first stem from older political and socio-economic conflicts. Second, these conflicts revolve around the use of land, the purpose of the forest, and who may decide on both (Chapter three). Third, and more importantly, those conflicts aim to reconfigure the relations between the State and local groups (Chapter two and four).

In Colombia, REDD+ has shown to alter the definition of relations over resources and land and the relations of power among state and non-state actors. The thesis's chapters reveal that REDD+ allowed non-state actors to include new meanings to the mechanism paving the way to reconfigure the relations of power. In other words, the mechanism disturbed what Castree (2013) calls the semiosphere, the ensemble of discourses, signs and symbols being available at a certain time and space to represent nature-society relations. A semiosphere maintains a seemly state of stasis or little change until a resource-rich instrument intrudes. At such moment, state and non-state actors literally swarm out into the semiosphere to seize

the financial and political opportunities opened by REDD+. Actor's knowledges, practices and representations are recycled and adjusted in view of the new mechanism to make use of the promise. Engagement with REDD+ then assembles and circulates a novel regime of truth which propels the new attached meanings. In this manner, REDD+ became a vehicle for different Colombian actors to actively pursue their preferred political objectives.

Implementing REDD+ in Colombia was a complex process. Undergirded with local and historical meanings, evolving interpretations, and entangled with various discourses, introducing REDD+ did not entail a straightforward translation of its components into the local context. Instead, it was a multifaceted process where local and historical meanings percolated into the REDD+ framework. The opposite also occurred, as REDD+ permeated state and non-state actors' discourses. This infusion of meanings played a crucial role in shaping the implementation trajectory of REDD+ in Colombia. Local events influenced the course that followed, as much as fresh interpretations often connected to changes in the government (Chapter 1).

In the next sections of this chapter, I first answer the three research questions articulated in the introduction chapter. Then, I continue with describing both theoretical and empirical contributions this thesis makes to REDD+ studies and to the governmentality literature. I conclude by instigating different meanings of forest conservation interventions. I encourage to embrace conflict as a productive force, and to recognize power within conservation initiatives, in the face of structural conditions that may impede realizing these objectives.

5.1.   HOW HAS REDD+ AFFECTED FOREST DISCOURSES AND PRACTICES?

The first research question asks how has REDD+ affected forest discourses and practices. The starting assumption of REDD+ implementation is that it would influence both the debate and practice of forest governance. The results indicate that the mechanism influenced the ways the state designs and practices environmental governance. Chapter two, for example, shows that REDD+ influenced the selection of the Amazon region and defined controlling deforestation as the form of governance intervention.

When we analyze the impact of REDD+ on forest discourses and practices, two specific processes stand out. First, interestingly, previous existing forest discourses transformed in response to the anti-deforestation narrative of REDD+. These older discourses became what I label "deforestized". Chapters two and three show the progressive engulfing of deforestation discourses by local politics. This peaked in 2019 when society acted, thought, and perceived forest issues in deforestation terms. Reports of historical deforestation in 2016; the first disbursement to the Amazon Vision program in 2017; an outstanding media coverage throughout 2018; civic society's' mobilizations and legal actions against the Colombian state in 2019; all contributed to the attention on deforestation. In line with the results, deforestation became the opportune problem to attach previous existing political concerns to. Environmental interests over deforestation were the vehicle to transport these concerns into the policy debate. For instance, state actors claimed guerrilla activities caused deforestation; indigenous groups explained deforestation as resulting from invading their collective territory by non-indigenous actors and loss of ancestral knowledge;

and peasants communities argued there were no economic alternatives to deforestation. Deforestation had become connected to the political interests of a heterogenous group of actors.

Connected to this discursive dominance of the deforestation narrative in Colombian environmental politics, political attention focused on territories where deforestation was supposed to be the highest, the Amazon. This resulted in manifold capacity building processes to make deforestation visible and to create awareness, and pilot projects to curb deforestation and conserve biodiversity in that region. Land use was re-ordered and re-organized along high deforestation spots. Public policy envisioned and built new products and supply chains that are free of deforestation, while also reforming environmental laws and primarily enforcing them in deforestation hotspots.

Next to REDD+ discourses becoming centered around the idea of zero deforestation, they also "environmentalized" problems. Social concerns of floods, landslides, or even big questions of peace or counter insurgency were perceived and expressed through the lens of deforestation. Reversely, deforestation was understood in terms of rural inequalities of the Amazon. And even more, the forest became a reconciliation symbol during the peace agreement during 2016. The term "environmental peace" emerged and was supported by state and NGOs to denote their mutual objectives of reducing rural inequalities and safeguarding forest and biodiversity. As a result, the "Peace Forest" program was launched in 2017, attributing to the historical memory of the end of the long term violent conflict in

Colombia. Colombian forests were also championed during the COP21 in Paris to attract funding to the cause of global climate action and national peace. Moreover, Colombian debates for presidential election campaigns in 2018 focused on the causes and ways of controlling deforestation. Concerns about remnant insurgent groups causing deforestation created an "environmental bubble" in which military operations could take place as shown in chapter three, a disguised counter insurgency strategy.

At the local level, since 2013, REDD+ re-instigated discussions on participation of rural and ethnic communities in environmental governance. Worries about self-determination, reduction of poverty and collective land tenure security became central issues during REDD+ workshops. In chapter four, it is shown how conservation and REDD+ discourses revitalize the ways politics is practiced, revealing land and food sovereignty problems. Setyowati (2020) demonstrates similar concerns in Aceh, Indonesia, where engaging with REDD+'s economic incentives is perceived as a way to address local demands regarding water scarcity and vulnerability to drought.

To my best of my knowledge, the detailed assessment of the intermingling of local discourses and REDD+ done in this thesis has no parallel in previous research. Researchers in the past have focused on implementing the characteristics of REDD+ and achieving national reforms in legal and technical systems—with a few exceptions. Concretely, Milne et al., 2016; Trench & Amico, 2019; van der Hoff et al., 2015 and Zelli et al., 2019 report similar social dynamics in their work. These authors show how REDD+ in other countries has revitalized old

discourses of forest marketization, supported centralization of forest governance, reinforced techno-managerial approaches of management, and stressed national autonomy and sovereignty concerns. Vijge et al. (2015) also found that the local discourses of REDD+ (e.g. what benefits, the outcome or even responsibilities) depend on pre-existing local discourses. REDD+ and local discourses encounter and support (and sometimes negate) each other, thus leading to different conceptualization of REDD+ across the world.

Overall, the results of the chapters indicate that the practice of forest governance has only been affected to a limited degree—compared to what was before. Chapter two shows that deforestation governance revitalized militarization and strengthened fortress conservation connected to fines, and at the same time encouraged the expansion of markets which are the historical trends of practicing forest governance. Despite the new discursive frames, and material practices brought by REDD+, there is little change in how forest conservation practiced in the forest before the mechanism in Colombian context. Rather, the results suggest that changes occur in both REDD+ itself and the national politics. All chapters show how the environmental discourses introduced by REDD+ fed political agendas of social movements, the state, and NGOs, mostly re-skinning national politics and thereby transforming the instrument itself.

5.2.   HOW DO DISCOURSES AND PRACTICES OF REDD+ INFLUENCE CONFLICTS IN FOREST GOVERNANCE?

The second research question of this thesis is about how discourses and practices of REDD+ influence conflicts. Many researchers and activists branded REDD+ as a source of conflicts because of its complexity and inherent contradictions linked to capitalism and global-local

coupling. However, the perturbances associated are not exclusively related to the instrument but stem from the political implications of the discourse and practices that REDD+ is situated in. These aspects include conflicts over development, land rights, and recognition, among others (Alusiola et al., 2021; Hunsberger et al., 2017; Patel et al., 2013). Such problems are common in development and conservation. Several authors noticed that these conflicts reemerge after new cycles of climate change policies and when interventions start (Fernández-Manjarrés et al., 2021; Fleischman et al., 2021; Gilmore & Buhaug, 2021), with REDD+ being a notable one.

Conflicts relating to REDD+ in Colombia occur in various domains. In the environmental domain, disagreements arise over the causes of deforestation and its solutions (Chapter 2). Additionally, the purpose of a landscape (i.e. forest conservation vs cattle ranching) pits stakeholders against defining an environmental problem, making deforestation itself a point of contention. Conflict also arises because of militarization of National Parks and as a clash between different approaches to economic development, as chapters three and four highlight. Chapter three emphasizes the resource frontier as the most extreme manifestation of conflict, a clash between the past forms of using the forest (deforestation) and new modes of forest governance (conserving the standing forest).

It is important to note that the conflicts that REDD+ triggers depend on local histories and interactions with unexpected events (Nightingale, 2018). As a complex system, forest governance exhibits path dependency, so conflict take different shapes depending on how

they were addressed in the past. The results of chapter two and three show how the Amazon Vision, a jurisdictional REDD+ approach, revitalized historical conflicts with the regional National parks (Cusack et al., 2021).

Sometimes not one but a series of interrelated events triggered a conflict state. Chapter three shows that peace-agreements and the first results of the REDD+ subnational program of Amazon Vision coincided in time and place to focus political attention on deforestation. Chapter three shows how following the retreat of the FARC guerrilla during peace accords lead an increase in deforestation, which rise speculation and occupation of land. Conflict escalated after the military deployed operations to reduce deforestation, which worsened after an NGO sued the Colombian state, alleging negligence on environmental protection and requesting immediate action. Altogether, the seemly disconnected events created a fertile ground for conflict to escalate towards violence.

While historical processes are key to understanding present-day conflicts, this thesis shows that the influence of REDD+ on conflicts encompasses three additional aspects.

First, REDD+ disturbs power dynamics. REDD+ and any conservation intervention is a political act (Carpenter 2022) because it opens the arena to challenge power constellations. REDD+ alters the constellation of power within indigenous communities, settlers, traders, venture capitalists, conservationists, state officials, and so on. I call it a disturbance, rather than a

change in power relations because the struggle for power may bring undefined changes in power and sometimes, like with chapter three, violence.

Chapter two of this thesis describes how REDD+ scrambles local politics and how actors support one or another version of REDD+ to leverage political advantage. Furthermore, chapters three and four demonstrate how actors re-utilize REDD+ and environmental discourses and practices to empower collectivities and renegotiate relations with state and economic actors. Orihuela & Mendieta, 2021 and Llaque and Barletti (2021) find similar results in the Peruvian Amazon, where locals use conservation practices to adapt, resist, and reconfigure their living experiences within conservation programs.

Second, REDD+ might trigger conflicts because it relates to resource allocation and rights. The most common conflict accounted in the REDD+ literature is the conflict over land rights (A. Asiyanbi & Lund, 2020; A. P. Asiyanbi et al., 2019; Benjaminsen et al., 2013; Hoang et al., 2019; Isyaku, 2021; Mukono & Faustine Sambaiga, 2021). Next to that, decision-making rights are concerned, as chapter three shows with indigenous organizations negotiating funding of the Amazon Vision. Chapter four also shows the case of Afrodescendant and Peasant communities raising concerns about self-determination. In addition, Chapter three also accounts of the breach of land and civil rights because of the military operations imposed on high deforestation spots.

The third aspect in which REDD+ influences conflicts is by changing the ways of thinking and relating to nature. By prioritizing carbon-centric concepts and favoring tropical rain forests as the aim of conservation, REDD+ sidelines other forests and social values of forests. Chapter three shows the different means through which the state imposes REDD+ concepts, including through direct disciplinary tools (surveying and militarization) and through indirect instruments (capacity-building, economic incentives, and loans). The empirical chapters show how non-state actors also employed and transformed conservation measures in meaning under their worldviews and life aspirations. Chapter four shows that environmental discourses and practices aim to incite, creating political subjects and a new sense of belonging.

5.3.   HOW DOES REDD+ PRODUCE GOVERNABLE SPACES AND WHAT STRATEGIES INTERMEDIATE THIS?

The third research question relates to how REDD+ produces governable spaces. Chapter three discusses how space is at the center of political calculation. Although often portrayed as stateless and in the periphery of government, the chapter shows that the Northwestern Amazon is at the center of the political imaginations of international and state actors. In that chapter, I argue that emptying a space of existing meaning and subsequently endowing it with new meanings achieves a governable space. I show that several strategies intermediate this process, which I call technologies of peripheralization. These technologies entail 1) narrating a place as broken; 2) rendering space technical; 3) encapsulating local politics; and 4) employing demonstration projects. All work together to present a place as deviant and in need of policy interventions, i.e. to make it governable.

To begin, for the first technology, REDD+ creates a space for new policy measures by framing the territory as faulty and requiring repair. Chapter three demonstrates that the representations that circulated during 2017-2020 portrayed the Amazon as a peripheral territory in contrast to what is perceived as the center: Bogota, the normal and civilized metropolis. These representations are fed by discourses of the exuberance of the Amazon, the megadiversity of Colombia, and the threat of its disappearance because of deforestation, which enunciates the Northwestern Amazon as problematic. Chapter two moreover shows that the idea of the Amazon region as a biocultural and multi-threatened place is sustained by rationalities that find such utterances useful to legitimize specific types of interventions (i.e. mapping territories, regulate insurgencies). State actors find those interventions useful because they represent sources of funding for the Ministry of Environment. Indigenous organizations, however, find it useful to finance their political activities and to acquire recognition of their rights.

Second, REDD+ makes a place governable by creating and circulating technical information. After the enunciation of REDD+, via visions and reports, these had to be grounded in credible information, and space became governable through science. Chapter three shows how biophysical indicators and its representation in maps played a key role legitimizing the new political project in the Amazon. Protocols, certifications, and specific methodologies supported the scientific authority of the annual deforestation maps, the hotspots of deforestation and the "early alerts". Technical information communicated through maps and

indicators allowed to extrapolate the punctual phenomena of deforestation into a broader geographical region, hence portraying the entire region as threatened by deforestation, and supporting the necessity to govern the Amazon.

The idea of maps is a common topic in political geography (Kitchin et al., 2009; Pickles, 2004; Scott, 1998; Wood, 2010). Environmental governance, and REDD+ specifically are domains where remote sensing has facilitated the creation of maps to sustain the carbon economy (Faxon et al., 2022; Fischer & Hajdu, 2018; Hajdu et al., 2016; Movik et al., 2021; Windey & Van Hecken, 2019). Satellite-based geographical indicators allow to comprehend nature conservation in terms of deforestation. In Colombia, media, state, and non-state actors have become reproducers of the meanings supported by maps, which engendered forms of knowing and feeling (Castree, 2013). The empirical chapters show that NGOs and policy makers aligned, sometimes unintentionally, with the frontier governmentality, and reassured the Amazon as a frontier after media images and scientific reports of deforestation.

Third, REDD+ makes a space governable by encapsulating and closing off local politics and simplifying understanding of biodiversity loss. The previous paragraph has shown how indicators represent a facet of the physical world and serve specific political rationalities. Those indicators are selective and, although they are important to inform policy making, they close off other understandings of biodiversity or deforestation. For example, chapter three shows that the governing project ensures that indicators and their graphical representations

are crafted to align with its own image and likeness. Utilizing other metrics ecological metrics may show that the Amazon it is the least threatened compared to other biomes in Colombia.

In this sense, indicators such as the hotspots and the annual rate funnels the understanding of conservation towards Amazon and deforestation only. The indicators simplified and replicated a skewed understanding of biodiversity loss. Other ecological phenomena such as endemism, habitat degradation or exposure to threats, among others, are not accounted for geographical prioritization or intervention. As mentioned in the Chapter three, annual rate or hotspots of deforestation shows other regions suffering similar or higher forest loss than the Amazon but they are not discussed by practitioners and policymakers during the period of study.

The fourth and last point, is that pilot projects make a space governable by supporting the previous three strategies. Pilot projects routinize indicators, understanding and practices tied to the carbon economy. To make the promises of carbon economy happen, pilot projects create an idealized space endorsing the problematizations, representations and politics of the previous strategies. Pilot projects isolate a place from the broader social and political context to introduce new notions of production and consumption ascribed to REDD+.

The premise of interventions from pilot projects is to transform an ill or broken place into one where the standing forest produces capital in new ways. The success of pilot projects is that they show action towards transforming old practices into new ones. However, as

chapter three shows, such transformation is artificial because the projects themselves are based on ill problematizations and denial of local histories, problems, and conflicts. The chapter shows the Amazon Vision had to pilgrim from settlement to settlement to find people who already willing to accept the premises of REDD+, which raises substantial doubts about the transformative premises of REDD+. At the end, pilot projects endure because they maintain alive an idea and a cycle of intervention which many actors benefit from (Asiyanbi & Massarella, 2020).

5.4. HOW ARE NATURE CONSERVATION ARRANGEMENTS INCITING ENVIRONMENTAL SUBJECTIVITIES?

The fourth research question revolves around the process of making political subjects. Environmental subjectivities take center stages in the empirical chapters, illustrating their crucial role in nature conservation efforts. By showcasing examples from chapter three and four, it becomes evident how the practices and discourses surrounding deforestation control and forest conservation generate new subjectivities. Chapter three shows how education, economic incentives, and demonstration projects are used to create "state aligned" subjectivities. The practices of community-based forest monitoring or catholic ceremonies, as shown in chapter four, become regular gathering events that foster collective (counter) subjectivities of non-state actors.

The empirical chapters demonstrate how the struggle between subjection and subjectivation technologies (or technologies of the state vis-à-vis technologies of the self) creates different

ways of forming subjectivities. Subjection-subjectivation technologies operate through "sticks and surveillance" such as remote sensing and criminalization, and "carrots" such as loans, payment for ecosystem services, or agroforestry projects. Other means of internalization include environmental education campaigns, protests, and community decision boards. The results show that nature conservation is present both within the carrot and sticks, and within the state and communities themselves. Together, they work to incite into forest dwellers new consciousness, behaviors, knowledges, and a sense of belonging and being.

The variety of ways and the augmentation of subject making that this thesis accounts for, I argue, reflects the intensification of politics incited by environmental agendas. Recent debates have positioned subjectivity at the center of the struggle for power within environmental governance (González-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2020; Loftus, 2020). Environmental subjectivities seem to be a new resource, or a last contention space, to enact environmental politics to govern spaces and subjects or to resist such government.

Foucault already recognized that producing subjectivity is the aim of power, thus recognizing its relational and political nature. According to Mouffe (1995), politics arises from the making of collective subjectivities. For her, an individual cannot make politics, rather, it is a collective subjectivity that can articulate a society's political demand. Together with Laclau, Mouffe (2001) further argues that at the end of the twentieth century, class-based politics have become obsolete and collective demands transcended class to intersect historical, gender,

racial, economic social hierarchies (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). Under this perspective, it is not surprising that the mechanisms of subject-making as part of environmental politics found in the results point to collective subjectivities.

Discursive and practices of forest conservation enrich collective subjectivities. The results show that nature conservation and REDD+ provided support for collective subjectivities, creating a sense of belonging and a toolbox to articulate political demands. With indigenous collective subjectivities, they point to ancestral practices of cultivating and living within the forest; with afrodescendant subjectivities, they point to ancestral practices of land ordering, while peasants in Caqueta point to a new sense of belonging and community after decades of migration and violence.

Both ethnic and non-ethnic identities articulate collective subjectivities. The opportunity to redefine power relations that REDD+ and nature conservation construes enhances and reinforces identities. Chapter four shows that environmental elements reinforce the notion of ancestral guardians of the forest for indigenous organizations. For afrodescendant groups, environmental elements involve enhancement of the sense of community and collective organization whereas historical disenfranchised groups such as peasants strive to reclaim power by redefining their identities in relation to nature, challenging dominant narratives of being outcasts and destructors of nature. It is through an idealized identity that the premises of REDD+ projects help to demarcate the antagonistic relation of them (State) versus us (rural community) (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001).

The productive aspects of subjectivities – i.e., their identity-making – show its ambiguous and politized endeavor. On the one hand, the state seeks to create state subjects that self-regulate and make it easier to govern at a distance, and can demonstrate results to foreign donors. On the other hand, chapter four shows that local communities articulate conservation initiatives to incite political subjectivities that oppose state intromission on local lives. Although political, the collective subjectivities described in this thesis do not show any attempt at becoming a political faction that struggles for national spaces. Instead, these collective subjectivities operate at very local spheres safeguarding autochthon ways of living.

The results further show that nature conservation in Colombia is both a means to and constitutive part of national and local politics. The picture is complex because historical institutional diversity and affective interactions shape the subject and its political position (Jakobsen, 2024; Persson et al., 2022; Sony & Krishnan, 2023; Verweijen et al., 2022). Collective subjectivities reflect political rationalities (see chapter 2) and attempt to materialize such articulations of meaning (see chapter 4). Hence, creating collective subjectivity implies the establishment and affirmation of a political project being the breeding ground for political conflict. As a result, and as this thesis offers evidence for in the empirical chapters, new modes of governing lead to undefined spaces and contradictory subjects.

5.5.   UNRAVELING CONTRADICTIONS IN REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION

A recurring theme emerging throughout the chapters is about contradictions. They manifest in the operations of political rationalities; in the ambiguity surrounding the conservation frontier, and in the complex dynamics of individuals and groups who align themselves with state narratives while simultaneously opposing the state. These contradictions find empirical support in the actions of actors who embrace the logics of different rationalities. Actors reproduce discourses, representations, and ideas as a means of securing their own position within the ongoing reconfiguration of power that REDD+ brings.

Local discourses of peace, counterinsurgency, development, and self-determination shaped REDD+ in Colombia. This led to contradictions between established concepts and new concepts belonging to REDD+. The contradictions are, however, useful to both national and local actors, because they can accommodate a wide range of meanings in REDD+. Any progress of REDD+ thus means advancing the political agendas of the supporters.

Examples of contradictions include indigenous groups who refuse to adhere to REDD+ or even sued the Amazon Vision, but a couple of years later were engaged in REDD+ activities. Another contradiction evidenced in previous chapters is the militarization of national natural parks by the state which are originally aimed at nature conservation, recreation, and science; the envisioning of industrial exploitation of non-forest products in the Amazon while the region is thought as a site of conservation; and providing loans to implement activities of the Amazon Vision instead of conducting national policy reforms, among others. By housing

different meanings, REDD+ and the new frontier it creates endorse different and sometime opposing political objectives of state and non-state actors.

A wide range of actors resonated with the ideas of REDD+ creating an epistemic community supported by the conceptualizations of the Amazon as a resource frontier. Different actors brought elements of the frontier to conjure it in REDD+: environmentalist brought the exuberance and diversity of the jungle; armed forces remarked the violence and ruleless of the guerrilla groups in concealed in the Amazon forests, indigenous group reminded the presence of unique and endangered cultures; economist and entrepreneurs highlighted the economic opportunities while politicians remarked the lack of state on the margins of the Amazon. All together assembled a resource frontier that accommodated the projects of different actors. As Asiyanbi et al. (2019) argue in their case in Nigeria, it was a multitude of actors that kept REDD+ alive because it was useful for their political rationality.

The idea of multiple actors keeping REDD+ alive resonates with the notion of political articulation of Laclau and Mouffe (2001), and the establishing of discursive hegemony. Laclau and Mouffe argue that contradictions stem from the constitution of a hegemonic project, a shared political logic. A political project, such as REDD+, becomes a new social order, hegemonic, articulating heterogenous meanings under a single idea. Luhmann (1998) also argues that contradictions are the condition of perpetuation of a social regime. According to him, contradictions help to maintain a stable social system and support its self-reproduction in spite of not being logical. The results of the thesis show a hegemonic regime emerging

from controlling deforestation measures, offering a shared and contingent possibility of a political future for several actors.

For both Laclau and Mouffe, and Luhmann, contradictions are innate to the social system as well the conflict. To Luhmann, contradictions are key to the stability of a social system because they maintain its autonomy and functions. Contradictions may also threat the capacity of self-maintenance, thus conflict arises to purge contradictions that hampers a new stable regime. For Laclau and Mouffe, contradictions are natural, since in the route to build a hegemonic discourse, multiple actors trace numerous chains of meanings to acquire influence. These meanings are also contradictory because the hegemonic construction is an open-ended process, irrational and affective. So for both theories, Luhmann's and Laclau and Mouffe's, the conflicts that arise with REDD+ comes from creating new contradictions and tracing new chains of equivalences to reach a stable point. Thus, these contradictions and conflict is necessary for REDD+ to pervade in the Colombian context.

The contradictions present in any political project, including REDD+ in Colombia, introduce certain tensions into local subjectivities. While many Foucauldian studies emphasize making coherent and discernible governmentality technologies and subjects, political reality is more complex than that. Indeed, Cepek (2011) argues that incongruent, or partially formed, subjectivities reveal a potential failure of domination as well of successful resistances. This thesis shows such failures and successful resistances are likely more common than we assume. Drawing on Gramsci, Jakobsen (2022) explains that such contradictions result from repeated attempts to exercise dominance. According to him, the greater the contradiction

among subjects, including landscapes, the more a place or subject has been subject to domination. Ruling programs create scars on landscapes and create fragmented subjects that result from the impossibility of attaining the desired project of domination, because of resistance to it or because it becomes obsolete through time.

Modern attempts to control the Amazon left its early scars after the decline of the rubber industry at the beginning the twentieth century (de la Rosa, 2004). Fragmented subjectivities emerged after Indigenous groups were decimated, marginalized, and their values and perception of the forest condemned. On its part, landscapes were wounded with conceptions of unlimitedness and resourcefulness, leaving many of them fragmented and degraded (Serje, 2011). These scars fed the developmentalist thinking of the mid-twentieth century when projects deployed to civilize the Amazon spurred landless Andean peasants to move into the region (Dourojeanni, 1998). Landscapes then were further wounded with economic models based on clear-cutting, while a settler identity remained fragmented as well after the State's promises of richness failed (Dávalos, 2018). From these failed agrarian reforms emerged new authorities, the FARC-Guerrilla, and a narcotraffic economy. Retreat of the state also left positive imprints on the biodiversity; the presence of insurgent groups restricted access to forest by development projects and local entrepreneurs, thus maintaining forest cover (Alvarez, 2003). In the late 1990s, a new wave of interventions based on controlling illegal crops and insurgency emerged, escalating the contradictions into violent conflict (Sevilla Soler, 1999). The scars of these interventions are today visible in untrusting rural communities which are sceptical of state promises and adamant about the economic benefits of clear-cutting (Montenegro-Perini, 2022). All these historical attempts

to rule explain the scars on subjects and landscapes today, scars that have become reopened after the new interventions based on controlling deforestation that this thesis recounts. Following Miller & Rose (2008) and especially the work Li (2007), this incompleteness is the very condition to exercise power. Desire to intervene perpetuates government's need, leaving endless scars in landscapes and subjects.

Contradictions, however, leave not only scars. A more positive reading of is found in the political agency they afford to local communities. Vela-Almeida (2020) explains these contradictions in terms of mirror strategies, i.e. how local communities mimic the discourses of domination in programs to advance their own cause. In her case in Ecuador, people use state-developed institutions of legibility and subjectification to reclaim their territory, to keep use and control of resources, or to resist state impositions. In this thesis, I also offer examples of this process in chapter four and for the case of Biocorridor Choco-Darien.

The opposite to local empowerment via state discourses is also possible, where the state adopts local discourses to serve its own project. Buu-Sao (2021), who details how the Ecuadorian state adopts practices and discourses of collectivism within communitarian mining enterprises offered a good example. The Ecuadorian state employs such practices of collective property, usually part of social movement discourse to change subjectivities and to implement its ruling program. In this thesis, chapter two and three show the state's focus on participatory technologies and community-based forest management to legitimize their interventions and REDD+ policy.

The diverging interpretations and political dynamics between state and local communities added layers of complexity to the REDD+ policy landscape in Colombia, reflecting the dynamic nature of its implementation. Thus, comprehending the governance impacts of reforms or instruments, such as REDD+ needs a profound understanding of how they adapt and become anchored in local meanings. This thesis shows that embracing contradictions has been fruitful to understand scars on landscapes and people as attempts to establish dominance by state programs. The exercise of power is a never-ending project, occasionally revitalized in new policy cycles. The effects of power remain often contradictory, and contradictions offer insight into the history of ruling and political conflict. In some places, scars and contradictions are clear and sensible, forming frontiers. In these places, any attempt to invigorate the ruling project may escalate the conflict because the failed previous attempts to address disagreement. By focusing on these contradictions, it was possible in this thesis to explain the conservation conflict that REDD+ brings in Colombia in terms of the history of state power.

5.6.   REFLECTION ON METHODS

This thesis provided a snapshot of policy making in Colombia. The short timeframe in which REDD+ was studied provided examples of how agitated politics can be, and how such politics takes shape. Yet, this timeframe limits the possibility of concluding on REDD+'s long-term effects. Somewhat limited access to informants furthermore hindered rich testimonies for interviews. Given the history of violence towards social leaders, access to interviewees at times came with suspicion and difficulty. In addition, organizations and officers showed to

be hermetic to scrutiny, so access to honest testimonies was difficult. This introduced a bias in the respondents' answers who deployed the political script prevalent in the time, so interviews were very little informative and showed to be similar across the interviewees.

Another limitation was funding. According to the terms and conditions of PhD programs in Colombia, the Ministry of Science is not entitled to allocate research costs, for example field trips. Living costs comprise the minimum wage or less and are limited to a fraction of the length of the program. Because of this, and the high cost of accessing remote project areas, I had to prioritize events and visits wisely. Consequently, not every location could be visited, limiting the range and quality of interviews. The study thus required a hunch to spot the opportunities of engagement and quality interviewees.

Limited access to information through interviews and funding was overcome by diversifying the empirical methods. Observations, ethnographic work, participation in events, document analysis and multimedia analysis helped to broaden the data base. The variety of methods addressed mostly the interviewer effect, the influence of my socioeconomic background, education, gender and origin in the interviewee responses. The methods also address my limited skills in interviewing and the inexistent training in this regard. The diverse methods counter the limited and repetitive amount of data of policy documents, the unavailability of experts, the access to key informants by gate keepers (people who filter the initial access to an organization) and the traveling limitations of COVID-19.

5.7.   REFLECTIONS ON THEORY

The thesis provides new insights into the REDD+ mechanism. This is the first study in Colombia to detail the implementation of an environmental international instrument and its early political life. The thesis study REDD+ through an interpretative approach to understand what it is doing and becoming. Researchers in the past have focused on the extent to which countries have successfully instituted REDD+ governance arrangements (e.g., den Besten et al., 2014). Instead, through a governmentality lens, this study conceives REDD+ as a mutable entity that serves power (Mukono & Sambaiga, 2022). This engagement, I found, was productive in understanding the sensibility to, and influence of policy instruments on discourses, subjectivities, powers, knowledges, histories, and unexpected events (Nightingale, 2018).

When it comes to theory, this thesis was able to make various contributions to governmentality and political studies. First, it presents an approach to understand the assemblage of political rationalities. The method stresses that there are multiple actors and forces like capitalism, the state, NGOs, indigenous organizations, and international agreements that shape political rationalities. The thesis shows that political conflict is a struggle of different political rationalities to define meanings and relations with nature. This assertion is further supported in chapter three by focusing on a specific rationality of government, the frontier rationality. It argues that REDD+ triggers frontier symptoms, including contradictions, ambiguities, and conflicts power rearrangements.

The thesis further introduces and develops the concept of collective subjectivities. Chapter four provides empirical evidence of environmental projects building political subjects. The results show the relevance of collective subjectivities to support political action within environmental governance and the productivity of the concept for understanding social mobilization processes.

The contributions of the thesis span across different academic and practical debates, including forest and climate change policy, forest conservation practices, literature on resource frontiers, and governmentality studies. The results show future research opportunities in the classic fields of the policy process, agenda setting, and path dependency. In addition, the thesis leaves the door open to understand how climate and nature conservation policies reproduce old power structures and legitimizes old agendas (Corbera et al., 2019; Lund et al., 2017; Storch & Winkel, 2013). This gap is especially pressing for climate change policy. Understanding that environmental problems are seen through past mental models of policy makers would help to recognize path dependencies.

5.8. FROM PROJECT-CENTERED TO PEOPLE-CENTERED IMPLEMENTATION

The empirical chapters of the thesis have shown that REDD+ policy (implementation) process in Colombia is contradictory and messy. This means that implementing policies requires practitioners to account for uncertainties, and to be aware of local histories and conflicts. Only then conservation can be put to benefit the peoples that relate daily with the forest— and not against them.

Bearing in mind that Colombia is further supporting bio-economic models, similar conflicts would be likely to happen in the coming years. Revitalization of old conflicts may emerge in the light of the new environmental opportunities and funding. Further funding may come after the Convention of Biological diversity's Conference of the Parties held in Colombia at the end of 2024. This may reinforce the range of conflicts among private implementers, the state and indigenous communities. Moreover, it may reinforce top-down conservation models against local ways of relating with nature.

 The Amazon seems likely to continue to be the spotlight of future conservation, given a recent approval of 30 million dollars to support the Amazon Vision. Furthermore, a recent report shows that the Colombian Amazon already hosts nearly 30 voluntary carbon projects in different stages of implementation with a wide range of conflicts within indigenous communities, and with the state and private implementers (Diaz, et al. 2023). For the next decade, these conflicts among indigenous groups, Amazonian peasants, carbon entrepreneurs and state agencies will prevail.

As shown in chapter three, the conservation of the Amazon region may provide less efficient contributions to global conservation goals than protecting other ecological regions. Protecting the Amazon would hamper the additionality criteria of conservation measures. Although the high conservation status of the Amazon would justify prioritization for funders, this status is sustained by entrenched ideas of global north, the increasing political influence

of Amazonian indigenous organizations and politico-economical characterizations of the region (Chapter 3). As being a highly conserved region, the efforts to conserve it would provide fewer benefits than conserving other highly threatened and fragmented forests, for instance, the Andean and tropical dry forest. Redirecting funds for the latter would safeguard unique ecosystems and species that are in critical conservation conditions due to human intervention.

This thesis emphasizes the pressing need to understand the conflict in forest conservation and the different motives that actors have to perform forest conservation. Shifting conservation priorities does not require new assessments, but profound shifting in paradigms of donors and practitioners. What the empirical chapters attempt to show is that in order to change these paradigms, it is necessary to access the different ways conservation, biodiversity or deforestation itself are understood. The field work showed the importance to utilize different epistemological methods for such endeavor. The diversity of methods allowed to overcome the limitations of time, distrust, and difficulties of interviewees to express openly ideas and feelings. Hence, practitioners and researchers should explore experiential forms of engagement such as arts and video eliciting methods to understand and recognize such relations.

Participatory approaches allegedly address power games, by building trust, empathy, recognition, and reflection although it requires skilled and power-aware professional for its performance (Barnaud&Van Paasen, 2013, Turnhout et al. 2020). Art-based research

methods such as paint, poetry, video, photographs have been encouraged by social scientists for more than three decades (Cahnmann-Taylor, M. 2013). Some alleged benefits include its empowerment effect; the participants are not researched but are engaged themselves in the generation of knowledge (Archibald, et al. 2020). It has also been argued that art-based methods challenge mental models and provide alternatives to express knowledge (Leavy, 2020). Participants of research or implementation workshops usually come with prejudices and conceptions about themselves and underestimate their own knowledge or overestimate of their peers. Arts-based methods may provide to practitioners and researchers tools to address the diversity of literacy and skills of informants (Hammond, et al. 2018). While arts-based methods require skillful implementation and thorough analysis to obtain meaningful conclusions (Wang et. Al 2017), the biggest gain may lie in fostering empathy and mutual understanding among participants and implementers (Leavy, 2020).

The last point is to acknowledge the existing ways of forest conservation. Forest conservation is practiced in many ways entitling different forms of understanding nature and relating with it as chapter four accounts. Noteworthily, chapter three shows that conservation and development projects come and go, often ignoring the previous results or the local efforts duplicating interventions. Currently, there are hundreds of conservation initiatives designed and led by peasant, indigenous, afrodescendant or even by citizens within the large metropolis. These initiatives underscore meaningful experiences that would enhance global efforts for the common goods. However, in many cases, these initiatives have been

obliterated by state or private implementers, or even practitioners, because they did not suit the projects objectives or external conservation models.

5.9. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis shows how international instruments, such as REDD+, can disturb local politics and be subjected to related power struggles. REDD+ may turn into a shapeshifting vehicle for different political rationalities, and may perpetuate existing power regimes but may not change the practice of forest governance. Given that, it should be the responsibility of future policymakers to ensure that such instruments transform conflict and make biodiversity conservation fairer.

This thesis adds evidence to the increasing body of research on the alternative ways of doing nature conservation and recognizing the forms of relating and its possibilities. There is a pressing need to better understand and subsequently acknowledge the different types of knowledge and social processes relating to forest and nature (Gebara et al., 2020; Pascual et al., 2021). Part of this acknowledgment recognizes power struggles embedded in forest conservation (Carpenter, 2020). Future research should focus attention on community-based conservation efforts that have too often remained in the shadow of state development and conservation projects in Colombia.

This thesis leaves open a dilemma: if any conservation effort or intervention reproduces power structures, then what would be a good course of action? Can scars caused by interventions on landscapes and subjects be healed? The findings show that despite the positive intentions of involving citizens in decision-making, such participatory spaces come

in the service of different political rationalities. While it is impossible that conservation stops being a tool of power, policymakers and practitioners should ensure that conservation addresses equity and justice too (Shackleton et al., 2023). Thus, power-aware practitioners should then create spaces that include a wide variety of forms of forest governance so the powers of shaping conservation would be more balanced. The task would be burdensome, but a negotiated conservation that more likely would benefit several parties. Outcomes of conservation would be more legitimate resulting in positive impacts on both the project and the hosting communities.

As Castree (2013) argues, the practice of conservation should ensure the different meanings that nature holds for different people, and thrive to maintain diversity in the semiosphere of practice. This resonates with the proposal of Laclau and Mouffe (2001) of radical democracy where they call for diverse and opposing understandings of conservation to take part in the making of politics. Instead of avoiding it, we should welcome conflict to ensure that the project undergoes negotiation and legitimation, preventing its escalation into violence.

Practitioners could use diverse methodologies to recognize and encourage a wide diversity of understandings of forest conservation. Current instruments of participation in Colombia are limited in regards to the recognition of local views. There are public environmental audiences which are informative, yet non-decision-making spaces. Right of petition is also a mechanism of information but is very much limited to the scholarly audience of whom requests it and the technical information available to state agencies. Free and prior informed consent mechanism is limited to ethnic groups. Moreover, recent rulings of the Supreme

Court invalidate popular referendums to be used for projects with an environmental impact. The above mechanisms only happened during projects that require environmental licensing, making a genuinely democratic form of conservation delusional. A promising space the Regional centers of Environmental Dialogue (CRDA), explicitly conceived in 2018 to deal with transformation of land and resource conflicts. The Pilar Indigena is also a good attempt. Being a political achievement, it should be replicated by state and implementer agencies.

Implementation agencies and NGOs know that engaging different values of conservation may help the result of the projects. Implementation agencies and NGOs allege that projects which demonstrate inclusivity are also more effective in terms of social and environmental outcomes (Börner et al. 2016). Ensuring democratic apparatuses such as voting, participation and public audiences is however not enough, given the power games that play out in implementation spaces. The call for meaningful participation in conservation is already decades old, but a very difficult one to realize in practice. Governments need to show results to donors; elected positions within the state depend on maintaining and supporting dominant narratives; implementers need short and self-contained solutions; and NGOs need to sell success and hide pitfalls. Democratic negotiations, however, are a long and exhausting duty, a duty that seems to escape the timeframe of policymakers.

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197

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1
Codes of stage 2 (with more than 3 counts)

biodiversity loss
richness
source of water
invasion of land
ancestral
Lack of state
Rebel groups
Guerrilla
Illegal groups
cattle
illegal crops
oil spill
backward tools
inefficient agriculture
market
land slide
fragmentation
forest connectivity
biodiversity
road construction
public-private partnerships
land planning plans
lack of market
lack of incentives
ignorance
people don't know
climate change
disorganized
directed colonization
indirect colonization
lack of resources
benefits from the forest
products derived from biodiversity
national export product
guerrilla attacks to infrastructure
conservation of forest
alternative livelihood
Palm oil deforest

Codes of stage 3

Problematizations	state's absence, lack of land planning or strategic plans, alignment of actors
	Access to markets, lack of productivity, inefficient practices that expand agriculture against forest conservation
	lack of recognition of ethnic authorities
	guerrilla and narcotraffic
	people's ignorance on the value of forest and alternatives to cattle and deforestation
	lack of peasant's participation in economy
Logics of intervention	eradicate guerrilla
	programs of coca substitution and eradication
	law enforcement for controlling illegal timber trade
	land planning plans and strategies
	indigenous/ethnic administrative autonomy
	support conservation and connectivity
	allocation of productive activities in appropriated soils
	restrict uses to the forest reserves
	organize efficiently land, allocate productive and unproductive spots
	capacity building on REDD+ and conservation
	participation of forest communities on productive and decision -making of the forest
	Payment of ecosystem services to control uncontrolled expansion of agrarian frontier
Authorities	indigenous and afrodescendant groups
	collective peasant associations
	technical instruments
	state agencies
	enterprises engagement
Social qualifications	illegality, people invade forest reserve
	political elite (cattle ranchers) deforest
	peasants deforest for surviving
	land in the Amazon is unproductive leading to deforestation to reach productive quotas
	deforestation is derived from people's ignorance on ecosystem services
	control the encroachment of natural parks or expand the latter
	state's branches do not coordinate
	peasants need education to understand law (REDD+)s and benefits of the forest
	Peace should be extended to reconciliate with environment
	By protecting Collective property and ancestral knowledge forest can be conserved
	The forest is another way of living
	Production has to align with soil capacity
	Unsustainability derives from overuse of forest
	Agrarian frontier has to be stabilized

Codes of stage 4

Industrial plantation and right incentives will make the forest to pay back.
Lack of markets and organization of production leads to deforestation
Organized forest production allows sustainable use of forest and reduce deforestation.
There is a lack of forest culture, ignorance of the benefits of the forest
Colombia is a megadiverse country
"Produce conserving and conserve producing"
Livelihoods of afrodescendant and indigenous peoples are in harmony with the nature
Forms of production of afrodescendant and indigenous people are sustainable.
Ancestral knowledge has been lost due to contact with western culture
Agrarian frontier has unappropriated access to global markets
Nation has to recover land left by guerrilla demobilization
State has to secure forest on behalf of common good
Forest is disorganized everybody exploit it without control
Production is inefficient
Technology is lacking and the available unsustainable
Peace agreements allows to access the unorganized land and to order towards sustainable use of the forest
Narcotic poisons forest and produce climate change, illegal activities exacerbate environmental crisis
forest communities are the ones that know to manage the forest

ANNEX 2

What is your role in this organization?
How long have you participated or engaged in REDD+/Amazon Vision?
According with your experience tell me how can you describe the REDD+ policy process in Colombia?
Do you have any knowledge of Amazon Vision?
Why you think to focus on the Amazon?
What is the role of rural communities including indigenous groups?

Dario Gerardo Zambrano Cortes
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)
Completed Training and Supervision Plan

Wageningen School of Social Sciences

Name of the learning activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS*
A) Project related competences			
A1 Managing a research project			
WASS Introduction Course	WASS	2019	1
Writing the Research Proposal	WASS	2019	6
Scientific Writing	Wageningen In'to Languages	2020	1.8
Intensive Writing Week	Wageningen In'to Languages	2020	0.9
A2 Integrating research in the corresponding discipline			
From topic to Proposal	WASS	2019	4
Qualitative Data Analysis, Procedures and Strategies MAT50806	WUR	2019	6
B) General research related competences			
B1 Placing research in a broader scientific context			
Smart Ecologies On the Nature and Power of Environmental Technologies	WASS	2019	4
Philosophy of Social Science	WASS	2019	3
Interpretative Policy Analysis	Southampton University	2019	3
B2 Placing research in a societal context			
Participation/presentation on a doctorate seminar	CIDER – Universidad de los Andes	2023	1
Presentation on Politics of controlling deforestation	UDISTRITAL, Colombia	2022	1
C) Career related competences/personal development			
C1 Employing transferable skills in different domains/careers			
Career Assessment	WGS	2019	0.3
Brain Friendly Working and Writing	WGS	2020	0.3
Total			**32.3**

*One credit according to ECTS is on average equivalent to 28 hours of study load