

CERREJON AND THE WAYUU:

DOCUMENTING VIOLENCE

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Committee's Approval Sheet:

Will be included upon completion of the thesis.

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Abstract

Multinational corporations continue to exploit natural resources throughout Latin America, often negatively impacting and endangering indigenous communities. Colombia has become a prime example of corporate practices that work to control and marginalize indigenous communities. The nation-state has empowered multinational mining corporations, like Cerrejon Limited, in the name of “the common good”. Cerrejon Limited is the largest open-pit coal mine in Latin America. The Wayuu, native to this region, have been the target of paramilitary violence, environmental racism and human rights violations. The impacts on their culture due to displacement and urbanization has not been well-documented. Although Cerrejon is largely responsible for violence against this community, it is the nation-state who has allowed these practices to continue. Cerrejon serves as an embodiment of different forms of violence enacted on Wayuu communities by the nation-state. This research aims to document the cultural impacts of urbanization and identify policies that work to empower multinational corporations.

Keywords; environmental racism, indigenous communities, multinational corporations, human rights, Wayuu, violence.

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1. Introduction

1. 1 Introduction to Research

As multinational corporations continue to exploit natural resources in Latin America, Colombia has become a prime example of what happens to indigenous communities when extractive corporations are given power. The nation-state has empowered multinational corporations such as Cerrejon Limited¹, Latin America's largest open-pit coal mine, in the name of "the common good" (Colombian Constitution 1999, Article 58). The concept of "the common good" legitimizes the power awarded to the multinational as a necessary sacrifice in exchange for Colombia's economic advancement and spot in the global energy market. As a result, dozens of afro-Colombian and Wayuu communities have been displaced been subject to different forms of violence through criminalization, use of militarized police and strategic absence of government in La Guajira, this department has effectively become the property of Cerrejon Limited with the endorsement of the nation-state. Since there is limited literature and research have prevented an in-depth analysis exclusively on the experiences of the Wayuu community, this research exclusively addresses the local indigenous community surrounding the coal mine, and addressing following: (1) that Cerrejon is not only responsible for violence in La Guajira but the violence being expressed through the corporation is an extension of the nation-state, (2) different forms of violence exerted through the nation-state, Cerrejon Limited and the effects they have had on the Wayuu and (3) the cultural changes that come with urbanization,

¹ Cerrejon Limited is Latin America's largest open-pit coal mine located in Albania, La Guajira, Colombia. It is owned by BHP Billiton, Glencore and Anglo-American.

displacement and environmental degradation. This research can be utilized, by both residents of La Guajira and academics, to understand how the Wayuu are subject to different forms of violence by Cerrejon Limited and by extension, the nation-state, and the effects of these practices have on their community and to encourage further research into this topic.

2. Violence and Criminalization

2.1 History and the Modification of Violence

According to Van Ackern, the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), “[Colombia has] the highest amount of internally displaced people” second to Syria (Van Ackern, 2015). In La Guajira, the Wayuu have been the target of paramilitary and guerrilla violence which has led to what Karmen Ramirez-Boscan, founder of the organization Fuerzas Mujeres Wayuu, calls the “systemic onset of paramilitary violence” that works to strategically exterminate Wayuu communities (Boscan, 2007). Wayuu experiences of paramilitary violence and forced displacement have not just been poorly documented but institutions, such as the nation-state, have consistently ignored the situation in the region (Boscan, p.17, 2007). This points to the theory founded by Emma Banks which states that Colombia has become an “absentee-state” in La Guajira (Banks, 2017). This allowed not just for paramilitary violence to have continued with barely any interference on the part of the nation-state, but it set the foundation for disempowering the region and the continued control of multinational corporations.

Palacios and Safford, argue that Colombia's difficult and varying topography allowed the nation-state to separate the country into different regions, leading to differences in development and creation of "frontiers" (Palacios and Safford, 2002). La Guajira was one of the regions that was difficult to access due to its desert landscape, lack of water, and its remoteness. La Guajira can be categorized as being one of these "frontiers", as this region has historically been known for its remoteness and in a contemporary manner, as the "wild west" of Colombia (Van Ackern, p. 147, 2015). The Wayuu, who successfully resisted colonization, were effectively separated from the rest of the nation-state. This isolation from the rest of the nation-state allowed for the community to preserve their customs.

Colombia has prided itself for its recent peace agreements with F.A.R.C², decrease in internal violence and its place as an increasingly popular tourist destination. However, violence against indigenous communities still exists, it has just been redesigned through policies and applied through practices. Today, violence in La Guajira comes in the form of a absent government, environmental racism, and the corporate governance.

2.2. Criminalization

In August of 1991, Colombia ratified the 1989 International Labour Organization Convention (International Labor Organization Report). This document explains, in Article 15, that indigenous communities have a right to access, manage and preserve natural resources on their land. It also calls for the assessment of damages communities may experience due to resource exploitation, their informed consent and fair compensation if displaced. In the context

² The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. In Spanish, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia.

of natural resource exploitation, especially in Latin America, this was seen as a progressive change in policies for indigenous communities throughout Colombia.

Unfortunately, since the ratification of this policy, Colombia has not adhered to the policy. OCMAL-CENSAT explain that the complete disregard to laws (or manipulation of them) is called “*criminalization*” (2016). La Guajira is one of the most obvious departments in Colombia where the complete disregard laws or policies is witnessed. Criminalization is a method used by the nation-state to enable Cerrejon to control the department, disregarding legal protections the indigenous community were promised. For example, in Article 14 of the 1989 International Labour Organization Convention (169), it states that “the rights of ownership and possession of the peoples concerned over the lands which they traditionally occupy shall be recognized”. However, many Wayuu communities are not officially recognized by the nation-state which has allowed for Cerrejon to create a loophole around this policy.

3. Statement of Research and Significance

3.1 Statement of Research and Significance:

Through criminalization, use of militarized police and strategic absence of government in La Guajira, this department has effectively become the property of Cerrejon Limited with the endorsement of the nation-state. These practices allow for the corporation to not only exert its power and control over the department but their presence legitimizes the nation-states absence from the region. This research argues that Cerrejon is not only responsible for violence in La Guajira but that violence through the corporation is an extension of the nation-state.

The effects of displacement, environmental degradation and urbanization by Cerrejon Limited on the Wayuu community has not been well documented. Scholars, researchers and the general public have placed their interests on scarce water sources and malnutrition in the Alta Guajira, northern region of the department. Environmental and human rights organizations have had to bear the burden of being the main source of addressing the crisis occurring in the Baja Guajira, southern region of the department, by the multinational mining industry. This research allows for the experiences of the Wayuu community in the Baja Guajira to have a platform in academia.

The following document will begin by providing background on the history of violence that has plagued Colombia since colonization so that the audience can understand how violence has been redesigned and executed by the nation-state in a contemporary form. The document will provide a background on the indigenous community this research focuses on, the Wayuu. By exploring this section, the reader will be able to better understand how corporate and state violence has a profound effect on this community. Third, the document will discuss the imagined perpetrator, Cerrejon Limited. After these brief introductions to the three actants, the nation-state, the Wayuu and Cerrejon, the document will begin to dissect the effects of environmental degradation, expropriation, and urbanization by sharing the experiences of residents and providing examples of policies that allow these processes to continue. By exploring all these facets, the document aims to explain how it is the nation-state that uses Cerrejon Limited to enact violence on indigenous communities. Finally, the document will share its limitations, conclusion and suggestions for further research.

3.2 Methodology

This qualitative research is based on interviews conducted in Bogota, Albania, and Barrancas, Colombia between January 2, 2018 and January 23, 2018. Participants interviews are used along with literature to strengthen or create arguments throughout the document. Interviews were acquired by employing the snowball sampling method. This was the best method available due to the necessity of speaking with Wayuu clan leaders before interacting with community members. Being respectful of local customs, the researcher must speak with the leader of a village or reservation first before interviewing community members. Leaders would provide the researcher with three things: (1) permission to speak with village members, (b) suggest an individual who they believed would be the best person to speak to in regard to the investigation and/or (3) agree to personally participate in an interview. By employing this method for this research, the researcher was able to access communities that have been displaced or are considered by the researcher to be “at risk” of being displaced. Using the snowball method to acquire interviews was the most efficient method of accessing a community where the researcher had no rapport. However, this method did present its own challenges and limitations. The main challenge posed by employing this method was that interviews were limited to who the indigenous authority approved to be interviewed which may have been selected according to their own biases. This method may have prevented an alternative perspective in regard to Cerrejon since the pool of participants was limited.

The researcher conducted a total of six interviews in La Guajira and two interviews in Bogota. Interviews were semi-structured and included residents that have been displaced or are at-risk of displacement, researchers, and indigenous authorities. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded after the participant signed an informed consent

form which also included an overview of the research being conducted. One problem did arise from the lack of internet available in La Guajira. Audio files became difficult to store on the researchers' computer device as the security program would not work without internet connection. To address this problem, the researcher audio taped files on a mobile device that was secured with a secret pin number known only by the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher left the region two days earlier than planned in order to properly store all audio files on a secure device in Bogota.

In exchange for participants time, each participant was paid approximately \$15.00 USD (equivalent to 30,000 COP). However, there were two interviewees who politely declined money provided for the interview. To help build rapport and understand more culturally acceptable methods of payment, the researcher helped this family with chores on their land and spent time bonding with the family by participating in everyday activities. In return, the researcher was informed that instead of monetary compensation, a more acceptable form of payment would be a bag of sweets or coffee. The topic of payment must be documented to address forms of more culturally appropriate methods of payment or reciprocity in future research. Furthermore, this experience helped to better understand the community's perspective on economy and reciprocity which will be explained in detail later in the document.

4. The Wayuu and Cerrejon Limited

4.1 Introduction the Wayuu

As Manuel Zapata Olivella explains, Colombian pride and identity is marked by departments or regions throughout the country (Vanderbilt University, Indigenous Culture in La Guajira, Colombia). The Wayuu are proud of their language, land and traditions and their ability

to preserve it during the time of colonization. The Wayuu are Colombia's largest indigenous group. The Wayuu are descendants of Arawak and Caribe tribes, who are native to the northern peninsula of Colombia, called La Guajira, and Venezuela, where they hold dual citizenship (ONIC). Although most indigenous reservations are located in the Alta and Media Guajira in Colombia, the Baja Guajira has a significant number of Wayuu communities. Many of these communities are being directly affected by Cerrejon Limited, Latin America's largest open-pit coal mine. The Wayuu have an intimate and significant connection to land and water (Harker, 1998). Communication with ancestors is a fundamental belief in Wayuu spirituality. They interpret messages from the sounds of crackles that come out of the *fogon*, or fire. Dreams and their significance are vital to understand, especially pertaining to this research. As the researcher's host family explained, along with multiple participants, ancestors and spirits protect and communicate with Wayuu families. Their messages are interpreted via dreams. If the Wayuu are displaced from their land, they experience a little to no communication with their ancestors through dreams because they are no longer on sacred land. According to participants, not being able to communicate with ancestors or spirits effects when community gatherings should be organized, the call for the *chichamaya* [traditional dance], warnings or advice. With a culture centered on environment and spiritual connections, territory is a principal concern to the Wayuu (Mushaisha: Una Pesadilla Wayuu, 2015). However, as the nation-state allows for Cerrejon to expand their territory in the region, Wayuu land and culture are increasingly at risk of being subject to further violence and displacement.



Cerrejon water tank in background as women prepare breakfast. Barrancon, La Guajira, Colombia. Siddique, 2018.

4.2 Introduction to Cerrejon Limited

Cerrejon Limited is one of the largest open-pit coal mines in the world and is the largest open-pit coal mines in Latin America (Goyes, Mol and Brisman, 2017). It is independently owned by Anglo American, BHP Billiton and Glencore- each holding a 33.3% share (Cerrejon). It was originally jointly owned by Carbones Del Cerrejón Norte and Carbones De Colombia, known as Carbocol, and Intercore. Intercore is a subsidiary of the American gas and oil giant, ExxonMobil and Carbocol was the nation-states share (Van Ackern, 2015). According to Mining-Technology, BHP Billiton, Anglo American and Glencore bought out Intercore for \$336 million in 2002 and in 2000 Carbocol's assets were acquired by the same three owners.

Essentially, in 2000, the nation-state lost its share in the project (Bermudez-Lugo). According to their website, Anglo American is a multinational mining company based in South Africa and the United Kingdom. Australian owned BHP Billiton and Swiss-owned Glencore share the same interests as Anglo American. According to all three official company websites, all

these corporations have projects and operations worldwide where they extract oil, coal, diamonds, and other raw materials. In each company's website, there appears a pattern of community involvement and sense of environmental protection. All companies have a plan for sustainability; BHP Billiton takes on climate change, Anglo American addresses economic instability in local communities they are active in, and Glencore works toward environmental and human development. Cerrejon's slogan is "Mineria Responsable", Responsible Mining, which is marketed to make the local community feel more comfortable about the mining process and assure the nation-state of its responsibility and consciousness as a mining corporation. According to the Cerrejon's official website and reports, their initiatives focus on sustainable solutions to water access and conservation, preserving indigenous culture, social and economic development (Cerrejon, 2018).

In January of 1999, the mine, through Intercore, was granted a permit that would extend the project until 2034 (Van Ackern, 2015). According to Cerrejon officials who agreed to speak with me, mining will have be discontinued by latest in 2033, to allow for time to the land to be reclaimed. According to Cerrejon officials, Cerrejon is comprised of 69,000 hectares and since the mid 1980's has only reclaimed 3,000 hectares of land.



Cerrejon Limited. Active site of extraction. Albania, La Guajira, Colombia. Siddique, 2018.

5. Issues

5.1 Environmental Degradation

As mentioned earlier, the Wayuu have a culture that is based on interactions with and interpretations of their environment. Therefore, this research heavily relied on environmental justice and human rights organizations based in Colombia. The limited academic focus on the environmental effects of Cerrejon, points to the main problem this community has faced. The nation-state and global community have consistently ignored Wayuu concerns and have worked to delegitimize their struggles by not addressing these issues in a academic or political setting. Instead, the burden of addressing these concerns and forms of violence have fallen, almost exclusively, on non-governmental organizations, local human/indigenous rights and environmental justice organizations.

One example of environmental injustice is seen in the case of the Rio Rancheria. The Rio Rancheria was once the main source of water used for bathing, cooking, drinking and irrigating crops. Today, residents claim that the water from this river has been depleted and contaminated

by Cerrejon. According to Banks, water serves as a connection between the Wayuu and *Wounmaikat*, or mother earth (2017). I visited the village of San Juan, a Wayuu community that is located in front of the Rio Rancheria and Cerrejon. Before the mine, this community would have accessed water from the river without any concern. I noticed the dark stains of coal residue from when it slips from the top of the mine directly into the river. This, residents believe, effectively contaminates the water. In Cerrejons 2007 Sustainability report, the corporation acknowledges that spills usually occur during the rainy seasons. The close proximity of this village to the mine allows coal dust to spread into the river and surrounding areas. San Juan and neighboring towns, like Provincial, are currently experiencing health problems related to living in such close proximity to the mine. Their proximity to the mine makes them more predisposed to inhaling coal dust and their piece of the Rio Rancheria gets directly contaminated by coal dust and residue. A representative of Indepaz explained that the organization is currently in the process of testing the water in order to know if the water is in fact contaminated and, if so, what chemicals are present in the water and their potential effects. Since Cerrejon denies any contamination of water sources, the results of this test would be an legitimate way to hold Cerrejon accountable for water contamination. This is the first study of its kind and the results will be provided to residents of the La Guajira before being published.

Participants from Provincial, a neighboring village, explained that before the mine the Rio Rancheria used to run deeper, was abundant in fish and was safe to consume. In fact, this participant, who will be referred to as Pedro, was documenting the health effects that the water and proximity to the mine has had on his community through film. I visited the portion of the Rio Rancheria that was accessible by Provincial. Photographs document what the residents claim is evidence to the amount of water lost to the mine. Pedro believes that the bank edges are proof

of water depletion over decades.



Rio Rancheria. Provencial, Barrancas, La Guajira, Colombia. Collected from researchers' personal pictures. January 2018.

Cerrejon claims to be environmentally responsible, proudly explaining that it helped wildlife resettle in other areas, after administering veterinary care to those in need, during the initial stages of constructing the mine (Sustainability Report, 2007 and 2016). Credit must certainly be given to their efforts in this respect. However, since mid-1980's to present-day, Cerrejon has only reclaimed 3,000 hectares of the 69,000 hectares that make up the mine (Cerrejon). In those 3,000 hectares they claim they have footage of native jaguars coming back into the reclaimed space (Cerrejon). However, locals are no longer able to fish out of the river and although many still use the water, many believe that it is not safe to consume due to contamination by the mine. The question that is left to be answered is will Cerrejon be able to reclaim the remaining 66,000 hectares by 2034 or will that burden be placed on the residents as

well? Colombia does not currently have a legislation pertaining to the closure of mine (2016 Sustainability Report. Cerrejon Limited.). However, in a 2011 seminar in Tokyo on infrastructure and minerals in Colombia, President Santos did ask that extractive multinational companies be socially and environmentally responsible ("Fuera Cerrejón de la Guajira: Memoria, Reflexión y Acción colectiva". Comisión Justicia y Paz). Furthermore, a Cerrejon official who agreed to speak with me during a visit to the mine, explained that part of the agreement between the nation-state and the mine was that Cerrejon would leave the allotted land in the same condition (or as close to it as possible) as it was given to them. Another potential problem is that even if the land is completely reclaimed by Cerrejon, coal exploitation has led to the discovery of natural gas reserves with Cerrejon. This discovery could easily mean decades of natural gas exploitation in the area after the end of Cerrejon instead of it being returned to displaced residents.



Reclaimed land at Cerrejon with active mining in the back. Part of the 3,000 hectares of reclaimed land. Albania, La Guajira, Colombia. Siddique, 2018.

5.2 Expropriation

As suggested by Indepaz researchers and to further the scope of this investigation, I visited several, Cerrejon-established, communities during field work. These communities were predominantly comprised of displaced afro-Colombians. For more information on how this community has been affected, see Emma Banks's work. Before addressing the serious problem of expropriation, we must acknowledge that there is a problem with the documentation of indigenous communities that were displaced in the 1980's. The exact number of displaced indigenous people by Cerrejon is unknown. Indigenous communities were not properly documented prior to their displacement and whatever was documented is not currently easily accessible by the general public. This lack of documentation points to the nation-states disregard for this community. The nation-state only recognizes and rewards indigenous rights to officially registered Wayuu reservations. They do not legally recognize Wayuu communities that are not officially registered and therefore these communities, which make up a large part of the Wayuu population near Cerrejon, are not awarded indigenous rights. Second, the focus of academic research and general interest has been on Afro-Colombian communities, local farmers, and the lack of water and food available in the Alta Guajira which has led to the deaths of thousands indigenous people, especially children.

The Colombian Mining Code (2010), states that that all minerals and subsoil, belong to the nation-state, regardless of who the territory belongs to (República De Colombia, El Ministro De Minas y Energía). Expropriation is the process by which the nation-state removes individuals or communities from their property in order for it to be used for the benefit the public. Expropriation is asked for by corporations to the nation-state when they cannot come to an agreement about property. In other words, if the residents of the property being discussed refuse

to leave, the corporation reserves the right to ask the nation-state to forcibly remove them. As long as the corporation can prove that the proposed project can economically advance Colombia (or the region that the project is operating in) and/or will socially benefit the nation, the expropriation process will be approved. Van Ackern further explains that in Article 13 (2001), the law states that “expropriation can take place even against the will of the concerned owner” (2015). In other words, if Cerrejon decided they did not want to use expropriation laws, the nation-state is the body that decides whether or not to implement it. According to the Colombian Constitutional Court, expropriation consists of three “characteristic elements”. First, is the topic of ‘subjects’. This subheading states that the active subject who opposes expropriation and the benefactor is the one who asks for expropriation in order to benefit the nation-state. Second, is the “object”, here the court addresses the need to maintain the individual rights of those being expropriated. Finally, is the proof or justification for expropriation. In order for expropriation to be undertaken, the project must benefit and prioritize the nation-state, socially and economically.

Expropriation has been the main method used to remove residents off their land by Cerrejon. The process itself is physically violent in its nature. The nation-state will utilize its military and police forces to forcibly remove residents who refuse to cooperate with the corporation. Cerrejon has used this tactic on communities such as Roche and Las Casitas. Residents are physically removed from their homes and forced to watch the homes they built being torn down by hand and/or bulldozers. Those who fought back or attempted to resist, were met with blunt force until the enforcers are able to subdue them and remove them from the space. During these processes, the strength and power of the nation-state is expressed through violence. Hundreds of fully armed police and military forces with large bulldozers are used to show the amount of power and control they have over dozens of unarmed residents.

5.3 Tamaquito II & Other Wayuu Communities

Tamaquito II is the first Wayuu community to be officially resettled by Cerrejon. I met with and interviewed a prominent leader of the community, who for confidentiality will be called Jaime. Jaime explained the process of resettlement; his community was quite different from other afro-Colombian communities for two reasons. First, Tamaquito asked to be resettled. Second, the community was very public about their experiences and worked with German filmmaker, Jens Schanze, to create a film documenting their resettlement process called “La Buena Vida” (2015). This community, Jaime explained, felt as though it was forced to ask for resettlement. By the mid-1990’s there was only “ten hectares of officially registered land left” and as Cerrejon quickly privatization waterways in the area, the community had limited access to the river (Planta, 2016). Their neighbors, such as Tabaco, had already been victims of a violent expropriation process years before. Due to an increasingly smaller amount of land, contaminated and privatized water of the Rio Rancheria, the community could no longer survive off their traditional economy of agriculture and trade (Planta, 2016). By eliminating the towns around Tamaquito, Cerrejon effectively isolated the community economically and socially, forcing them to ask for resettlement. The discussion surrounding this resettlement, according to Cerrejon official documents, began in 2006 (Cerrejon). Jaime explained that when they were negotiating the settlement with Cerrejon, the nation-state did not award them indigenous rights because they had not registered as a Wayuu reservation. As the process of resettlement move forward, the community tried to register as a reservation, however, the nation-state denied their application.

In the 1980’s Cerrejon displaced dozens of Wayuu communities such as Hamichi and Caracoli. Their displacement has not been well documented, and many former residents have disbursed throughout the region. I conducted two interviews with individuals that were displaced

from Hamichi. Unlike Tamaquito II, Hamichi did not have the option of working the the Cerrejon. . Participants expressed that in their case, they did not necessary blame Cerrejon for their displacement. According to the participants, Cerrejon had bought Hamichi (or the land that belong to the community) from the nation-state. Neither party had told the residents of Hamichi that their land had been sold off. When Cerrejon came to ask the residents of Hamichi to leave, the community was obviously confused and upset.

In turn, they refused to leave and threatened to fight back. According to an elder I interviewed, who we will call Maria, Cerrejon then addressed the state on the resistance they were facing from Hamichi. Maria stated that her community was ready to fight for their land, organizing themselves in the following way: women at the forefront to start a dialogue with police and men hiding in the forests with bows and arrows to attack in case the women's dialogue did not work. Wayuu culture is matriarchal, and violence is not supposed to be met with more violence but instead with a reasonable compromise (Cuervello, 2002). Therefore, women were at the forefront of resisting police forces and a dialogue was encouraged before physical violence. Unfortunately, Maria stated, the police were too powerful and the bulldozers the state brought quickly began to tear down houses that still had families inside them (translated and paraphrased from audio). Another participant from Hamichi, who we will call Laura, recalled the trauma she experienced from the process as a child. Her voice cracked, and her eyes filled up with tears as she asked:

“Do you know much it hurts for someone to take away your home? So many years ago, I don’t even know the year, but just talking about it ...it’s hard. I don’t like to remember that time.” (Siddique, 2018. Translated by researcher from audio recording)

Dozens of other communities, such as Oreganal and Caracoli, have been displaced. These communities, from what was shared during conversations with residents, are believed to have

been essentially paid off by Cerrejon. However, this investigation cannot confirm or deny that due to a limited number of credible sources.

6. Effects

6.1 Effects of Urbanization

According to Wayuu tradition, parcels of land are separated by parents to children who have married (interview with indigenous authority). It is not common for Wayuu families to see their neighbors because large parcels of land usually are handed down through generations. For this practice to continue, land must be plentiful in order to properly distribute it within the family. Large amounts of land also allow for the Wayuu to create large fogons where they can pass on oral histories, stories and receive messages from ancestors. The space allows for husbandry and agriculture, something that the Wayuu have traditionally lived off. Isolation prior to the development of rural Colombia allowed the Wayuu to preserve their traditions, language and traditional economies. Today, urbanization and displacement threaten all they have worked to preserve. This section discusses the effects of urbanization and displacement have had on Wayuu communities by concentrating on the resettled community of Tamaquito II.

In the case of Tamaquito II, the community was able to design their homes and settle on 300 hectares of land (La Buena Vida, 2015). This move occurred in July 2013 and Cerrejon did work with them and the nation-state to declare Tamaquito II a Wayuu reservation (GlenCore, 2016). However, the community was built with homes close to each other even though it breaks with the tradition of having vast amounts of land to pass down. The reason for this is safety. Tamaquito II is located right outside of Barrancas, a town containing approximately 200,000 people (Van Ackern, 2015). Urban crimes include theft, assault and kidnapping. As a result,

Tamaquito II do not use all the land awarded to them for fear of safety. Jaime tells the communities children to make sure they play in groups and not to venture outside of the comuna because they are not familiar with this area but are aware of the crimes that occur here (La Buena Vida). During the interview with Jaime, he explains how Wayuu language, economy and tradition has been threatened by resettlement.

Jaime and other community leaders do their best to keep their native tongue, *Wayuunaiki*, alive within the community. The community has their own school that teaches in *Wayuunaiki* and have designated playing areas that promote traditional Wayuu games. One morning a ride into Albania, an indigenous authority and myself, shared a taxi with two other Wayuu women from Barrancas. The leader quietly pointed out to me that the women were conversing in Spanish. He then whispered “this is what happens, this is how we lose our language” in reference to urbanization. He is referring specifically to the main town of Barrancas and how Wayuu communities are forced into these urban spaces where Spanish is the dominant language. *Wayuunaiki* is quickly replaced in these settings by Spanish and Wayuu communities are forced to speak the language of the oppressors they once successfully resisted.

In living so close to urbanized spaces, Jaime points to the younger generation of Wayuu members that have become more at risk of developing alcohol addiction and joining gangs. Many youths have exchanged their traditional *manta*, a traditional long dress made of one piece of cloth, for jeans and snazzy shirts. In their original community, alcohol only came in form of *chicha*, a fermented maize drink. It was much more limited in their community than alcohol is in Barrancas. Furthermore, organized crime continues to be a problem in Colombia and La Guajira is no exception. With the presence of organized criminal gangs in the area, members of Tamaquito II are afraid of the influence they have on their children. However, there are another

three main factors that must be addresses when discussing the effects of urbanization - shifts in economic systems, access to water and spiritual limitations.

I asked him if he could please expand on a phrase that caught my attention in the film “La Buena Vida”. In the film Jaime states “we can have gone from being producers to consumers” (2015). Jaimes’ interview serves as a foundation, along with other sources including a second interview conducted in Tamaquito II, to explain and expand on the economic effects urbanization has had on Wayuu communities. In the original Tamaquito, residents grew their own food, enjoyed free access to clean water from the river and were able to preserve a traditional economy based on agriculture and trade. When their neighbors of Roche and Tabaco were violently displaced it had an effect on Tamaquito’s economy. After the destruction of Tabaco, Jairo explains that Tamaquito no longer had a community to trade goods with. Other neighboring communities such as Las Casitas, Patilla and Chancleta had also been displaced and destroyed. This, as mentioned earlier, economically isolated Tamaquito who was then forced to ask for resettlement by Cerrejon.

La Guajira is one of the poorest departments in Colombia and has one of the smallest declines in poverty compared to other departments (Planta, 2016). As part of the resettlement agreement, Cerrejon worked with the community to develop sustainable projects that the community could generate revenue from. These projects were geared more towards artisanry as they would create revenue and preserve an art form. The Wayuu are known for their *muchillas*, colorful, hand-knit bags. Each *muchilla* tells a unique story and is unique in its colors and pattern. However, selling the bags in mass is not part of their traditional economy but the pressures of urbanization has forced them to do. Today, many Wayuu communities rely on selling their renowned *muchillas* and intricate hammocks, called *chinchoros*, to generate income.

Participants repeated that muchillas were usually made to tell a story and hammocks are a very intimate and personal object to the Wayuu. Being invited to sit on someone's hammock is a sign that you are welcome in the person's space and works as an invitation to bond. The intricacies of these hammocks and bags, that can take up to months to create, must be explained because these intimate and meaningful objects are exploited by Cerrejon. In other words, these art forms were supposed to be created in large quantities to generate and serve consumers. The economic development project was essentially the introduction to a capitalist system which the Wayuu had not been a part of prior to resettlement. However, Jaime and a second participant, mentioned that after resettlement the project was soon met with apathy on the part of Cerrejon, and without the support and advertising of the corporation, the project soon collapsed.

This led to the Wayuu community believing they could rely on agriculture for themselves and to generate revenue. However, they soon found out that agriculture was not an effective practice in Barrancas. The new location of Tamaquito II is quiet barren, which means that the land is a lot hotter and drier than the original location of Tamaquito. The corporation did award them enough land to continue agriculture however, La Guajira is a desert region and without the water of rivers and streams, it is a difficult place to grow crops. Another issue with agriculture, is that of water. Jaime and another participant from Tamaquito II state that the running water provided by Cerrejon has caused the residents of Tamaquito II to develop rashes when they shower, especially on children. I had heard of similar complaints in the neighborhood of Las Casitas and Chancleta. I met a young teenage female from the afro-Colombian community of Las Casitas whose legs were marked with white splashes, when asked what had happened to her she replied that she had just showered. She stated that every time she showered her skin would get those white marks. She then showed me her hair which was completely dried out and frizzled.

The reason for this, the participants theorize, is that the water is not only contaminated by the mine but it's not properly desalinated. Residents of Tamaquito II do not drink the water they have been provided with and try to not bathe their children in it. Furthermore, because the water is salinated it does not work to irrigate their crops - which has halted their agricultural practices. During my field work, I spoke to residents of other nearby communities who had the same concerns and also choose to not drink the water. Residents have been forced to buy bags of water instead of using the running water in their communities. Since they can no longer grow their own food, they have also been forced to buy food from Barrancas. This is what Jaime refers back to when he stated that the community had gone from being producers to consumers. In fact, Tamaquito II has been forced to become a consumer of goods of nearby Barrancas.

According to Glencore documents regarding Tamaquito and El Haltilo, Ivan Glasenberg, chief executive of Glencore, visited Tamaquito II in 2015 (Glencore, 2016). During this visit, Jaime expressed the communities' concerns over the quality and quantity of water (Glencore 2016). As a result, Glasenberg promised the community the construction of a new well connected to a treatment plant, for better quality drinking water. He also promised the community that the company would test their water. At the time this document was written, 2016, Glencore stated that the well would be finalized by May of 2016. It also states the water was treated and came back without any signs of contamination. Furthermore, in Cerrejon's 2016 Sustainability report, Tamaquito has its own water treatment system and that treated potable water would be provided to neighboring towns. However, at the time of my visit to Tamaquito II, in January 2018 - Jaime and other residents continued to express their concern over the quality of water. The well that Glencore had promised to work, did not. Jaime explained that he had address this concern once more to Cerrejon but they have refused to address the matter any

further. According to Jaime, Cerrejon stated that they had promised running water which is what they got but would not be salinizing the water for the community. Jaime and his community continue to address their concerns to Cerrejon. Jaime even travelled to Switzerland to address the shareholders of Cerrejon Limited about his community's concerns during a convention (La Buena Vida). Unfortunately, his concerns were not addressed and continue to be ignored by Cerrejon.

Another significant issue concerning the Wayuu community is the loss of dreaming. As mentioned in the beginning of the document, dreaming is principal factor in Wayuu spirituality. Residents, especially the elderly, find it difficult to dream after resettlement. This is a serious and significant phenomenon of displacement. When elders are displaced from their original communities, it was observed that one of two things happen, (1) they quickly become infirm and pass away, or (2) they have difficulty or inability of dreaming. Not dreaming means that the community cannot effectively communicate with spirits that guidance them. Spirits are able to give the communities advice or warnings. In all the interviews that were conducted, this was a topic that every interviewee highlighted. Wayuu community members were extremely concerned about the inability and/or difficulty of dreaming. To them, it is something intimate, meaningful and culturally important that had been taken away from them on top of being stripped of their territory. To remedy the situation, some residents of Tamaquito II have created traditional shelters, made of dried cactus, outside their official residence. The hope for the residents is that by sleeping in traditional shelters they have a better opportunity of communicating with ancestors. It is also another way residents can preserve culture and their spirituality.



Street of Tamaquito II. Barrancas, La Guajira, Colombia. Siddique, 2018.

6.2 At Risk Communities

“At-risk” communities are defined as communities that have yet to be displaced and may be in conversation with Cerrejon officials about purchasing their land or other matters. I consider the village of Campo Alegre, Provincial, San Juan and Barracon to be communities who are at risk. A common factor between these four towns is that they are overwhelmingly Wayuu. They are all also extremely close to Cerrejon. In the case of Barracon, my host family who lives on the border between Barracon and Campo Alegre, have been in discussion with Cerrejon officials about their property. The officials have come to their property to (1) measure if there is any obvious coal deposits on the property and (2) if so, how deep into the ground it is and (3) how much coal deposits are there. In fact, their property does have a significant amount of coal reserves buried about 12 meters into the earth. Cerrejon has put in their offer to buy the families property. A member of this family is a local indigenous authority figure. Although he does not want to lose his land- the place where he was raised, the place where a parcel of land was given

to him when he married and where he is raising his family- he does not see too many other options. He has held off the transaction for a while and firmly rejected the proposed amount Cerrejon offered on their property. He explained to me that he knew Cerrejon wanted to exploit this land and if he had to leave, he was going to get properly compensated.

The above-mentioned villages have all had contact with Cerrejon officials and are currently getting water tanks delivered to their residences on a weekly basis by Cerrejon. However, it was observed that when Cerrejon begins to deliver water tanks and help certain communities with education or economic development plans, it comes at a cost. I theorize, based upon observations, that these supposed kind and generous offers are initiated by the company to establish rapport with the community at hand and shortly thereafter, begins the company's investigations on coal reserves in the community and negotiations on resettlements. Based on this theory is how these communities are categorized and defined as "at risk".

At the end of each interview conducted, interviewees were asked three questions. The first, if their voices could be heard in Western nations who had a hand in initiating Cerrejon, what would they want them to know? Second, what they believe the next steps should be for their community (regardless of whether they were displaced or "at risk") and what are they recommending to other communities that are at risk of being displaced? Finally, what do they personally seek out when attending Cerrejon community meetings, participate in local activism and/or create films that target large audiences? The following are the answers, as a collective, to these series of questions. I coded the responses to analyze a trend. Their answers point to what the point of this work is, why we should bring attention to La Guajira and what the future is of the Wayuu in La Baja.

In regard to what “at risk” communities should consider, every participant had a slightly different answer. However, their responses can be separated into two categories. The first, resist. The second, leave but ensure fair economic compensation. The prominent leader of the only Wayuu community to be officially displaced, Tamaquito II, shared the views of many others in regard on what to do with the risk of forced displacement by Cerrejon. Resist. He believes, that at the time of his decision to work with Cerrejon he did the best thing for his community. However, poor living conditions, broken promises and significant change to culture has made his view change. He believes that “at risk” communities should resist displacement. He believes that Cerrejon will not fulfill their end of the bargain and communities who thrive in their environment will suffer by moving. However, we must take into consideration the Colombian Constitutional Court’s mandate on extrapolation. How easy would it really be for these communities to resist? How long would Cerrejon wait until asking for extrapolation?

The second popular response was for members to leave their land but be conscious of property value. In other words, some participants believe that Cerrejon is powerful enough to move residents regardless of consent. Cerrejon has broadened its hectares over the years, consuming communities. In effect, they have forced the displacement of neighboring villages, such as Tamaquito. By eliminating neighboring villages and the threat of health issues associated with the mine, it is in the best interest for residents to leave. However, they should be conscious of the funds available to multinationals. Residents are now aware of Cerrejons’ millions. If leaving their territory, residents are encouraged to insist they get fairly compensated.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Discussion

The relationship between Cerrejon and Guajiros has been extensively documented. This research focused on Wayuu communities because of a severe lack of information available strictly on Wayuu experiences with extractive industries. The Wayuu are caught between already being displaced and at-risk of displacement. It is not the fact that the people are not aware of the Wayuu that prevents extensive research but because there is a lack of documentation of indigenous communities displaced, specifically in the 1980's, and the impending risk of being displaced now by Cerrejon, this gray area makes research slightly more complicated. One critique of available literature is the tendency to lump Afro and Wayuu communities together. Although, in Barrancon, Afro and Wayuu communities do work together closely on preserving their communities and economies - their history is not similar, neither is their oppression or experiences of displacement.

First, by lumping Afro and Wayuu communities together it points to an assumption that because these are communities of color, their experiences are the same, which is not the case. It creates the idea that both communities have lost the same things, that they both have experienced violence and discrimination in the same manner. The Wayuu are native to this region, they thrived in La Guajira and resisted colonization (Olivella). The Afro-Colombian community are descendants of African slaves that formed their own communities in the Baja Guajira and successfully fought back their oppressors. Today, these communities work closely together, but that shouldn't be mistaken as a singular identity. Afro-Colombians have been subject to physical violence at the hands of the nation-state for resisting expropriation. Many afro-Colombians have lost their homes to Cerrejon. They have watched the homes they built be torn down and

experience significant trauma from the process. Traditionally, after a Wayuu community member dies, their homes should not be destroyed or reoccupied. Instead they are left to naturally disintegrate. By destroying a home, the Wayuu culture has been disrespected and deemed unimportant to the nation-state they are native to. So, while both groups may hurt and have the same physical experience, the significance and emotional reaction of these practices are different but no less legitimate.

Second, the habit of lumping Afro and Wayuu communities together fails to properly address and validate conflicts experienced solely by the Wayuu. This practice fails to properly acknowledge and expand on the loss of oral histories, lack of dreaming, loss of autonomy, the introduction to a capitalist economy and Westernized culture which has led to the loss of language and complete change in lifestyle due to urbanization. The Wayuu community must rely on their own organizations, such as Fuerzas Mujeres Wayuu, and environmental and human rights organizations such as ONIC, Censat Agua Vida and Indepaz to address their concerns. Academia has underserved this community and just as the nation-state invalidates their rights, we invalidate their experiences and concerns. By lending attention to their concerns over dream loss we can explore their religion, by addressing the problem of urbanization we can learn about traditional economies and how to support them and by allowing accessibility of these research papers then the world can bear witness to the violence they experience.

Residents, activists, and researchers have taken it upon themselves to get their message and voices on a global platform. Through social media, residents have been able to voice their concerns and show the world what residents of the La Guajira are fighting against. By that same token, Cerrejon has also been able to create a variety of advertisements aiming to show how environmentally and culturally responsible the mine is while pushing the limits of innovation.

Groundbreaking documentaries, such as “La Huellas Del Cerrejon”, backed by ICANH- Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia (Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History), do not only play with aesthetics to capture audiences but are dense in facts on the history of Cerrejon and the experiences of displaced residents. However, this film, like literature, has a tendency to lump afro-Colombians and Wayuu together. But that's where documentaries such as “Mushaisha: Una Pesadilla Wayuu” focuses on the experiences and voices of indigenous people. This film, winner of the National Journalism: Simon Bolivar Award, delves into how Wayuu spirituality continues to be fractured by mining. It highlights the *pesadilla*, or burden, the Wayuu must bear in the name of economic development for the nation-state. It focuses on the contamination and abuse of land and water by Cerrejon and how it has affected Wayuu culture and lifestyle. If residents are making their stories, struggles and forms of resistance available to the world - researchers, academics, and anthropologists should work harder to make findings, theories and ideas on solutions more available to the community.

When discussing violence in La Guajira, we are discussing physical psychological, environmental, and systemic forms of violence. Violence is at its most obvious when it is physical. Physical violence is expressed through paramilitary violence that targeted Wayuu communities in the 1990's. It is also expressed during the process of expropriation - the physical force of militarized police and machinery used to tear down homes with residents still inhabiting them or in the case of afro-communities, such as Roche and Tabaco, physically remove bodies from their land. When the nation-state and Cerrejon exert their power through physical violence then the communities get media attention but if they don't, the world stays silent. Violence is also the psychological trauma that comes from displacement and expropriation. Psychological trauma can be applied to the multiple threats of murder and assault environmental activists in the

area receive for speaking out against multinational corporations and the nation-state (cite). The anticipation of violence can also be placed in the category of psychological violence. This anticipation refers to (1) the impending violence that comes before expropriation and (2) the threat of forced displacement and/or resettlement that may come from living in a community that is categorized as “at risk”. Environmental violence can be expressed in the form of contamination of water by the mining practices Cerrejon. It can also be seen in the streets of Barrancas and the villages that lay on its outskirts. Trash fills these streets and villages are forced to contaminate their own environment because the nation-state has not provided them with sanitation services. In 2007, the World Bank was involved in a proposed loan of \$90 billion USD to be used on sanitation infrastructure and water services in La Guajira (World Bank, 2007). This document specifically identified the fact that Wayuu communities are in need of sanitation and water development programs yet 11 years later, La Guajira still has no sanitation services. Systemic violence, as coined by philosopher Slavoj Zizek in “Violence: Six Sideways Reflections”, is the spectacular violence created by political and economic systems (2007). La Guajira is the space in which indigenous communities are forced into a capitalist economy, neoliberalism has empowered multinational corporations and where a corrupt government that sold out it’s indigenous communities plays out.

7.2 Limitations

There are certain limitations on this research that must be addressed. First, there was not enough time on the ground in Colombia to document the stories of displaced residents, to monitor Wayuu families that are considered “at risk”, document health effects as Cerrejon draws its borders closer to Wayuu lands and follow legal battles initiated by residents against Cerrejon.

The time limitation also challenged the ability to create rapport with residents, organizations, and Cerrejon officials. It also limited the amount of time spent at the site of extraction. Furthermore, this investigation was completed in four months when it requires months, even years to be properly documented. Second, as mentioned in the methodology section, by employing the snowball sampling there was a limited pool of participants, including interviewing more Cerrejon officials. This method limited the ability to interview residents that may have a different perspective on Cerrejon and the role of the nation-state.

7.3 Conclusion

Indigenous voices in Colombia are often met with a superficial interest followed by violence when they do not conform to or accept unjust policies that target indigenous communities. Social movements and the increasing accessibility of media production and social media outlets have allowed for indigenous voices to be heard and distributed world-wide. Participants who are active in social media platforms or have produced documentaries that highlight the struggles of their communities with Cerrejon, believe that Western nations must bear witness to the violence enacted on indigenous bodies by multinational companies. The coal exploited in La Guajira provides energy directly to European nations. America is not without innocence, ExxonMobil was the first partner of this investment and its subsidiaries continue to be active in this investment. By hearing the stories and voices of residents affected by the mine we cannot turn the other way. By watching Cerrejon blasts, seeing how it shakes the homes of locals and seeing militarized police forcibly remove residents from their ancestral lands we can no longer pretend we are not complicit. We must bear witness to the violence that is forced onto locals.

Wayuu community members ask for (1) first and foremost, autonomy, (2) the return of their original land bought by Cerrejon, (3) dignified way of life in resettled communities - desalinated water and investment and commitment to sustainable economic projects (4) for Cerrejon to fully understand that some things cannot be bought with money and (5) nation-state to accept responsibility for producing and enforcing policies that hurt indigenous communities. Let us create a narrative about the residents who now have access to internet, phones and laptops and use their knowledge to get their story on a national platform. What prevents these communities from success is the lack of support from the nation-state and ignorance from the worldwide community.

7.4 Future Work and Significance

There is a lack of accessibility to documents regarding the experiences of Wayuu community members in relation to extractive industries and an absentee state. Research into how Wayuu lifestyle, economy, language and spirituality is affected by Cerrejon Limited is lacking. There is need for more research into this subject that can benefit the community, educate others outside of the nation-state and allow them to bear witness to the violence caused by extractive industries on indigenous communities.

Future research into the Guajira should include the documentation of any health effects, the documentation of legal battles brought against Cerrejon, testing water sources for contamination and complete commitment to learning and documenting Wayuu language and beliefs. As Spanish is quickly consuming Wayuunaiki in Barrancas, a dialect stemming from the Arawak family, it is at risk of losing its footing. Researchers can help by formally documenting the language in an effort to preserve it. Furthermore, researchers should make their research easily accessible to local communities.

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