

TUMBURAO: A SOVIET IN THE ANDES

New realities and challenges to the dominant narratives on the indigenous movement and the Colombian conflict between 1981-1992 in the department of Cauca, Colombia



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*“Ithaca gave to you the beautiful journey;
without her you’d not have set upon the road.”
C.P. Cavafi*

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To Cauca. Ancestral and unquenchable source of the admirable struggle for human dignity. To her indigenous and her black peoples, her guerrilla, her alluring scenery. The place that removed me from the land of wonders and plunged me, irremediably, into the infinite and steep path traversed by the 'nonconformists' of this earth.

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ACRONYMS

CRIC	Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional
EPL	Ejército Popular de Liberación
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
INCORA	Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria
M-19	Movimiento 19 de abril
PCC/CP	Partido Comunista Colombiano
PNR	Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación
UP	Unión Patriótica

INTRODUCTION

“You’re leaving on the 12.30 bus, tell the driver to drop you off at Salvador’s and we’ll pick you up there». This is how the governor of the *cabildo* of Tumburao announced the acceptance of my visit to their territory to recount the history of their community. I did not know Salvador, nor the place I had to get off and wait to be picked up. The bus climbed the backbone of the central mountain range and the voluptuousness of the Andean mountains filled the glances of all the passengers, all of whom were natives except me.

«This is where you get off, we’re at Salvador’s», the driver told me, after what I remember as an hour and a half long journey. The rain had not seized since noon, a dense medley of red soil tinted everything, but the crisp smell of recently made water redeemed the beauty of the moment. At the house, which had three unplastered brick bedrooms, earth floor and a woodstove, no one asked me a thing, I was just told that Salvador was not in, and handed a stool on which I sat and watched as the rain fell, estimating how many oceans Pachamama’s thirsty throat could hold in these fertile lands, waiting for something to occur.

A couple of hours later, at the door opening, a silhouette appeared of a man who greeted me at once. It was market-day in the town of Silvia. Salvador had had a few when he got home and we began talking, leaned against the door frame. He asked me where I was from, how long I had been in Colombia for and what this whole thing was about writing the history of the *cabildo*. I explained myself as best I could at the time. Salvador started speaking to me of the importance of the struggle for the territory, the importance of having their own *cabildo* and of the sacrifices that were needed to achieve it. During the conversation, Salvador began to weep; he wept out of anger when he told me of the abuse of the authorities, of the accusations and of the threats. He then looked at me and thanked me for having gone there, for wanting to tell the story of his people.

Lastly, without holding back those tears of anger that still gushed out of his eyes, he told me: «this story must be known, people need to know about us, that we’re not the bad ones, people need to know who the true enemy is”¹

These field notes sum up the exact moment of my first physical encounter with Tumburao. A community and a territory whose life experience and resistance does not match the conventional narratives of the political, social, economic and armed conflict in Colombia; narratives that are at times challenged and at others surpassed by the reality in Tumburao. A *cabildo* and an indigenous *resguardo*² I discovered by accident, which ended up being the core subject of this thesis.

¹ Diego Fernando Marin Rios, "Field Work Notebook," (2017).

² *Resguardo* is the basic political-administrative unit of the indigenous population; it is a geographic area with well-defined limits, protected by law, community-owned and corresponding to a specific group of inhabitants. The membership of a *resguardo*, besides guaranteeing rights (mainly the right to land ownership), imposes political and social duties such as participation in different forms of collective work and administration of the territory through the *cabildo*. Approximately 70% of the indigenous *resguardos* of the Cauca region belong to the Nasa people. The *cabildo* is the political-administrative institution that governs each one of the *resguardos*, it is a hierarchical structure whose maximum authority is the governor and all of its positions are chosen democratically every year. In addition to the political administration of the *resguardo*, the *cabildo* is also the

In the wake of the signing of the peace agreements with the FARC-EP, the dominant historical narratives are being pierced by the realities previously occult to the academia. Realities that demand urgent analysis and disclosure. In this context, the thus far untold story of Tumburao is of exceptional value as it challenges the official history of the indigenous movement in Cauca, provides new elements to expand the history of the Colombian conflict, and because it calls for attention on the need to address the study of this country's history from new angles, such as local and oral histories.

Gathering, assembling, narrating and analysing the history of Tumburao was an academic endeavour that surpassed the limits of the utmost effort that I, as a Master's student, was able to offer. Thanks to what Lund calls serendipitous episodes during the interviews³ I came across Tumburao, whose founding process of the *cabildo* and *resguardo* is quite unique. From the original idea of a social history project on the guerrilla warfare in Colombia, I abruptly moved unto a project with strong anthropological and ethnographic components. The sources went from being predominantly written to becoming fundamentally oral, forcing a methodological and theoretical change. This is a case in which the progression of the field work and the sources themselves, determined the method and the theory of analysis as the topic grew in scale and possible ways of development. More than a drawback, this has to me been the opportunity to truly immerse into the realms of academia and History.

This Master Thesis presents the accounts of some of the main protagonists in the history of the struggle and resistance for the establishment of the Nasa⁴ *cabildo* and *resguardo* Tumburao

intermediary between the community and other indigenous and state authorities. It is worth mentioning that the *cabildo* also has functions of judicial authority and that it is, without a doubt, the most important reference for social control together with the elders of each *resguardo*. Ximena Pachón C., "Los Nasa O La Gente Paéz," ed. Instituto Colombiano de cultura hispánica, vol. II, *Geografía Humana de Colombia. Región Andina Central* (Bogotá, Colombia: Banco de la República, 2014), <http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/geografia/geohum2/inicio.htm>. 191-201.

³ Christian Lund, "Of What Is This a Case? Analytical Movements in Qualitative Social Science Research," *Human Organization* 73, no. 3 (2014).

⁴ The Nasa (people of water), indigenous people formerly known as Pueblo Paéz, represents 13.4% of the indigenous population of Colombia (186,178 persons), with 88.6% of its population concentrated in the department of Cauca, according to the 2005 census. Their language is Nasa Yuwe, spoken only by 41.9% of the total population. Their ancestral territory forms a triangle located in the eastern buttresses of the Central Andes, between the rivers Paez, Yaguará and La Plata; a territory characterized by the abundance of important water sources and large topographic features, among them several prominent volcanoes. The Nasa people are the principal referent of the struggle for dignity and indigenous self-determination in Colombia since the Spanish colony, due to a history of struggle and resistance that begins with the Cacica Gaitana (mid-sixteenth century), followed by Juan Tama in the seventeenth century (their most important historical and mythological figure) and José Gonzalo Sánchez and Manuel Quintín Lame in the mid-twentieth century. The Nasa people are the

*NXUN CXAMB*⁵, for the first time. A historical analysis is pursued that captures methodological and theoretical elements of social and oral history, as well as elements from anthropology and sociology.

This historical analysis plays out in three concentric stages. The first stage corresponds to the history of the struggle and resistance for the establishment of the *cabildo* and *resguardo* Nasa of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, in opposition to the *cabildos* and *resguardos* already in place; a battle against the landowners and their *pájaros*⁶, against the dominant ruling group inside the CRIC (the most important indigenous organization in Colombia); against guerrilla groups of opposite ideology to the political thought of the people of Tumburao, and of course, against the State. This is the stage of the analysis of the experience of the community of Tumburao, as a people and as individuals, in their condition of struggle and resistance.

The second stage of analysis is the history of Tumburao in relation to the dominant historical narratives on the indigenous movement of the Cauca region and of the CRIC; narratives that are stirred up by the case of Tumburao, presenting new realities and demanding new analyses.

Finally, the third stage of historical analysis studies the relationship between the experience of Tumburao and the history of the political, economic, social and armed conflict in Colombia. The Tumburao case represents unprecedented developments in the way Colombians have lived the conflict, a situation that demands greater creativity and innovation in the investigation of this social phenomenon. Therefore, in this third stage the story of Tumburao is contrasted with some of the conventional narratives about the conflict and the process of construction of the Nation-State in Colombia, exploring new elements for the analysis that the Tumburao case offers us - an approach from the local and human perspective, to rediscover history.

backbone of the CRIC, the first indigenous regional organization created in Colombia and a reference for indigenous movements throughout Latin America. Dirección de Población, "Caracterizaciones De Los Pueblos Indígenas En Riesgo," (Bogotá, Colombia: Ministerio de Cultura, 2010).

⁵ From *Nasa Yuwe*: Town of the Laurel Trees. As the elders have explained in the interviews, this is due to the abundance of this tree in the territory. From this point on, Tumburao will refer to the community and the territory, and the name Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* will refer to the *cabildo* and *resguardo* institutions, just as the community uses the term. I have decided to keep the *Nasa Yuwe* spelling, as it was taught to me in Tumburao, because of the futility in finding an authorized source on the matter - my search of *nasa yuwe* in different dictionaries yielded different forms of spelling, such as is the case with *CXAMB* (town), of which I also found the spelling forms *ÇXHAB* and *CHJAMB*.

⁶ *Pájaros* (Birds) is the name given to the private armed groups at the service of the local economic and political powers. In Colombian historiography, these are understood as the precursors to the paramilitary groups that will rise at the end of the 80's to defend the same interests, in direct association with the official military forces and the large illegal businesses, such as drug trafficking and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

In sum, this thesis presents ground-breaking historical experiences, defiance to some of the dominant narratives as well as new elements for the analysis and study of the Colombian conflict.

I must warn that the history presented here is told by some of the protagonists belonging to Tumburao, their description of the facts, together with their motivations, objectives and functions⁷. The goal is to present the case of Tumburao from the vision of its protagonists, their own description of the facts and what they believe happened. The reason for this is both practical and academic. Many of the persons and power groups embattled with Tumburao *NXUN-CXAMB* no longer exist, as is the case of landowners, the guerrillas M-19, Quintín Lame and Ricardo Franco and leaders and officials of the time. Furthermore, due to the socio-cultural environment in which the events took place, there are no substantial written accounts available. I have not found, so far in my research, any academic texts on Tumburao or cases similar to it, and, additionally, the predominant use of oral sources allows for other routes of analysis.

I consider myself truly fortunate for having come across the history of the life and struggle of the Nasa people of Tumburao and their *cabildo NXUN CXAMB*, and for counting on their confidence and trust in compiling their history and writing about it. This is a story of suffering, violence, injustice; but also of heroic actions of ordinary people, of solidarity and altruism; but above all, it is a story of an entire community's struggle for dignity and political self-determination. This is their story, the history of Tumburao. In this thesis we attempt to tell it collectively: some of its protagonists in the role of narrators, and I, doing my best to live up to my role as a historian. As for me, my commitment in writing this can be summed up in Manuel Mejía Vallejo's «Raison d'être». I write this story because

«For us, Latin Americans, writing is almost a civic and political duty, in the best sense of these words (...) due to an instinct of solidarity, in an attempt to be the voice of those who do not have one (...) an instinct of curiosity, as an equivalent to creative research (...) an instinct of the magical, when the *homo ludens* surpasses the *homo sapiens* (...) Or simply because I grasp the different phenomena better as I write them down»⁸.

⁷ My use of the terms “objective”, “motive” and “function” subscribe to that suggested by E.P. Thompson, as the basic elements that must be traced in order to comprehend the change in human behavior and the actions undertaken in a given historical context. E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present* 50 (1971).

⁸ Manuel Mejía Vallejo, *Cuentos De Zona Tórrida* (Bogotá: Ed. Norma, 1994).

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH QUESTION, METHOD AND THEORY

1.1 Research Question

This paper gathers, assembles, narrates and analyses the untold history of Tumburao, in the voice of some of its main protagonists. It is the history of the struggle and resistance of this Nasa indigenous community, for the foundation of an autonomous *cabildo* and *resguardo*, today called *NXUN CXAMB*. This is a historical process that takes place between 1981 and 1993, in the northeast of the Department of Cauca, Colombia.



Figure 1.1: Map of Colombia. Source: Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute.

The central theme of the historical analysis is the founding process of this Nasa community as an autonomous political community, that is, the founding of a new differentiated political

community within the most important indigenous social movement in Colombia. This historical process had political and ideological bases contrary to the dominant political discourse in the CRIC and therefore had to face, not only the landowners and the State, but also the CRIC leadership itself as well as three guerrilla groups (M-19, Quintín Lame and Ricardo Franco).

The analysis is addressed from three concentric analytical stages: 1) the history of the struggle and resistance for the foundation of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, 2) the case of Tumburao seen in the framework of the history of the indigenous movement in Cauca and, 3) the Tumburao case in relation to the Colombian conflict and the formation process of the Nation-State.

Through the first analytical stage, the quest is to know what makes Tumburao a remarkable case within the indigenous movement of Cauca, what are the most important features and how did the historical process unfold. In the second stage, I will explore the challenges that the history of Tumburao presents in relation to the dominant historical narrative about this indigenous movement and to what degree the case of Tumburao forces change of that historical account. In the third analytical stage I will examine the relation of these events to the political, social and armed conflict and the construction of the Nation-State in Colombia, as well as what new elements the Tumburao case introduces for the historical analysis of the Colombian conflict in general. These are the questions that guide this thesis.

This is a historical experience whose astonishing singularity contributes to broadening and clarifying the history of ordinary people and communities in the context of the conflict in Colombia, which has been one of the main driving forces –perhaps the main driving force–, in the formation process of the Colombian nation-state and the political culture in this South American country. This is the history of Tumburao: A Soviet in the Andes.

1.2. Method

My encounter with Tumburao and its history was a serendipitous encounter. It occurred at the end of two weeks of research into archives for the original subject of this thesis and at the end of one of my first interviews, when I heard the name “Tumburao” for the first time. Almost possessed by what I today would call a historian’s instinct, I embarked on the task of telling this story. It implied a methodological readjustment, changes in the work schedule –already

two weeks short–, the rethinking of the fieldwork and the inclusion of unfamiliar theoretical and methodological components into the thesis.

Contrary to the predictable field work with which historians are often associated, this thesis is an example in which history manifests itself spontaneously and exceeds the academic assumptions of the historian, showing him a better way to fulfil his mission.

1.2.1. Social History and Oral History

If the past is another country that we historians go visit, why conform to drawing the map of that foreign land when we could also observe it from “the natives’ point of view”⁹?

From a critical viewpoint, Raphael Samuel posits ordinary peoples’ dignity as the integrative theme of social history, “a celebration of everyday life, even, perhaps especially, when it involved hardship and suffering.”¹⁰ This is understood as telling the story from below, a theoretical and methodological approach which “held special appeal for historians writing about the kinds of men and women whose voices were hard to recover”.¹¹ This type of historical analysis implies analysing the structural elements, the political (power) and the economic (property)¹², in the search of historical human experience in all its magnitude. Following Keith Thomas, it cannot be overlooked that the structural elements of any society are also culturally determined¹³, so that, as Robert Darnton points out, historians in their work also “may be able to unravel an alien system of meaning”¹⁴.

The expansion of the field of historical analysis in this direction requires the use of methodological tools from cultural anthropology, ethnography and literary criticism, as explained by Natalie Zemon Davis in her study on the violent rituals in the context of struggles between Protestants and Catholics in France. These types of analyses should, according to Davis, search for “connections between patterns of experience and the adoption of social identities, aspirations, and religious beliefs”, with the aim of not reducing the past to socio-economic rationality, paying attention to the meaning of the symbolic systems and the character

⁹ Clifford Geertz, "From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 28, no. 1 (1974).

¹⁰ Raphael Samuel, "What Is Social History," *History Today* 35, no. 3 (1985).

¹¹ William G. Pooley, "Native to the Past: History, Anthropology, and Folklore," *Past and Present* gtv038 (2015).

¹² Natalie Zemon Davis, "Writing 'the Rites of Violence' and Afterward," *Ibid.*, no. Supplement 7 (2012).

¹³ Keith Thomas, "History and Anthropology," *Ibid.* 24 (1963): 7.

¹⁴ William G. Pooley, "Native to the Past: History, Anthropology, and Folklore," *Ibid.* gtv038 (2015).

of performance. In this sense, human actions are “historically and culturally conditioned, not the simple expression of timeless demonic force”.¹⁵

The social, economic, political and cultural conditions in place causes the Tumburao case to fit perfectly for this type of analysis, which implies observing more than traditional explanations based almost exclusively on conflicts over land ownership, control of political power and the development of the armed conflict, as an integral part of the construction process of the Colombian Nation-State. It becomes necessary, then, to move closer to the concrete human experiences (the motivations, aspirations, limitations), both individual and collective, in order to achieve a better understanding of history from the perspective of its protagonists. It is a matter of discarding the idea of doing history on social phenomena (in this case the political history or the history on the Colombian conflict) and to begin to write history from the very people that lived it, through their perceptions of their own realities. In the case of this work, it is to tell and analyse the history from the point of view of the leaders of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, about its founding process as an autonomous political community, adopting a particular political identity and growing new social aspirations based on their autonomy vis-à-vis other *cabildos* of the CRIC.

Furthermore, the use of oral history imposes itself on this thesis not only due to the socio-cultural complexities of studying an indigenous community whose system of knowledge is based on oral tradition, but also by the material conditions of poverty and abandonment of rural areas such as Tumburao. The most common cultural condition for people in the non-hegemonic classes is somewhere in between, in a fluid state of transition from orality to writing and sometimes back, declares Alessandro Portelli¹⁶. This is an assertion that fits the Tumburao case like a glove, not only in the traditional sense of understanding the non-hegemonic classes in relation to the power of the State (Tumburao as part of the indigenous movement in permanent tension with political elites), but also understanding Tumburao as a non-hegemonic group within the indigenous movement itself, in opposition to the power group in control of the CRIC. This is to recognize the existence of a political and ideological debate within the indigenous movement in Cauca, an internal struggle not only for the leadership of the indigenous movement, but also for its historical narrative in contradiction with the vision disseminated by

¹⁵ Natalie Zemon Davis, "Writing 'the Rites of Violence' and Afterward," *Past and Present*, no. Supplement 7 (2012).

¹⁶ Alessandro Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," *History Workshop* 12 (1981): 102.

the historical account dominant in the CRIC. The predicament of the Tumburao community will therefore be understood in this thesis as the *multiple counterhegemonic condition* of Tumburao.

The use of oral history was also deemed necessary due to the absence of relevant written sources. This in turn is disclosed through the education level and living conditions of the people of Tumburao, the conditions of secrecy, political risks and rivalry in which the historical events unfolded, in addition to the geographic isolation which has prevented local newspapers or third parties to find interest in recording what has taken place there. There is, however, one single book, preserved by the community, which contains the socioeconomic study done by INCORA¹⁷ in 1992, as a legal requirement for the Colombian State to officially recognize Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. This text is included in the analysis of written sources, but the relationship of the community with this book, as much with the contents as with the book itself, as an object, is also important analytical material.

What we have already called the serendipitous character of my encounter with Tumburao produced great challenges after assuming oral history as a core element of this thesis. This was in large part due to the preparation prior to conducting field work, which was dedicated to other subjects of study, as to the lack of knowledge in oral history - nearly entirely absent during my undergraduate and master studies in history - which in turn may affect the quality of my analysis.

Together with the historical explanations of the social and political phenomena, through an emphasis on oral history, I seek to unveil something of the framework of motivations, identities and personal, family, social, economic, political and cultural relationships that make up the canvas of the human condition, canvas upon which all history, inevitably, must be drawn. I believe this is the best way to extract universal human themes that make it possible to understand others' stories, to relate to them and to feel them, not just read them.

There is therefore a need to clarify some of the problematic elements that emerge in the use of oral history, such as the origin and credibility of the sources, the problem of language,

¹⁷ Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform. Institution that oversaw the public administration of the rural properties and the implementation of the agrarian reform. It has disappeared off the institutional map of the Colombian State.

individual and collective memory as well as the relationship between myth and history. These issues will be discussed at greater length further on in this chapter.

1.2.2. Look to the Sources or Create Them?

According to Portelli “Oral sources (...) are a necessary (if not sufficient) condition for a history of the non-hegemonic classes”¹⁸ as a consequence of the excluding nature of the control over writing of the ruling classes. This condition reproduces remarkably in the case of Tumburao, an indigenous Nasa community, confronting the State, landowners, the dominant power group within the CRIC and several guerrilla groups who opposed the political and administrative autonomy of Tumburao.

In consequence, the stories told by the narrators in Tumburao - the primary sources in this work - acquire a *multiple counterhegemonic condition*. Multiple, in the sense that they had to confront what could be understood as their natural adversaries (the State and landowners with their private armies), as well as those who should have been their natural allies (three left wing guerrilla groups and the social indigenous organization CRIC, which formally represents the interests of all indigenous people of the Cauca region). This condition of exclusion, isolation and persecution of the people of Tumburao, and the opposition to the constitution of Tumburao *NXUN-CXAMB* can therefore be understood as a *condition of multiple subordination*, since it came from the State and landowners, as much as it did from the indigenous social organization CRIC, as well as the left wing political organizations, represented under three guerrilla groups (M-19, Quintín Lame and Ricardo Franco).

As was already mentioned, the sociocultural conditions of the population are also decisive for the predominant use of oral sources, e.g. the condition of illiteracy or functional illiteracy of the community of Tumburao in 1982 (they only had a meagre school which offered education until 5th grade). To this, we must add the linguistic element. On the one hand, the lack of a good proficiency in the Spanish language and, on the other, the lack of rescue and conservation programs of the Nasa-Yuwe language further alienated them from written culture.

¹⁸ Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 104.

Based on concrete examples of oral history, Paul Thompson asserts that “where no history is readily at hand, it will be created”¹⁹. In the case of this thesis, reinforced by the unpublished condition of the history of Tumburao, the process of historicisation begins with the creation of sources in my fieldwork as a historian. This would be the recording of oral stories as well as their transcription.

There is the need here to emphasize that the oral sources, the primary sources for this thesis, possess a particular nature, as “oral sources are always the result of a relationship, a common project in which both the informant and the researcher are involved together”²⁰. The latter opens up a new dimension of my work as a historian, granting greater analytical scope to my performance as an interviewer, in the development during the fieldwork and in the transcription of the stories - which always contains a degree of interpretation.

The choice of narrators during my visit to Tumburao was also determined by the aforementioned serendipitous character of this work. Limited by the timeframe of my visit as a guest in their territory, and aware of the time I had to invest in establishing bonds of trust that would lead to the community’s acceptance of the project, I focused on interviewing the most important authorities of the *cabildo* and the greatest number of elders as I possibly could. In this way I obtained access to the stories of the protagonists or direct witnesses of the turn of events and to the recounts made by the young leaders who today have received the responsibility of managing the history of what happened and to defend the results. This allows for the consolidation of what we, from sociology, can call a *representative sample* for this case study.

With what has been said thus far, we can assert that in the content of this Master's thesis, what concerns the oral production and written interpretation of all primary sources, is the presentation of the *dominant foundational narrative* within Tumburao that legitimizes the history, founding process and existence of the autonomous political community Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. I wish to add special emphasis to the word «dominant» here, as the majority of the narrators are people who were at the forefront of this historical process and today are the most representative group in the leadership of the *cabildo*. Since I did not conduct interviews

¹⁹ Paul Thompson and Joanna Bornat, *The Voice of the Past. Oral History*, Fourth Edition ed. (Oxford University Press, 2017), 1.

²⁰ Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 103.

with persons outside the leadership of the *cabildo* or with the average Joe, I must consider this narrative the dominant one. However, to recognize such is not to claim it is the only narrative in existence. In any case, the primary sources of this thesis are not invalidated and the circumstances allow for the historical analysis, as well as examining the formation of collective memory and the purpose of the dominant foundational narrative within Tumburao. To follow Portelli once again: “oral history tells us less about events as such than about their meaning”²¹.

The group of narrators of this story is composed of ten of the elders in the community (witnesses and/or first-hand protagonists of the events in Tumburao between 1982 - 1993), and three young leaders of the *cabildo* of Tumburao, including the current governor. This group of narrators constitute the primary sources for this thesis.

When it comes to Tumburao’s early history, the elders will be considered secondary sources as their stories depend on the stories told by other elders, as is natural in societies where historical accounts are based on oral tradition.

The content of the socioeconomic report written by INCORA in 1992 - the only book written on Tumburao - gathers historical, demographic, geographic, social and economic data of the community and the territory. As a source, it has dual character, behaving both as a primary and a secondary source depending on the subject of analysis. As an artefact, the relationship the community has to the book and the objective it fulfils as part of the *dominant foundational narrative* of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, are part and parcel of the main observations from the fieldwork.

The set of sources is completed with academic texts consulted for historical analysis and the theoretical and methodological foundations of the present work. Finally, my field notes as well as the experiences and observations made during my stay with the Tumburao community, are also taken into consideration for the analyses in this thesis.

1.2.3. Reliability and Analysis of Oral Sources: language, subjectivity and memory

In the case of Tumburao, as we are talking about narrators who were first-hand actors or witnesses, and of the young leaders who today are in charge of receiving, reproducing and

²¹ Ibid., 99.

transmitting that legacy (the sum of what we have termed primary sources). Therefore, prior to introducing the dilemma between reliable and unreliable sources, we must consider that memory is also a subject of study in dealing with oral history.

As Alistair Thomson points out, “the subjectivity of memory provides clues not only about the meanings of historical experience, but also about the relationships between past and present, between memory and personal identity, and between individual and collective memory”²². Furthermore, Thomson highlights how historians have managed to build a set of tools in order to approach the study of memory. With contributions from psychology and social anthropology, historians today can discover the bias and fabulation of memory, the significance of retrospection, and the effects of the interviewer upon remembering. Representative sample methods have been adopted from sociology and thanks to a long tradition of documentary history, rules have been established for checking the reliability and internal consistency of the sources; “These guidelines provided useful signposts for reading oral history interviews and for combining them with other historical sources to find out what happened in the past.”²³

The proximity of the historical events (1982-1993) and the continuation of the political and ideological conflicts generated in that context, are elements that sustain the reliability of the primary sources in the way these are presented in this work: as the dominant narrative of the foundation of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. This *dominant foundational narrative* in the history of Tumburao remains in use in the everyday political and social life of this community. These are narratives of permanent use throughout the period of time that separates us from the historical events. Living stories whose meaning and function in the community remain valid and in use, thus facilitating their analysis.

1.2.4. Analysis of the Sources

As established thus far, the accounts, their transcription and their presentation in this thesis, constitute what I have called the *dominant foundational narrative* in the history of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. The aim is to analyse this narrative, applying the tools developed by previous scholars for the validation and understanding of the sources.

²² Alistair Thomson, "Memory and Remembering in Oral History," in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Donald A. Ritchie (Oxford University Press, 2010), 80.

²³ *Ibid.*, 79.

1.2.4.1 *The Factual and the Subjective*

Once the reliability of the sources is verified, one can engage the analysis of the narratives produced. The first step is to understand that the analysis of oral sources goes beyond the pursuit of the factual and implies the study of the psychological and subjective aspects of the stories told. It is necessary, then, to account for what I will call the *personal story* of each narrator: firstly, the family, political and ideological background, his or her standing in the social network upon which the narrated events took place, and the possible personal, social or political agendas of each one of them; in second place, is the way each narrator recalls his or her *personal story*.

Additionally, it is pivotal to clarify how the interviews were carried out, how the story was expressed, and the intervention of the historian in the production of oral sources. To exemplify, the same level of confidentiality cannot be expected of a narrator in an individual interview as during a collective interview or an interview with an audience. This is so, as each narrator will either be limited in distancing him- or herself from the collective memory, lest great contradictions or polemic issues within the community come afloat. In other words, what could be perceived as a great disadvantage of oral history, here it is applied as a strength.

1.2.4.2. *The Notion of Time*

Naturally, another central theme here is the use of time. Dealing with an ancestral community, with its specific cultural characteristics, the Nasa possess their very own perception of time. However, despite how interesting the topic, I lack the necessary space and theoretical tools for a more in-depth analysis of the Nasa notion of time. Nevertheless, owing to the results of my fieldwork, I am able to analyse the perception of time that emerges in the accounts obtained from primary sources, since the idea of writing history from the perspective of its protagonists inevitably involves telling it from their perception of their particular time, what sort of periodization or what sort of generalizations they make regarding it.

When speaking of the subject, Jan Eivind Myhre exposes the way Robert Berkhofer divides the perception of time into five categories: *physical (metric or absolute) time*, *subjective time*, *cultural time*, *social time* and *symbolic time*. *Physical time* is that which is tied to the clock, to the modern and standardized vision of the passing of time. *Subjective time* is that based on individual experiences or expectations related to the way in which time manifests itself. *Cultural time* is the perception of time shared by a group of persons in the same culture, a sort of shared perception of the *velocity* or *speed* at which human activities are carried out. *Social*

time is that which describes repetitive social activities, such as hunting or harvest seasons. Finally, the *symbolic time* is that which encompasses periods of history whose developments have mythical or foundational functions in a society.²⁴

There are, of course, numerous other ways of dealing with the subject of time. However, in this case, based on Berkhofer's division of time, I have decided to approach the issue in terms of two objectives. First, to present the story in the closest form possible to how its own protagonists perceive and narrate it, and second, to make this story most understandable to the reader, which in itself allows for the possibility of historicizing the accounts. In this way I have tried to identify and synthesize the way the narrators perceive the time of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* regarding its founding process. It is, simultaneously, the way in which this story is presented and analysed in the present work.

Preserving the distance with what may be known as the perception of Nasa time, three perceptions or usages of time are to be found in this thesis: the *ancestral time*, the *political time* and the *research time*.

The *ancestral time*²⁵ refers to the community of Tumburao's perception of time, shared to some extent with other Nasa communities, and includes Berkhofer's symbolic time, i.e. the mythological and historical founding elements of the community of Tumburao. This time extends from the very origin of the Nasa to the foundation of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, as the emergence of the *cabildo* and *resguardo* are also founding elements of the community of Tumburao. To us, as readers, it allows to see the elements of constitutive importance of the community of Tumburao - both those shared with the other Nasa, as much as the particular ones of Tumburao. This is the constitutive time of Tumburao as an autonomous political community, with its own identity and narratives.

The *political time* resembles Berkhofer's *social time* insofar as it is collective and has to do with a recurrent social activity. However, here, *political time* refers to the struggle and political resistance in the construction and/or defence of the *cabildo* - the most important and recurrent social activity in the accounts produced for this thesis. Hence, this is the perception of time that

²⁴ Jan Eivind Myhre, *Historie. En Introduksjon Til Grunnlagsproblemer*. (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2014), 69-73.

²⁵ I have decided to group under the concept of 'ancestral' the narratives that combine historical events with explanations from the Nasa history and Nasa worldview.

can be divided into the before, during and after the formation of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* and is defined by the specific struggle of the people of Tumburao, in opposition to CRIC and to the other neighbouring Nasa communities.

The *research time*, similar to Berkhofer's *subjective time*, is defined by my activity as a historian, and begins from the moment I learned of the existence of Tumburao and decided to welcome it as my subject of study, through the fieldwork and the subsequent developments of my analytical work. While I have accepted that the historical analyses based on oral history are the product of the collective effort of the researcher and the narrators, the *research time* will allow me to introduce the explanations about the contexts of the interviews, my annotations and observations from the field, as well as my own experiences in Tumburao, as part of the narrative and analytical exercise in this thesis. This is, in short, the time the community of Tumburao and I have done on this research.

These *times* are a narrative resource applied to guide the reader throughout the text, holding a full perspective of the stories while they are narrated. As is common to non-Western historical narratives, in the Nasa stories, the past events are not clearly isolated from the topics in the present, rather, the Nasa people present a series of images of what they remember, in the form of individual episodes, without linking them to a narrative sequence - as is usual in Western history - making it difficult to place such events in *physical* time and space. It is important to clarify that this way of narrating is a mnemonic resource, which does not affect the existence of the usual chronological references, shared by the narrator and the listener. It is precisely because of this, that these *times* are used as narrative resources rather than analytical tools.

1.2.4.3. *The Narrative*

Although a relationship is recognized in the historical analysis, in which “the object of study defines the method, in the same way the method also defines the object of study”²⁶, it is evident how, in this work, the subject of study had a determining impact on the choice of method. It becomes clear, then, that due to the type of sources used in this work, we are dealing with a case where the narrative character in which the story is produced (oral stories), also defines the narrative character of the way history is transcribed and analysed.

²⁶ Astri Andresen, *Å Gripe Fortida: Innføring I Historisk Forståing Og Metode* (Oslo: Samlaget, 2012), 87.

To Hayden White, each narrative exercise has at least three dimensions. The first of these is the *chronicle*, which refers to the chronological order of events. However, it should be noted that this is not necessarily *physical time*, but is of the organization of events in relation to themselves. That is to say, each narrator organizes the events chronologically based on his own criteria, from his own subjectivities, in the same way that the historian must chronologically organize the history that he presents. The second dimension is the *process*, this is what leads, both the narrator and his audience, from A to C through a B content, i.e., the way each narration can be made comprehensible to others. Finally, the third dimension is the *emplotment*, “the encodation of the facts contained in the chronicle as components of specific kinds of plot structures”.²⁷

To this author there are four archetypes of plot structures or narrative structures. These are: *romance*, *tragedy*, *comedy* and *satire*. In our case we will reside on *romance*, as this corresponds to the structure of the accounts presented here, that is, a story more or less of the heroic type in which an individual or a collective triumph over some sort of injustice, overcoming enormous difficulties on their path.²⁸ With the natural nuances introduced by each narrator, this is a story told under this structure, which will undoubtedly be reflected in the way these stories are presented and organized, following the objective of presenting the story closest possible to how its protagonists interpret it.

Although White's categories help us to understand analytically the internal structure of the stories, it is necessary to address, in a more profound manner, the role of narration and language in history and in each individual, in order to unravel the greatest possible meaning of each historical experience told. Accepting the premise that each compilation of past events involves a narrative exercise (we think narratively), we find the intermediation of language as something inescapably present in the way in which we remember and write history.²⁹ This is part of what Ricoeur calls the *narrative identity*, that is, we not only remember the past, but also, simultaneously, we build our own identity, i.e. the way we order and give meaning to the past is, at the same time, the way we resignify our existence. A game of mirrors between the I, the protagonist or witness of the story, and the I present in the role of narrator.

²⁷ Hayden White, "The Historical Texts as Literary Artifacts," in *The History and Narrative Reader* (London: Routledge, 2001).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Identity," *Philosophy Today* 35, no. 1 (1991).

I would like to emphasize the ethical aspect of this approach, without delving into Ricoeur's dual definition of identity (*idem* and *ipse*) or other demanding aspects of his theory. The ethical in this case, is the way each individual justifies their actions according to their own set of values in tension with the moral or legal standards in their respective context. The ethical aspect has to do with how each individual explains, justifies or rejects their own actions or those of others, according to their own or shared system of values, at a given moment in history in contrast to their current condition. To focus on the ethical aspect is essential in understanding the meaning of each narration. This is another element that will be taken into account when analysing the primary sources.

1.2.4.5. Individual Memory and Collective Memory

Ulric Neisser states that, to remember “is not like playing back a tape or looking at a picture; it is more like telling a story. The consistency and accuracy of memories is therefore an achievement, not a mechanical production”.³⁰ Remembering is a complex physiological process involving the brain, one of the most studied and at the same time most mysterious organs of the human body, as well as involving the life experience of each individual. However, without underestimating the need to physiologically understand this process, the first thing which is vital for the historian is to understand the difference between short-term memory and long-term memory. This is, in sum, the difference between an important event and an insignificant one, for each narrator. “We may telescope the sequence of events in ways that emphasize periods of significance and diminish unmemorable times, or we may bring together temporally disconnected experiences that have a shared significance”³¹, that is, while the historian analyses what is said and what is not said by the narrator, in order to determine its importance and meaning, he must also be attentive to stimulating the stories, presenting possibilities for the narrator to find new ways that lead him to broaden his account of that which took place.

With the passing of time, memories may be reinforced, blocked or modified in relation to post-event experiences, changes in the current context that promote or discourage certain types of memories or simply similar experiences that create interferences. In principle, the closer the experience of the narrator, the better the possibilities to remember, but always bearing in mind

³⁰ Thomson, "Memory and Remembering in Oral History," 82.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

that both sensory perceptions, as the level of importance assigned to each fact, can reinforce or decrease the permanence of memory. This is what is understood as a process of consolidation or reconsolidation, the first of which refers to the fixation of some event in the long-term memory and the second, to the exercise of remembering after the narration of the occurrence.³² From this it follows that each exercise of remembering, or narrating, is a different exercise each time, regardless of whether the exact conditions of the interview are reproduced. Hence the importance of giving an account, not only of the context in which the interview was conducted, but also of the historian's intervention, as well as the way each narrator produces his or her story.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize the social character of memory, the possibility of collective memory as a central element in the construction of shared identities. Anna Green, summarizing historians' work with memory, illustrates how, after passing through the linguistic barrier and the cultural challenge, the idea of a collective memory as the basis of a collective identity remains valid. This opens up for the possibility of connecting human subjectivities with more abstract categories of social analysis, as the same individual subjectivity is socially and culturally determined (even the very language being so), indicating that ultimately all memory is a cultural collective memory. Due to the selective nature of memory, which forces the exclusion or inclusion of certain events, there is a debate about the use of the term 'collective' here, and in general, about the terminology.³³ Nevertheless, the idea of the existence of a dialectical relationship between memory and identity remains intact, manifesting the possibility of analysing oral history as a collective history, always paying attention to what Thomson calls the paradox of oral history, i.e. that while memory is a valid and reliable source, at the same time it is psychologically, socially and culturally determined, forcing the historian to keep one eye on the past (history) and one on the-past-in-the-present (memory)³⁴

1.2.5. Fieldwork and interviews

The fieldwork for this thesis was carried out during February and March of 2017, in the city of Popayán (in the historical archive of the Universidad del Cauca) and in Tumburao, Silvia and Caldono. Prior to the fieldwork in Colombia, interviews were also conducted in Oslo, Stavanger

³² Ibid., 82-87.

³³ Anna Green, "Can Memory Be Collective?," Ibid. (London), 96-108.

³⁴ Alistair Thomson, "Memory and Remembering in Oral History," Ibid., ed. Donald A. Ritchie (Oxford University Press), 90, 91.

and Havana. These interviews were not included as primary sources due to the change in the central topic of this thesis, yet they serve as an important source of complementary information.

The core of the fieldwork was the visit, for five days, to the territory of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* - after three weeks of waiting and failed attempts. Edilberto and his family were my hosts in Tumburao and during my days there, I was able to interview individually with 3 of the elders, two teachers at the school and another seven elders in collective interviews. During those days I was also able to participate in a *minga*.³⁵ I held a presentation about Norway for the children at the school and, on my last day, I walked out of the territory with Alberto, Alfredo and Jeremías, a two-and-a-half-hour-long hike to Pueblo Nuevo.

Turning to Anthropology, my fieldwork was a participant observation research exercise, in which I used a form of semi-structured interviews.³⁶ I operated with a series of pre-established topics, for each of which there were first questions about its central aspects, leaving the order of the topics and questions open to the development of the interview and, most importantly, leaving room for the narrator to follow his own accounts, as “oral history process is a collaborative one in which both players make equally important contributions”.³⁷ The latter is of vital importance for the emergence of new topics, new sources, and more detail. In accordance with this type of interview, the preparatory work focused on two aspects. The first, to select a structure of the interviews and their contents. The second, an in-depth evaluation of my role as a historian, especially after the change of the type of sources.³⁸

Although this thesis has consolidated a representative sample of narrators who can expose the *dominant narrative* of the foundation of the *cabildo* and *resguardo* in Tumburao, it was only possible to repeat the interviews with three of them. Contrary to what most authors - who find it necessary to repeatedly interview the same narrators, over an extended period of time - believe. Even so, my permanence and coexistence within the community of Tumburao gave me direct contact with the narrators 24 hours a day, facilitating diverse and continuous conversations about the topics of my research and the life of the community. Although this

³⁵ The indigenous term form collective work done for the benefit of the community.

³⁶ Tove Thagaard, "Innsamling av Data-Intervju Og Relasjon I Felten," in *Systematikk og Innlevelse. En Innføring I Kvalitativ Metode* (Fagbokforlaget, 2009), 89-90.

³⁷ Mary Kay Quinlan, "The Dynamics of Interviewing," in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Oxford University Press, 26.

³⁸ Thagaard, "Innsamling av Data-Intervju Og Relasjon I Felten," 89-91, 110.

information has not been recorded in the interviews, it is part of my fieldwork experience and my reflections when interpreting the sources.

An additional problem is the evident absence of autobiographical material or documents of some nature that can specify dates or more details about the narrated events. However, this was not a major concern in this work, as it is of greater interest to know the order in which each narrator locates the sequence of events, in his own chronology, than the exact date of those events.

Despite having lived in Popayán for five years, between 1999 and 2004, I had never known of the existence of Tumburao. My former occupations as a student leader and political activist showed me the reality of the conflict in Cauca, and led me to approach the realities of some of the indigenous communities. Therefore, from very early on, at the beginning of this thesis, I was aware of the need to preserve my role as a historian, without transferring any form of bias on my work. Regardless, I must point out that it was in part owing to these previous experiences that I could have a better geographical management of the study area, greater logistical facilities, a prior knowledge of the Nasa culture and how to build the necessary trust with the authorities of the *cabildo*, in order to undertake the task of writing this history.

Writing this history was a project embarked on in common agreement with the community. To them it was meaningful to record the voices of their elders, have their photographs taken and to write their history. For this reason, the community of Tumburao remains in possession of a copy of all the work done, both the photographic record as well as all the interviews with their elders. This thesis is therefore, in short, an example of the social function of oral history, particularly in its restorative aspect, as well as its cooperative nature.³⁹

1.2.6. How to read this thesis

Unlike the conventional history piece, in this thesis the generation and presentation of primary sources - the stories of the narrators - occupies a determining place and has consumed, without a doubt, a large number of my efforts. This was an unforeseen aspect at the time of the planning of this thesis. For this reason, I have considered it necessary to provide some guidelines on how to read this thesis, guidelines that will help the reader on his way.

³⁹ Thompson and Bornat, *The Voice of the Past. Oral History*, 1-10.

As has been mentioned, the historical analysis plays out in three concentric stages around the history of Tumburao. Chapter Two here, presents the very history of Tumburao, the common axis of these three analytic stages. Chapter Three corresponds to the stage dedicated to the analysis of the history of Tumburao itself - the analysis of the narratives of its protagonists in terms of the constitution of an autonomous political community, Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. Chapter Four is the stage where the history of Tumburao is analysed in contrast to the 'official' history of the indigenous movement in Cauca, this is the arena to highlight the challenges and lessons from Tumburao in relation to the conventional narrative about the indigenous struggles. Chapter Five is the stage from which we observe the history of Tumburao in relation to the construction of the Nation-State and the conflict in Colombia, searching for new elements that the case of Tumburao offers future analyses.

As mentioned, Chapter Two represents the central axis of this thesis, a story that is told in three times, the *ancestral*, *political* and *research time*, as previously accounted for. The main purpose is to present this story closest possible to how the narrators themselves do, as we can in neither case speak of strictly chronological or strictly thematic stories. Each of these times operate, therefore, as a path that guides the reader through the topics and keeps him located in relation to events that are measurable in the common *physical time*. In the development of Chapter Two, as the narrators reveal their story, the elements of history also appear, in an exercise that resembles how the historian came to have access to this story told by the elders. It is not the most conventional method in this sort of thesis, but I hope the endeavour in the production of this text will be found with the sufficient patience of the reader interested in the subject.

As the narrator speaks of the importance of having a *cabildo* of their own, he is able to refer to the time of Juan Tama in order to justify it, as well as talking about the difficulties produced by the confrontation with the guerrilla groups, through a series of memories. With these *narrative times*, the reader will be able to place the events chronologically without difficulty, understanding that, while the history of Juan Tama belongs to the mythical founding time of the Nasa, the confrontation with the guerrilla groups belongs to the political time of the struggle for the constitution of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. Likewise, with the aim of creating space for the explanation of the conditions of the interviews, providing further impressions on the life of the community, their everyday life and my fieldwork observations, the narration of my visit to Tumburao is included, as it represents the *research time*, in which I allow myself to take the

reader by the hand to visit Tumburao through my journey. These three dimensions of the accounts provide a certain order that I hope will help to better comprehend the issues in question. Finally, the purpose of Tumburao as a case study is exposed in each of these chapters.

In the development of the history presented in Chapter Two, five transversal components of the Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* history is present; the *ancestral, territorial, political, family* and *ideological* components. The same components which stand out as the recurrent themes and upon which we can evaluate the development of the historical process in each stage and in each time. That is, the observation of these components in each analytical stage - the respective analysis of their origin and development - is the basis of the exercise of historization in this thesis. It is for this reason that I have decided to call them components and not themes, as they are present throughout the history, varying greatly in their development and in their contextual function.

The major challenge in the transcription of the interviews has certainly been the language, as the stories are produced in an unconventional Spanish (most of the narrators have Spanish as their second language). The translation into English has unfortunately forced the sacrifice of a certain degree of fidelity in the form, so as to ensure content. Moreover, I have decided to keep the Nasa-Yuwe spelling the way it was taught to me in Tumburao, as part of my fieldwork.

This thesis, as the result of dialogue with the community and with each of the narrators, contains stories and photographs with full authorization for their publication, with the only desire that all that is narrated here contributes, in the best possible way, to a greater knowledge of history.

1.3. Theory

1.3.1. The Nasa History

Joanne Rappaport⁴⁰ has generated a theory which describes Nasa history and the way it operates within that indigenous community. The contemporary Nasa history is the result of the development of the narratives starting from Juan Tama, through Quintín Lame, all the way to the most recent narrative of Nasa history, held by Julio Niquinás. From Rappaport's work we

⁴⁰ Joanne Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory*, Native Historical Interpretation in the Colombian Andes (2012).

are able to extract a concise description of what, in this thesis, will be understood as Nasa history, illustrated below.

The Nasa history is defined as a practice of interpretation and reinterpretation of the past, through a permanent attempt of validating their own knowledge, as a weapon against their subordinate position within Colombian society. This history has a function focused particularly on three aspects: 1) as a source of knowledge on how the Nasa were subjugated, 2) information about their legal rights and 3) as a starting point for a new definition of themselves as a people. A history which has been reformulated and revalidated since the eighteenth century, according to the Nasa notion of their own place in the historical processes.

The model of the historical Nasa narrative can be understood from two central premises. The first is a clear notion of continuity from the past to the present. In this line of continuity, the Nasa narrative is adjusted according to the historical conditions of its elaboration, especially from its alternating and tense relation with the State, be it the Spanish colonial State or the contemporary Colombian State. Another factor that plays an important role in these readjustments of the narrative is the political action of the Nasa proper, focused primarily on defining and empowering the community in its relationship to the dominant society.

The second premise is the relocation of the State as the centre of the historical narrative. The centre of this narrative is dominated by the activities or actions undertaken by the Nasa people in confrontation with the State. There is a permanent need for documentation of these actions, whose historical function is evaluated according to the level of success in the struggle for the survival of their community.

The current Nasa historical narrative, according to this model, begins with the accounts of the main *caciques* of the eighteenth century and aims to compile the principles of being Nasa and their empowerment as a community. This includes a permanent reference to representative geographic sites for the Nasa and is presented in a non-chronological order, in the sense of “chronicles of the impossible” in an attempt to build their own “brand of historical and cosmological thought within western-style discourse”.⁴¹ This creates a moral connection to the past for the Nasa, “operationalized in the interest of achieving political goals in the present”.⁴²

⁴¹ Ibid., 6, 7.

⁴² Ibid., 9.

The objectives that define the Nasa political action as a result of the recent reinterpretation of Nasa history are: the elimination of *terraje*, the autonomy of the territories and the conservation of their culture. This is a natural consequence of the political agenda of the two main historical references: Juan Tama and Manuel Quintín Lame. The result is a history built internally by a series of "time-worn patterns" that regenerate century after century to confront a given political condition.

To Rappaport, this history can be legitimately studied as a symbolic system internal to the community, or as a moral history articulated by contemporary Nasa activists operationalized as a mediator with the community and the broader Colombian society. In short, a history that covers both internal and external ideological needs.

The way in which the chronology operates and is presented in Nasa history, as has previously been explained, is part of this theory of the Nasa history and it should suffice to emphasize that, although Nasa narratives do not appear in the traditional chronological pattern of Western history, the Nasa people do possess, practice and understand the chronological.

It is precisely by observing the practical use of the Nasa history that one may better understand its presentation, in a succession of narratively unconnected episodes, as described above. These practical uses have been: defining land disputes, reaching political agreements, strengthening their identity as a community and discussing heritage. This flexible and ambiguous, 'non-narrative' way of telling stories is of great value considering its uses.⁴³

There is a necessary condition for the analysis of the Nasa history, which is the existence of a traceable path of the knowledge transfer (oral sources), which usually coincides with persons who are able to mobilize others. These are the most common sources of Nasa history, whose legitimacy is based on the value assigned to their mobilizing power and magical background. The magical refers namely to the genealogical or geographical origin of the source, e.g. as a direct descendant of a great leader or being from a sacred or representative place in Nasa history.

⁴³ Ibid., 15-19.

Regarding the political power of their leaders as an element of legitimacy of the sources in Nasa history, this is associated with the ability to interact with the mestizo society. Such abilities would be a good level of Spanish, political networking and even military experience, usually from the national army.

As for orality, more than as a cultural reality generally accepted when it comes to Nasa history, it should be understood as a reality that has allowed the Nasa to keep something secret, exclusively to themselves.

In this way we may summarize the most important elements of the theory of Nasa history developed by Rappaport; its two central premises, the content and main historical references, its social function, the chronology and narrative form, the main characteristics of its sources and their legitimacy.

This is the theory with which the analysis will be made, further on, of the narrative of the people of Tumburao. One of the reasons behind the election of this theory is my insufficient anthropological knowledge on topics such as the myth in the Nasa culture and language (Nasa-Yuwe). Rappaport's historization of Nasa history opens for the possibility of historically analysing the stories narrated by the community of Tumburao, bypassing subjects of greater anthropological depth, as they would otherwise occupy space and efforts beyond the scope of the present work.

1.3.2. Notions on the conflict and the construction of the Nation-State in Colombia

The political and social history of Colombia is, inevitably, the history of the conflict, regardless of the interpretation one may have of this. In the words of Jaramillo, "this war, during beyond the reasonable, is also a war of narratives that express an unfinished battle of stories."⁴⁴

Adopting this premise, it is necessary to give an account of one's own approach or understanding of the Colombian conflict, in order to establish an analytical relationship between the case study of this thesis and the debate on the construction of the Nation-State in Colombia.

⁴⁴ Jefferson Jaramillo M., *Pasados Y Presentes De La Violencia En Colombia. Estudio Sobre Las Comisiones De Investigacion (1958-2011)* (Bogota: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2014), 128.

This is an inexhaustible topic of analysis, however, in the available literature some common elements are found in all the different narratives. These are the events or phenomena of great importance, events that sculpted the political history of Colombia in the twentieth century.

The first of these is *La Violencia*, a period of active military confrontation between the two most important political parties of the Colombian elite (Liberal and Conservative), whose 'operations theatre' is almost exclusively rural, involving mainly hundreds of thousands of peasants, indigenous, afro-descendants, men and women without land. Scholars locate this period, with greater or lesser precision, between the 1940's and the beginning of the 60's. The person who can best summarize this phenomenon is the same Jaramillo, to whom *La Violencia* left, as a result, the impossibility of building a common project of a Nation-State, the inauguration of a binary and exclusionary political world, the establishment of friend-foe logic in all political and social relations, i.e., violence as a constitutive force of the social and the political life in the absence of a unifying legal order.⁴⁵

The *Frente Nacional* (1958-1974) is the result of the peace agreement signed between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, with which they hoped to inaugurate a transition phase towards democracy and better social and economic development in the country. The collection of events that gave shape to the Colombian State in the twentieth century is completed with the *Frente Nacional*, so that the hallmark events are the 1886 Constitution and the conservative *regeneration*, the *Thousand Days' War*, *La Violencia* and the *Frente Nacional*. Although authors such as Sánchez, Wills and González acknowledge that this agreement between elites managed to end the war that was taking place,⁴⁶ Jaramillo emphasizes that the consequence was oblivion and silence concerning all the events that took place in said war.⁴⁷ The remnants of that armed political confrontation were, unsurprisingly, the self-defense groups founded spontaneously or by political organizations of the left - mainly by the Communist Party - motivated by the communities' need to have their lives and lands protected.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 53-56.

⁴⁶ Fernan Gonzalez G., *Poder Y Violencia En Colombia* (Bogota: ODECOFI-CINEP, 2014). Gonzalo Sánchez Gómez, *Colombia: Violencia Y Democracia. Comisión De Estudios Sobre La Violencia*, 1a ed ed. (Bogotá, Colombia: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1987). Maria Emma Wills, "Los Tres Nudos De La Guerra En Colombia," in *Report of Commission of History of the Conflict and Its Victims* (2015).

⁴⁷ Jaramillo M., *Pasados Y Presentes De La Violencia En Colombia. Estudio Sobre Las Comisiones De Investigacion (1958-2011)*, 60-62.

On the democratic character of the *Frente Nacional*, two main groups can be found among academics. Those who entirely deny any democratic character of that State, as they assume it as an abducted State or a State privatized by the political parties of the elites, a democracy without citizens.⁴⁸ On the other side there are authors who support the idea of the existence of a true democracy during *Frente Nacional*, but a democracy built on particular premises due to the political context of the country.⁴⁹

The result of *Frente Nacional* was very poor in relation to the development strategies launched, especially on the issue of Agrarian Reform. Regarding the armed confrontation, its result was the mutation of political violence towards the territorial - now exercised by the State against its opponents, under a National Security Strategy. This is, the formation of a counterinsurgent State.⁵⁰

Here, the territorial issue appears as an element of vital importance. Starting with the *Frente Nacional* it became impossible to speak of a unified and national state in Colombia. A society emerged, with clear regional differences in political and social relations and in economic systems and development models, thus forming some enclave regions, some regions of new settlements or simply areas of poor peasant economy.⁵¹ There are scholars who add other elements to this, such as the existence of areas outside state control, and thus naturally excluded from government plans and strategies. These areas also coincide with the geographical areas with the greatest presence of self-defense groups.⁵²

⁴⁸ Jairo Estrada Álvarez, "Acumulación Capitalista, Dominación De Clase Y Rebelión Armada," in *Report of Commission of History of the Conflict and Its Victims* (2015). Javier Giraldo Moreno, "Aportes Sobre El Origen Del Conflicto Armado En Colombia, Su Persistencia Y Sus Impactos," in *Report of Commission of History of the Conflict and Its Victims*, ed. 2015. Renán Vega Cantor, "Injerencia De Los Estados Unidos, Contrainsurgencia Y Terrorismo De Estado," in *Report of Commission of History of the Conflict and Its Victims* (2015). Sergio Zubiría Samper, "Las Dimensiones Políticas Y Culturales En El Contexto Del Conflicto Colombiano," in *Report of Commission of History of the Conflict and Its Victims* (2015).

⁴⁹ Franciso Gutiérrez Sanín, "Una Historia Simple?," in *Report of Commission of History of the Conflict and Its Victims* (2015). Wills, "Los Tres Nudos De La Guerra En Colombia." Eduardo Pizarro, "Una Lectura Múltiple Y Plural De La Historia.," in *Report of Commission of History of the Conflict and Its Victims* (2015).

⁵⁰ Gonzalez G., *Poder Y Violencia En Colombia*. Jaramillo M., *Pasados Y Presentes De La Violencia En Colombia. Estudio Sobre Las Comisiones De Investigacion (1958-2011)*.

⁵¹ Gonzalez G., *Poder Y Violencia En Colombia*. Eric Hobsbawm, "The Anatomy of Violence in Colombia," in *Primitive Rebels* (Barcelona, Spain: Ed. Crítica, 2014). Jaramillo M., *Pasados Y Presentes De La Violencia En Colombia. Estudio Sobre Las Comisiones De Investigacion (1958-2011)*.

⁵² Darío Fajardo M., "Estudio Sobre Los Origenes Del Conflicto Social Armado, Razones De Su Persistencia Y Sus Efectos Más Profundos En La Sociedad Colombiana," in *Report of Commission Of history of the Conflict and Its Victims* (2015). Alfredo Molano Bravo, "Fragmentos De La Historia Del Conflicto Armado (1920-2010)," in *Report of Commission Of history of the Conflict and Its Victims* (2015).

One of the features of major distance between the theories about the Colombian conflict and the State is the temporal dimension of the conflict. The postures are distinguishable between long-term (from the beginning of the Republic or early twentieth century), medium-term (from *La Violencia* and *Frente Nacional*) and short-term postures (from the 80's and 90's). The differences lie in the emphasis placed on historical continuities or discontinuities, depending on the author's approach. While some view it as the same conflict which has mutated over time, acquiring new features and reaching developments outside of the actors' own objectives and motivations; to others it is about different conflicts in terms of reasons, motivations and actors. To the former, it has to do with the widely known *social, political, economic and armed conflict* of Colombia, whereas to the latter it is conceived as a political conflict in the mid-twentieth century, an ideological conflict in the 1970's, an economic conflict originated by the drug trafficking in the 80's and 90's and more recently, the territorial dispute over illegal economies in the most inaccessible parts of the country. The position assumed by academics regarding the spatial dimension of the conflict and its historical continuities or discontinuities is the principal differentiating element between the diverging theories.

Interpretations made by researchers on the guerrillas and the armed struggle in Colombia derive from the preceding argument. To the advocates of the thesis of the *social, political, economic and armed conflict*, the guerrillas are the product of systematic political, economic and social exclusion as well as of the aggression perpetrated by the counterinsurgent State. It is precisely for this reason that the guerrillas emerge in peasant settlement areas outside state control, first and foremost in the Andes (outside or on the edge of the agricultural frontier), with a highly politicized population, as a consequence of the Communist Party's presence (initially) and of other left-wing organizations later on (in the 60's and 70's). These guerrilla groups emanate from the previous self-defense experiences and are a product of both the military aggression of the State and the exclusion of the development plans and the political life of the country.

Consequently, the faction that emphasizes on the discontinuities, explains guerrilla groups as partaking in the 'recycling of violence', or violences⁵³, mutating according to the economic, political and social developments of the country throughout the twentieth century.

⁵³ María Teresa Ronderos, *Guerras Recicladas* (Aguilar, 2014).

Jaramillo, in a valuable study on the academic narratives of the conflict between 1958 - 2011, distinguishes at least three moments that generated the paradigmatic views of academia on the conflict: The Commission of Research of the Conflict (1958), The Commission of Experts on Violence (1987) and the Historical Memory Group (2007-2011)⁵⁴. These have in common that they are institutional initiatives (financed or directly supported by the State but with autonomous functioning). However, based on the evaluation made earlier on the primary academic interpretations of the conflict, and considering the characteristics of this thesis, I have decided to rely on other paradigms. It is in my opinion, that the focus on the territorial provides us with a necessary balanced perspective, which opens the door to subjectivities and culture as determinant aspects of the conflict in the formation of the Nation-State in Colombia.

The ODECOFI group,⁵⁵ led by Professor Fernán González González, has developed what they call a *multilayered* and *interactive* vision of the armed conflict and the construction of the State in Colombia.⁵⁶ In my opinion, this is a theory that successfully integrates the territorial and the subjective element (culture and ideology), in the model of analysis of the formation of the Colombian State - not only tangentially or rhetorically as in the case of most conventional theories.

This theory understands the armed struggles as an integral, though not a necessary, part of the formation of States (more generally, not only in Colombia) and in that, of course, are also the structural elements of political and economic power. This is also an interpretation which responds to the challenges introduced from the regions, to the practical developments of the process of construction of the State and the realities of the conflict. In short, it is a theoretical tool of great value for historians who wish to overcome the history of the phenomena and the structures, focusing their interest in making the history of the people.

This territorial dimension goes beyond the idea of the conflict as a natural or automatic expression, in a specific context, of the centralized construction of the State. It is, above all, the way in which the regions in conditions of political, social and economic marginality approach the political and productive dynamics of the country, through the illegal economies and the so-

⁵⁴ Jaramillo M., *Pasados Y Presentes De La Violencia En Colombia. Estudio Sobre Las Comisiones De Investigacion (1958-2011)*.

⁵⁵ ODECOFI: observatorio para el desarrollo de la convivencia y el fortalecimiento institucional.

⁵⁶ Gonzalez G., *Poder Y Violencia En Colombia*, 11-36.

called 'armed actors', which are, in practice, the only political or economic operators of national scope, present in these regions. So it is in this way that the analysis must be approached, without bias, to the way each territory, from its singularity, has consolidated the relations of coexistence among citizens. It is in this way that the regions have historically inserted themselves into the State (or decided to maintain the distance), evidencing that the Nation-State was also built from the periphery, be it a State of war or a State of peace.

The open space for the subjective dimension of the conflict begins by recognizing that, in each territory, the subjects have their own motivations and interests, without detriment to their possible connection to national structures. Hence, the option of waging war is not seen as an automatic, rational response to the existing state of affairs, but also as an alternative assumed by political organizations and their leaders, in their context. This leads us to embrace the armed relations as a structural feature of the Colombian Nation-State and the political culture of the country.

This *interactive* and *multi-layered vision* (local, regional and national) is, in my opinion, the tool that best fits my analysis of the Colombian conflict in this thesis, as much as it gives a particular significance to the objective and subjective reasons for the conflict as well as attend to the differentiated concentration of the conflict in the regions. This theoretical and methodological tool integrates the temporary long-term vision previously mentioned, a dynamic vision of the construction of the State (from above and from below), and understands the conflict as an integral part of the formation process of the Nation-State in Colombia. It is upon this theoretical and methodological tool that the analysis made in this thesis resides.

CHAPTER 2: TUMBURAO, A SOVIET IN THE ANDES

Like an arrowhead pointing northwest, this is how Tumburao appears when seen from above. An arrowhead etches all the way up to its sharpest apex by the Ovejas and Quichaya rivers, aiming left, embedded on one of the side ribs of the Central Andes in the Department of Cauca, Colombia. Alfredo Peña, governor of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* at the time of our interview, explains that the territory “borders with Pueblo Nuevo, the Nasa town of Pueblo Nuevo and also with a section of Quichaya and also with the town of Quizgó and over on this side with the rural area”⁵⁷. When he speaks of the rural area, he refers to Usenda, an area with a strong presence of mestizos which it borders to southwest. Tumburao belongs to the municipality of Silvia, and also borders to the northwest with the *resguardo* of Laguna-Siberia and La Aguada, municipality of Caldono⁵⁸. These administrative and political borders were once an enemy fence, stretched out to prevent the creation of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*.



Figure 2.1: Map of Cauca. Source: Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute

⁵⁷ Diego Fernando Marin Rios, "Interview with Alfredo Peña," (2017).

⁵⁸ "Interview with Pedro Vaca," (2017).

From Tumburao, mainly on the few nights without rainfall, one can perfectly see Cali, the third largest and most industrialized city in Colombia. For the locals of this territory, the sight of Cali is the closest and daily piece of evidence they have of that other country, «urban and modern», the country of the majorities. This results as quite ironic for a community that has no landline connection with the outside world, despite being located only a few kilometers off the Panamerican highway (the main artery in Colombia).

It was to my great surprise when, on a motorbike driven by Edwin –a 15-year-old boy – underneath the heavy rain, distant city lights appeared before us on the horizon of that dark night in the heights of the Andes. I arrived that same night in Tumburao and the sight of Cali astounded me on the journey I, to this day, am baffled I got back from completely unharmed, with my belongings intact. With our first tumble, the lights of the motorbike went dead, and so, while the driver was trying his best to guess the way through a flooded trail, I stretched my hands over his shoulders and lit with my cell phone - I believe this was done more in an attempt to feel useful than for the actual effect of my maneuver. On our second tumble, all of the fuel leaked out of the tank, with which I felt great relief, until I noticed we now had to drag the motorbike all the way until the nearest gas station. Fortunately, it was not that far away, ironically enough, in a house where I perceived no signs of electrical power and where they sold fuel on bottles of *aguardiente*.⁵⁹

That is how I got to Tumburao in March 2017, to gather, assemble, narrate and analyze the history of a Nasa indigenous community that stood up against landowners in 1981, because they were living in near-slavery conditions under the figure of *terraje*⁶⁰. A community that stood up against the leadership of the main indigenous organization in the country, CRIC, because they refused to acknowledge them as an autonomous *cabildo* and attempted to prevent, even through violent means, the founding of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. A community that withstood three guerrilla groups who also opposed their political self-determination. A

⁵⁹ Local alcoholic beverage made from sugar cane.

⁶⁰ Form of tribute or tax that the landless indigenous (known as *terrajeros* or *terrazgueros*) were forced to pay the landowner. This tax would be charged in days of labour, in return for the lease of a small piece of land for the indigenous family's use, mainly for crops, but also for housing. This system, similar to *sharecropping*, was abolished by Colombian law in 1850, but was violently re-introduced at the end of the nineteenth century. The reappearance of *terraje* was one of the main motives of the first indigenous uprisings of the twentieth century. According to the reviewed literature, this system was eradicated in the 1960's and 70's. Juan Carlos Castillo Gómez, "El Estado-Nación Pluriétnico Y Multicultural Colombiano: la Lucha Por El Territorio En La Reimaginación De La Nación Y La Reivindicación de La Identidad Étnica De Negros E Indígenas" (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2006), 210, 11. Manuel Quintín Lame, *En Defensa De Mi Raza. Los Pensamientos Del Indio Que Se Educó Dentro De Las Selvas Colombianas* (Bogotá: Rosca de investigación y acción social, 1971).

community that, on top of this, managed to impose their "will-of-life"⁶¹ to the State, thus achieving the legal recognition of their own *cabildo* and *resguardo* in 1992.

In addition to the social, cultural and political conflicts present in the history of Tumburao, I also discovered the ancestral origins of their political thought and action - that place where history and myth merge into one.

“Diego Marin: ¿Is Pueblo Nuevo also Nasa territory?

Isidro Fernández: Yes.

DM: So, why are two *cabildos* created, being so close to each other?

IF: That is a very special story, a very important one. Because, in days gone by, the territory of Pueblo Nuevo reached all the way here [Tumburao], I mean, geographically it reached all the way here. On top of this, it's special, I mean, because the territory of Pueblo Nuevo belongs to the five ancestral towns, in other words, the territories, as the mythological part created by Juan Tama"⁶²

2.1. So say the elders: from the struggles of the great *cacique* Juan Tama to the last will of Tomasa Méndez

“DM: Before we talk about the creation of the *resguardo* Tumburao, let's go back to the five ancestral towns and to who Juan Tama was.

IF: Juan Tama is a *cacique* (chieftain), mythological because he is a very special person, he is spiritual and is now situated in a special territory, he lives there alone, in a lagoon, where he went to live after having ruled, after having fought against the Spanish invaders. He was a very important person.

The five ancestral towns are Caldono, Pueblo Nuevo, Pitayó, Quichaya and Jambaló. These are the five towns he governed, those he came to an agreement on. He did this, they came to a dialogue, a negotiation with the kings of Spain. It was so."⁶³

Juan Tama wasn't, Juan Tama is. I stood corrected and the story began, told by the elder Isidro Fernández, a traditional doctor and the only Nasa teacher of the three who work at the school in Tumburao. Isidro is responsible for the oldest boys and girls at the school. He possesses a gentle voice and attitude, transmitting a perpetual state of calm. As the interview unfolded, master Isidro revealed himself, before my eyes, to be the figure of a Nasa intellectual, knowledgeable in western sciences as well as in ancestral indigenous wisdom. To my first

⁶¹ Will-of-life (Voluntad-de-vida) as the "fundamental material determination of the definition of political power", a positive definition of power in opposition to the definition of power as domination which is seen as a negative definition of power, emblematic of Eurocentric Modernity from 1492 onwards. Enrique Dussel, *20 Tesis De Política* (La Habana, Cuba: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2011), 12, 13.

⁶² Diego Fernando Marin Rios, "Interview with Isidro Fernandez," (2017).

⁶³ Ibid.

question about the history of Tumburao, master Isidro reached all the way back to Spanish colonial times and to Juan Tama, in order to explain the particular character of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*.

The existence of the *cacique* Juan Tama is a verified and well-known historical fact. In the year 1700, the *Real Audiencia* of Quito, top legal and administrative body of the Spanish crown for the territory that makes up Tumburao, granted *cacique* Juan Tama the property titles for what is today known as the «five ancestral territories»⁶⁴: Caldono, Pueblo Nuevo, Pitayó, Quichaya and Jambaló.⁶⁵ This is the legal and political founding precedent on which the indigenous struggle and demands for the recovery of their land in the Cauca region rest. It is, consequently, a cornerstone of CRIC and the earliest and lasting hallmark of the Nasa people as a principal reference of the indigenous struggle in Colombia. This is the reason why the group of these ancestral territories, the *cabildos* of Caldono, Pueblo Nuevo, Pitayó, Quichaya and Jambaló, are considered the historical epicenter of the Nasa territories and foundation of CRIC, a social organization that claims to be inheritor of Juan Tama's tradition of struggle.

It is based on this tradition that master Isidro asserts that the case of Tumburao is a very special one, as it deals with the birth of a new *cabildo* and *resguardo* Nasa, against the will of the CRIC leadership, on the same territorial core of the legitimacy of the indigenous struggles in the Cauca region. This is what I, subsequently, will call the *ancestral component* in the dispute over the establishment of the new *cabildo*.

The Nasa were not the only indigenous people who confronted the Spanish militarily in what is today Colombia, however, they did distinguish themselves as one of the most skilled and determined ones in the moment of doing so. Their story of resistance begins with the woman *cacique* Gaitana, who launched a legendary attack against the Spanish, a war that to this day takes part of Latin America's decolonizing collective memory. Similar to what Anacaona did in the Dominican Republic – the first indigenous leader who took it upon herself to defy the Spanish instead of making alliances with them.

⁶⁴ Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria and Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación, "Estudio Socioeconómico De La Comunidad Indígena De Tumburao, Municipio De Silvia, Departamento Del Cauca," (Popayán: INCORA, 1992), 73.

⁶⁵ Marin Rios, "Interview with Isidro Fernandez."

It was because of these wars that the indigenous peoples took control of the steep highlands, while the Spanish settled in the valleys, as the Pubenza valley, where Popayán, the capital of the department of Cauca, is found today.

DM: So [the Nasa people] went up to the mountains?

IF: Yes, because of the oppression, surely because of the slavery, so much violence. So the people left, looking for safer, more protected, spots. Of course, there was also war before they came. I don't know if you have researched?

DM: Of course, there were politics before the Spanish arrived.

IF: There was a war between two tribes, two ethnic groups, but the Nasa were very wise, this is why it is said that we, the Nasa, are warriors⁶⁶

Nevertheless, master Isidro proceeded, Juan Tama emerges victorious over the Spanish, adding a new element to the tactic of struggle.

IF: This applies, it is a political trajectory, because no *cabildo* existed prior to this moment. The word “*cabildo*” itself is appropriated.

DM: Spanish.

IF: Spanish. Previously, the governance belonged to the *cacicazgos* (chiefdoms). As you were saying that over there [in Norway] you have a king, over here there were *caciques* who governed their territories, in political, military, scientific ways, because there was also a lot of science. There were mathematics... anyway... there was a political, scientific, cultural development and all that. So the *cacique* –in Nasa Yuwe we say *Sa't*–, there were some *caciques* who were very powerful, spiritually and physically, they were what we call wise men. So they ruled or managed their people according to the administrative ways they had. For example, the *cacique* Juan Tama, he ruled over these territories. He was the one who spoke of dialogue, of no more war, so they discussed having their territories elsewhere, separated, for the indigenous population to live in.

DM: ¿Is that when the *cabildos* began?

IF: Yes, the word “*cabildo*” is appropriated, and that's how they chose the different ways to govern the territories, the communities.⁶⁷

Juan Tama is hence the greatest *cacique*, and therefore the wisest, the one who left behind most spiritual, political and military teachings; teachings that today are reflected in the practices and customs of the Nasa people. Juan Tama is the *cacique* that the Nasa people continue to consult through their rituals, their spirituality and through the visits to the sacred lagoon where they can meet him. But above all, Juan Tama is the *cacique* who succeeded in getting the titles of the five ancestral territories - recognized by the Spanish crown - the first *cabildos* and *resguardos* set up, not by the will of the colonial crown, but by the indigenous resistance in the Cauca region.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

When presenting themselves formally, all the indigenous persons I greeted also presented the name of the territory they belong to. Master Isidro Fernández presented himself as belonging to the *cabildo* of Pueblo Nuevo, the structure in the CRIC that most fiercely opposes the constitution of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, because it involved conceding part of their own territory. In other words, they had to hand over an important part of their ancestral territories for the foundation of a *cabildo* and a *resguardo* that were ideologically and politically embattled with CRIC. This new element for the historical analysis of Tumburao is what I will call *the territorial component* in the dispute over the establishment of the new *cabildo*. The *territorial component*, together with the *ancestral component*, are key factors for the historical analysis of the case of Tumburao.

At his 56 –nearly unnoticeable– years of age, Isidro has been a teacher in Tumburao since 1999, but he has also been an indigenous leader. In 1996, he was governor of his *cabildo* (Pueblo Nuevo), as well as a first-hand witness of the conflict between Pueblo Nuevo and Tumburao in the 1980's. As we were talking about the history of the Nasa people, some children were playing in the schoolyard, a place of certain privilege, as the «Cristo Rey» Educational Institution⁶⁸ had been assigned the best location in what was previously the ranch «La Asunción» (or «Granadillo», as it also appears in the official documents of the foundation of the *resguardo*⁶⁹), a 279 hectare estate and former property of doctor Héctor de Jesús Ríos.



Figure 2.2: elder Isidro Fernández, teacher and traditional doctor.

This was one of the four ranches Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* was founded on, and is the place where we find Tumburao's «downtown» today. It is a group of about 30 houses – large and built mostly out of brick and concrete – located on a not-so-steep summit, where the

⁶⁸ Official name of the primary school of Tumburao. Diego Fernando Marin Rios, "Interview with Jairo Fernandez," (2017).

⁶⁹ Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria and Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación, "Estudio Socioeconómico De La Comunidad Indígena De Tumburao, Municipio De Silvia, Departamento Del Cauca," 75.

communal center and the office of the *cabildo*, the only church –catholic and rundown–, and the aforementioned primary school –where 83 children can study up to fifth grade–, are set.⁷⁰ Most of the 700 inhabitants of Tumburao (160 families) live spread throughout the 5000 hectares of the *resguardo*.⁷¹ Tumburao’s «downtown» is a 360° viewpoint, with an exceptional panorama of the steep hillsides of the Central Andes, a patchwork quilt of *green of all colors*⁷² –as the poet says–, made from crops of hemp, yucca, maize, onion, plantain, coffee and beans.



Figure 2.3: View of Tumburao from «Loma El Carmen», the northern border of the territory.

“**DM:** When we talk about the history of the *cabildo*, many begin to talk about land seizures and the struggle in the 80’s, but there are some who say that, beforehand, there was already a *cabildo* in Tumburao, but that these lands had been lost. Do some of you remember how the territory of the former *cabildo* of Tumburao was lost?

Jeremías Peña: [makes a very short intervention in *Nasa Yuwe*, 25 seconds, in which at different moments, I hear the following words in Spanish: *cuenta* (tell), *información* (information) and *escrita* (written)]

Alfredo Peña: What do the elders say? Elder Miguel?

Miguel Ángel Isoto: First and foremost - good morning. As for your question, those are stories. There used to be a *cabildo* indeed, or so our elders, our grandparents have told us. It ceased to exist when the Spanish brought in their liberal and conservative politics. That’s when it was over [the former *cabildo* of Tumburao], because they had appointed... what was it called before? Police Inspector, they appointed one here, and they erased the *cabildo* and appointed a police inspector when the Spanish came in and took over the land. This was around the 1940’s, yes. It ended because of this, the Spanish came in with those liberal and conservative politics and so, poor people, indigenous people, began to fight among each other, the liberals and conservatives came in, convinced

⁷⁰ Figures provided by the teacher Jairo Fernández, who works in Tumburao since 1993, making him the oldest teacher in the territory. Marin Rios, "Interview with Jairo Fernandez."

⁷¹ Territorial extension and number of inhabitants defined by the governor of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* during our interview. "Interview with Alfredo Peña."

⁷² Aurelio Arturo, *Morada Del Sur*, vol. 7, *Un Libro Por Centavos* (Bogotá: Universidad Externado de Colombia, 2004).

some indigenous people, for they had been around here before. So the people were divided, well, those over there fought because they were liberals, those down there because they were conservatives. So that's when it was over and the same governor was the one appointed police inspector. So that's why it was over [the *cabildo* of Tumburao].

They got him into the game, as they say, for ambition of money. They gave him money for him to do politics since he spoke our language, he convinced people. So the landowner would thank him and offer him money. But for us it was nothing, for us it was only for a meal.

DM: Do you remember the name of that governor?

MAI: That was Leonel Tombé⁷³

It was a Friday, my last day in Tumburao, when we conducted the collective interview with the elders. Fifteen of them sat around my recorder, some women knitted as they listened in, some small children played in the back, while many of the adults were protecting themselves from the cold. Behind us, in the kitchen, a smaller group of 4 women were preparing our lunch, a vegetable soup with ingredients grown right there in Tumburao, served with rice. We were by the entrance of the communal centre, sitting on plastic chairs, under a zinc roof.

The vitality projected by Miguel Ángel Isoto, one of the first to arrive for the interview, contrasted with the certain modesty when he spoke. When he explains the reasons for the disappearance of the former *cabildo*, the liberal and conservative politics brought in by the Spanish, he refers to *La Violencia*, a well-known episode in Colombian history.

In 1885, the conservative party - the traditional right wing in Colombia -, militarily defeated the liberal party – the traditionally most progressive party -, abolishing the Río Negro Constitution enacted in 1863, which had established the most radical liberal period after the independence from the Spanish in 1819. In this period of the political history of Colombia, known as *La Regeneración*, the conservatives enacted the political Constitution of 1886 (which was maintained until 1991), and thus the conservative rule began, which lasted until 1930, when the liberal Enrique Olaya Herrera was elected president of the Republic. Between 1930 and

⁷³ By the words in Spanish I was able to pick up, and knowing that it was Jeremías Peña talking, I inferred he was referring to the only book written on the history of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, the official INCORA report written in 1992. Later, when he spoke, Jeremías showed me the book and lent it to me so I could take pictures of it, which I did of every page, since only that copy exists in the territory, and it is prohibited to leave it in the hands of a different person other than the elder Jeremías Peña. It was Alfonso Peña who, in my first night there, having just arrived in Tumburao, told me about the existence of that book. The reason for my excitement was tremendous as I held it in my hands; I had finally found my only primary written source, a source I knew nothing about until my first interview in Tumburao. Diego Fernando Marin Rios, "Collective Interview with the Elders," (2017).

1945 there were different liberal governments, whose reforms sparked a violent reaction from the conservative party, especially due to Law 200 from 1936 or the Agrarian Reform Act.



Figure 2.4: elder Miguel Ángel Isoto

On the one hand, the first labour unions, first peasant alliances and the first Marxist party in Colombia (*Partido Socialista Revolucionario*, 1926) had appeared. The latter quickly turned into the Communist Party of Colombia in 1932. This social block and the newly born left-wing took advantage of period of the liberal government to launch the first large mobilizations and began to claim rights, such as the freedom of association (right to unionization), the right to strike, the 8-hour workday and the agrarian reform. On the other hand, the conservative party made use of police and private armies at the service of landowners, so as to go after liberal and social leaders, especially on the countryside.

This confrontation reached its peak on 9th of April 1948 in Bogotá, with the murder of the popular liberal leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, the most popular presidential candidate for the 1950-elections. Jorge Eliecer Gaitán was the most important political figure who denounced the bipartisan violence. Rooted in the political memory of Colombia is the recording of a debate lead by Gaitán in Congress. Gaitán, faced with the government's denial of the great *Masacre de las Bananeras* (Massacre of the Banana Plantations), exposed, before all congressmen, the skulls of some of the hundreds of workers murdered in the bloodbath.

The murder of Gaitán unleashed the battle between liberals and conservatives throughout the country. The war that followed is known as *La Violencia*, and constitutes a turning point in the political and social representation in Colombia. The first democratic change of a party in power, following the Constitution of 1886, led to an open war between the subcultures of liberal and conservative politics. This made the project of constructing a common Nation-State impossible, and instead emerged a binary and excluding political world. The friend-foe logic established in

every political and social relationship, i.e. violence with a constitutive force of the social and political in the absence of a unifying legal order.⁷⁴

La Violencia continued up until the start of the National Front, an agreement signed in Spain by the liberal and conservative leaders of Colombia in 1958. All other political sectors were excluded from this agreement, and the decision was taken for conservative and liberal candidates to take turns of the presidency every four years. In the words of Eric Hobsbawm, *La violencia* was the largest popular mobilization of armed peasants up until that moment of the twentieth century in the western world.⁷⁵ It was precisely the most progressive political and social forces who, outside the government pact of the two parties in power, turned into the forces of systematic opposition to the antidemocratic and violent State model, founded by the traditional parties. Naturally, some sectors of those same social and political forces were the ones that turned into the modern-day guerrilla groups, some of which were dismantled in the development of the conflict (for example the Ricardo Franco group), others which demobilized in 1991 (M-19, Quintín Lame, among others). There is also the FARC, who signed a peace agreement with the Colombian State in 2016, and the ELN, a group who, at the time of writing, are undertaking peace negotiations with the State.

In the first interview I performed during my fieldwork, in narrating one of the scenarios of persecution by the *cabildo* of Pueblo Nuevo, the elder Alfonso Peña was the first to speak of the existence of a former *cabildo*.

“**Alfonso Peña:** Because I had been the deputy mayor of Pueblo Nuevo, I worked very carefully there. So, for example, in the year 1986, because I could not always travel to Pueblo Nuevo, they tried to punish me, lash me and hang me by the *cepo*.⁷⁶ Because of that, I joined Mr. Leonel Tombé, as part of the Community Action Board. What do we do? Because without having done wrong, we would get sanctioned, lashed, hanged on the *cepo* - they announced this to me on Wednesday. So on Thursday I woke up early, and at 5 am I went to see that elder [Leonel Tombé], and he said: until 1950 there was a professional *cabildo* here, so we write a document and send it to the Ministry of Government. Yes, he wrote the paper and said: we go on Friday. So we went. On Friday we arrived in Popayán, to the Office of Indigenous Affairs, and they said that we already belonged, that we could have a normal *cabildo*, that we were already part of the municipality of Silvia.”⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Jaramillo M., *Pasados Y Presentes De La Violencia En Colombia. Estudio Sobre Las Comisiones De Investigacion (1958-2011)*, 53-56.

⁷⁵ Hobsbawm, "The Anatomy of Violence in Colombia."

⁷⁶ Colonial punishment integrated by the Nasa people in their judicial sentencing.

⁷⁷ Diego Fernando Marin Rios, "Interview with Alfonso Peña," (2017).

Alfonso Peña was the first to pay me a visit the same night I arrived in Tumburao. I had not seen him before, and I was surprised to know that someone would have heard of my arrival so late that same night. He introduced himself as Roberto and began asking me about the sort of work I wanted to do in Tumburao, how I had come to hear of the *cabildo* and how I had arrived there. I immediately understood he was someone important, because more than a casual visit, it was the first test of trust undertaken by the community. That night, what started off as a trust test, ended up being my first interview. A few days later, when I met him again, I found out that the first narrator of this thesis was not called Roberto at all, and that he was, in fact, one of the principal protagonists in the creation of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. The elder Alfonso Peña was born in 1951, he is the father of the current governor of the *cabildo*, Alfredo Peña, and he is one of the oldest of the Peña family - a particularly important family in the history of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*.



Figure 2.5: elder Alfonso Peña

In the episode narrated by Alfonso Peña, it was Leonel Tombé who had told him of the former existence of a *cabildo* until 1950. This matches the statements of Miguel Ángel Isoto, who refers to Leonel as the last governor of the *cabildo*, and later as police inspector of Tumburao. On the role of Leonel Tombé, elder Alfonso added:

“Alfonso Peña: There was nothing back then, no help, we were forgotten by the municipality. There was only the police inspector in 1982 for example.

Diego Marin: But was he also member of the [communist] party?

AfP: no, no, no, no. He helped, because he knew the history.

DM: Was there no liberal party neither?

AfP: He was liberal. He did good by us.

DM: What was his name? Do you remember?

AfP: Of course, he was called Leonel Tombé, he was a founder [of Tumburao].

DM: Ah, so he agreed?

AfP: Of course, because those from Pueblo Nuevo and the CRIC were giving a lot of trouble.

(...)

AfP: He was an old and wise man! He knew how to use his pen.

DM: He knew how to write.

AfP: And a soldier too.

DM: Really? He was a soldier?

AfP: Yes. I don't know in what year that was, around 1930 I believe. He was very attentive, very helpful. "Everything you need, have it", because they were wealthy, they had land, in Siberia and here too. He had things... and cattle. That is why he was not afraid of going to Popayán, if he needed money, he would sell some cattle. And what about us? We had nothing, we were very poor, very poor."⁷⁸

Arlein Charry appears in the presentation of the "Socioeconomic Study of the Indigenous Community of Tumburao, Municipality of Silvia, Department of Cauca" as the anthropologist in charge of the research and anthropological report, published in chapter three: "Ethno-historical Aspects". This report, an official text whose conclusion and recommendation is for the constitution of the *cabildo* of Tumburao, assumes oral tradition as «the source of information on the history of the community, contained in the wisdom of the elders, the ones in charge of transmitting the knowledge of their ancestors through language».⁷⁹ The report holds that 18 people over 65 years of age lived in Tumburao in 1992, however, it only presents the account of one of them, in regards to "recent history". The narrator was the late Leonel Tombé.

"By 1881, there was already a *cabildo* in existence, as *cacique* Juan Tama asserts in the title of the five ancestral towns, but with the incoming violence the *cabildo* came to an end in the attempt to exterminate the liberals.

(...)

During that time, the *cabildo* was in place up until 1949, when the *guanós* and *chusmeros*⁸⁰ came into the scene. Back then there was a conservative mayor in Silvia, just like the people of Pueblo Nuevo, who sent the *chusmeros* to murder the people of Tumburao; I was the governor that year (Leonel Tombé Osnás), and because I was running away, I took no papers with me, nothing. The *chusmeros* came to my house, the house of the *cabildo*, and burned everything; they came to kill, so I left for Siberia, to another land where a relative lived; I stayed there and returned when things went back to normal.

We have now been constituted as a *cabildo* for 8 years and we work together with those in Pueblo Nuevo, but just to recover our lands; for they are trouble and want to incorporate us into their *resguardo*. We do not want that, we are not like them, they are part of Caldono and Tumburao is part of Silvia; over there they are *godos* [conservatives] and we were always liberal, that is why we are different, we are not Pueblo Nuevo, we are Tumburao, with our own *cabildo* as Juan Tama says, and we are not screwed"⁸¹

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria and Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación, "Estudio Socioeconómico De La Comunidad Indígena De Tumburao, Municipio De Silvia, Departamento Del Cauca," 24.

⁸⁰ Name used during *La Violencia* to call the paramilitary groups.

⁸¹ Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria and Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación, "Estudio Socioeconómico De La Comunidad Indígena De Tumburao, Municipio De Silvia, Departamento Del Cauca," 25, 26.

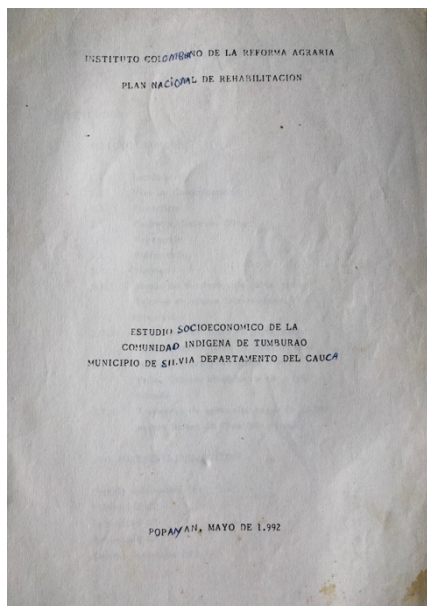


Figure 2.6: first page of the report from 1992 published by INCORA.

Despite the lack of information on this interview (the conditions under which it took place or the methodology for the development of the study), we can consider 1992, the year of its publication, as a close-enough approximation to the date Leonel Tombé was interviewed, since the report was a mandatory requirement for the legal recognition of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, and there are sufficient elements to deduce that prior to this, INCORA was not interested in compiling the accounts of the elders in Tumburao.

There is no doubt in regards to the identity of the narrator, Leonel Tombé, as, despite the minute imprecisions on the dates of the events mentioned by elder Miguel Ángel (who claims the *cabildo* existed until the 1940's) and elder Alfonso (who claims the *cabildo* disappeared in the year 1950), we can clearly observe that both refer to the same political phenomenon (*La Violencia*) and to the same person (the governor who then became police inspector). The imprecision as to these dates can be due to the way each one got access to the information and, of course, it can be due to their individual recollection of their memories.

Therefore, considering the account told by elder Leonel Tombé reliable, as it was transcribed in the INCORA-report, there are sufficient elements to assert that indeed, as the elders expressed, there was a *cabildo* in Tumburao until 1949, when *La Violencia* intensified following the assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, and when the paramilitary groups of the Conservative Party attacked the community of the *cabildo* of Tumburao and tried to murder their governor. The evident rivalry between Tumburao - a liberal territory belonging to Silvia (a municipality of strong liberal tradition) - and Pueblo Nuevo - a territory of conservative tendency - stem from these events. It is a rivalry that can be sensed in the accounts of Leonel Tombé. This is what I, from here on, will term the *political component* in the dispute for the establishment of the new *cabildo* of Tumburao, which adds to the historical analysis together with the *ancestral* and *territorial components*.

Leonel Tombé, the only elder narrator in the INCORA-report, and a first-hand protagonist, as much of the *cabildo's* disappearance in 1949 as of the struggle for the foundation of Tumburao

NXUN CXAMB, mentions only one source from which he received the earliest history of the *cabildo*: Maria Tomasa Méndez. Leonel describes Tomasa Méndez as a 110-year-old woman who died in 1939; his great-grandmother in-law.⁸²

“**Alfonso Peña:** A woman named Tomasa Méndez who worked as a housemaid. She would churn. She would churn [food] daily, from one in the morning and all day, to be transported to Silvia.

Like you have been told, the [land]owner always earned a lot, but her salary was very low. She was the first one to tell that, before, there existed a *cabildo*.

So *cabildo*, with the name of Gonzalo Osnás, a lifetime authority. Back then, he had coins in white gold, a *mochila* half-full of those coins, that's what they said. Because he didn't fear anyone, then two men that had arrived, one was the brother of the general Ezequiel Hurtado, his name was Nicolás Hurtado, he was from Silvia, and the other was Nicanor Velazco, who was from Combeima, Tolima. So those men, because there was land here, they placed bets, they bet three *pesos*, and the money was more than he could show for. And then he thought, because a year passed and they didn't show up, that they had left. And then a year later they came back and said, well, since you weren't able to pay, we will add 1.50 [*pesos*] and you sign the handover. And Gonzalo Osnás signed the handover.

Then they began dividing the land from Chulubembo all the way to Culebrero.

Diego Marin: What year was it he signed?

AfP: I can't remember...

Jeremías Peña: 1886.

AfP: That was how they started dividing the land”⁸³

It was my last evening in Tumburao. During the morning and afternoon, we had carried out the collective interview with more than a dozen of the elders. Jeremías Peña came walking from Pueblo Nuevo to take part in the interview –a two-hour long hike. Jeremías lives there, in the *cabildo* of Pueblo Nuevo, and is the president of the Community Action Board (*Junta de Acción Comunal*) in the village of San Antonio; village chosen by the FARC and the Colombian government for the demobilisation of somewhat more than 200 guerrilla fighters. As we were preparing for the interview in the backyard of his house in Tumburao, together with his brother Alfonso, elder Jeremías pointed to the exact location of the guerrilla camp, a rather steep hill almost at the same height as the "downtown" of Tumburao, but on the other side of the Quichaya river.

⁸² Ibid., 25.

⁸³ Diego Fernando Marin Rios, "Interview with the Brothers Alfonso and Jeremías Peña," (2017).

Jeremías is 8 years younger than his brother Alfonso. Born in 1960, he is also one of the central protagonists in the struggle for Tumburao's autonomy. Elder Jeremías was governor of Tumburao in 1994, when the regional manager of INCORA (Larry Olmedo Guerrero) wrote a letter where he explained that "for his knowledge and for the community of Tumburao"⁸⁴, he attached a copy of the socioeconomic study made by INCORA for the legal recognition of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. This could be the reason Jeremías Peña appears to function as the "librarian" of Tumburao. He brought his *mochila* to the collective interview, full of the *cabildo's* original documents, legal documents, the official maps upon which Tumburao's borders were drawn in 1992, the aforementioned INCORA-report and a small sample of the books in his library: invaluable texts on the political



Figure 2.7: The elder Jeremías Peña reading the INCORA-report during our interview. In the back is the *mochila* (traditional handbag) with maps and other legal documents of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*.

history of Colombia, the history on CRIC and the indigenous movement and of the guerrillas. The documents and the library of Jeremías Peña appear to be one of the most interesting treasures in the Colombian Andes.

“Some men came here, Nicanor Velasco from Tolima and Nicolás Hurtado from Silvia. Both came from Silvia, where a man named Gonzalo Osnás, settler of Tumburao; he had fine roosters and Velasco and Hurtado did too, they started to practice, to settle the bets (...) playing over 3 pesos at that time; Gonzalo Osnás lost and had to give away what he ruled over, that was Tumburao. They took over and kept ruling, selling the titles of the properties to others (...) Mr. Gonzalo Osnás controlled the indigenous people of Tumburao (...) and because he was the owner of it all, because that's what the community made it that way, therefore, nothing was said of him letting others take over the land.”⁸⁵

In a rooster fight in 1886, that's how the lands of Tumburao were lost at the end of the nineteenth century to the hands of Nicolás Hurtado, from the Silvia municipality. Nicolás was the brother of general Ezequiel Hurtado, president of Colombia in 1884 and a fighter who rose up in arms against the conservative government of *La Regeneración*. General Ezequiel Hurtado was

⁸⁴ Apéndice.

⁸⁵ Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria and Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación, "Estudio Socioeconómico De La Comunidad Indígena De Tumburao, Municipio De Silvia, Departamento Del Cauca," 25.

defeated in 1885 together with the Liberal Party, giving way to the period of conservative hegemony, described earlier in this work.

The tandem-story of the Peña brothers, produced during our interview, coincides with the transcription of Leonel Tombé's story. The stories complement each other in details such as the amounts betted, how the landowners took possession over the lands, but most importantly, both stories originate from the same source: Tomasa Méndez, whose oral tradition appears as the primary source of information on what happened in Tumburao at the end of the nineteenth century. It is established, then, that the *cabildo* was lost in 1949 due to the conservative paramilitary aggression during *La Violencia*, and that the territory of Tumburao had already been lost in 1886, in a cockfight.

The presence of Nicolás Hurtado in these stories, brother of the former president and general Ezequiel Hurtado, key person in the Liberal Party, both from the municipality of Silvia, is essential in order to understand the background of what we have termed the *political component* in the dispute over the foundation of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. This event sheds light on the aforementioned tradition of Tumburao being Liberal, party to which Leonel Tombé himself belonged. This can be understood as a piece of evidence of the Liberal Party's influence in the Silvia municipality, which reinforces what was said by the elders regarding the conservative aggression in these territories during *La Violencia* and the rivalry with Caldono and Pueblo Nuevo.

It is fundamental here, to return to the network of family relations which is uncovered in this story. I learned of the existence of Tomasa Méndez two days prior to the interview with the brothers Alfonso and Jeremías Peña. It occurred at the end of the interview with Alfredo, the son of Alfonso and governor of the *cabildo*. Close to 21:00 we concluded a two-hour long interview, but the harsh rainfall constrained us to the governors' bedroom. As we stood there, talking about the history of Tumburao and Colombian politics, I was hit by a powerful headache. The Andean altitude punished me for the eight years I have been living next to the sea in Oslo. Elder Alfredo Peña, also a traditional doctor with ten years of experience, anointed my temples with a colourless, odourless and extremely cold liquid, which later, thanks to the cotton buds placed in my ears all night, allowed me to work until late and sleep, alleviated of the pain. As we were speaking about traditional medicine, Alfredo told me that the oldest person in his family he could remember was Tomasa Méndez, his father's great-grandmother.



Figure 2.8: Alfredo Peña (left) presents the idea of writing the history Tumburao.

“**Alfonso Peña:** (...) he was called Gabriel Peña and he came here, with that woman [Tomasa Méndez] they got family. At that time, because there was a *cabildo* here, the authorities went around asking who was the father, who was the irresponsible one. So they investigated and as always, they found him. So our grandfather was a man called Venancio Peña.

Diego Marin: Son of Gabriel?

AfP: He was son of Gabriel, so not Venancio Méndez, but Venancio Peña, that's how he was named, if not, we would be Méndez, but now, as is known, his name was Venancio Peña. We are the grandchildren of Venancio.

(...)

DM: But that was at the time of the Thousand Days' War, didn't any of the Peña family fight in that war?

AfP: there was war, a [liberal and conservatives] political war in which I believe my grandfather participated, yes, Venancio Peña was there.

DM: He fought in the Thousand Days' War?

Jeremías Peña: Yes, he confronted the Conservative Party.

DM: With whom? Under whose leadership?

JP: I think it was Ezequiel Hurtado, the general. He (Venancio) was a liberal so he had to.

Well, the history of Tumburao is five generations; first, Gabriel Peña and María Tomasa Méndez, second, Venancio, and third, Marceliano Peña - our father.

DM: Ah, so Marceliano comes from there? And who did Venancio marry?

JP: Venancio had...

AfP: Martina Osnás.

JP: And the fourth generation are the children of Marceliano Peña, my father, and late mother, named María Juana Casas, originally from Pitayó.

DM: So Venancio was also a *terrajero*?

AfP y JP: Yes, he was.

DM: And Marcelino?

AfP y JP: As well”⁸⁶

The INCORA-report includes a fairly detailed quantitative description of the population of Tumburao in 1992, whereby 54 families, 281 persons, lived there. It is only natural that persons share kinship in such a small community, as is the case with the Tombé Osnás and the Peña Casas families. However, it is important to observe the direct descent of the Peñas in relation to María Tomasa Méndez, who is also the source of historical reference to the liberal leader of Tumburao (Leonel Tombé), member of the Liberal Party and a comrade of the Peñas in the struggle for an autonomous *resguardo*.

The protagonists of this story, from the nineteenth century until the 1980's, hold kinship which is prevalent to this day among the leaders of the *cabildo*. This is what I will term the *kinship component* in the dispute over the establishment of the new *cabildo* - a new piece adding to the *ancestral, territorial and political components* as the basis of the historical analysis of Tumburao. The *kinship component* is crucial in order to understand the personal motivations that led to the struggle for political autonomy and self-determination of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, as, for the Peñas, being direct descendants of María Tomasa Méndez is less of a genealogical curiosity and more of a mandate.

“**Alfonso Peña:** So she said: all this suffering, hopefully some of the grandchildren turn out to be good leaders, because this land was *cabildo*, this is the community's. Maybe the grandchildren, hopefully they will recover the territory. She said that and it is very true. Who were the ones to make the *cabildo*? The grandchildren of Tomasa Méndez.

Further on, in the same interview, when speaking of the founding process of the *cabildo* in the 1980's, as to how that process came about, the Peña brothers had a clear answer.

Diego Marin: So who was it that began with the idea of recovering the *resguardo*?

Jeremías Peña: The elder, Tomasa Méndez, she was the one who spoke of that”⁸⁷

2.2. Tumburao 1981: the struggle for the new *cabildo*

“**Diego Marin:** How does it begin, or who begins the idea of re-establishing the *cabildo*?

⁸⁶ Marin Rios, "Interview with the Brothers Alfonso and Jeremías Peña."

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Delfin Peña: *Compañero*⁸⁸ Pedro.

Miguel Ángel Isoto: that day there was a person who had already been in the organization together with *compañero* Pedro. *Compañero* Pedro came to share his ideas, he came here and we had a meeting with him. From there one person from here started to lead the people and conduct meetings.

DM: Who was that?

MAI: They killed him, I believe the landowners killed him, his name was Floresmiro Peña.”⁸⁹

According to the *dominant foundational narrative* within Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* - the stories of the elders and the current leaders of the *cabildo* - it was after the lawyer Pedro Vaca's arrival to the territory, in 1981, that the organization process began, the struggle and resistance whose result was the reestablishment of the *cabildo*, the recomposition of the *resguardo* and the constitution of Tumburao as an autonomous and differentiated political community. Against the leadership of CRIC, this community, with their own interpretation of the indigenous struggles and a particular interpretation of the Colombian conflict, decidedly distanced themselves from the dominant group within the indigenous movement.

“**Diego Marin:** And what organizations were here before [the new *cabildo*]?”

Alfonso Peña: no, before there were none, only the [Communist] Party was here.

DM: in 1980 or 82?

AfP: 82, 84, only the Party, there was no CRIC, the CRIC arrived, but that was later, when we began to seize [land], that's when they came in.

(...)

Doctor Vaca arrived, he was discreet, we already knew that there was a *cabildo* here before, but only from history, by ear, not more. We hadn't seen a proper *cabildo*, so it was with him that we started organizing.”⁹⁰

Pedro Vaca was born in Santander de Quilichao – the most important municipality of northern Cauca – and remembers perfectly well the moment when José María Güetia, professor in social sciences and geography in the Technical Institute of Santander (Instituto Técnico de Santander), suggested he become active in the Communist Youth of Colombia (Juventud Comunista de Colombia). It was 1971, Pedro was thirteen and, according to his own description, a rather independent and determined young boy, who had assumed the responsibility of providing for his family after his father - a musician - was left in complete disability after taking a bullet in his neck from a *pájaro*. From the moment he became a member of the Communist Youth (1971) until today, Pedro has been a prominent figure; organizing indigenous peoples and peasants,

⁸⁸ A friend or fellow in the struggle.

⁸⁹ Marin Rios, "Collective Interview with the Elders."

⁹⁰ "Interview with Alfonso Peña."

establishing *cabildos*, a student leader of the Cauca University, a human rights lawyer and lawyer of political prisoners and a congressman of the Republic in 1990. Pedro Vaca is, without a doubt, one of the most well-known political figures of the left-wing in the Cauca department, and one of the protagonists of most authority. He was, therefore, a compulsory source at the time of the historical investigation into the social struggles in Cauca in the 1970's and 80's.

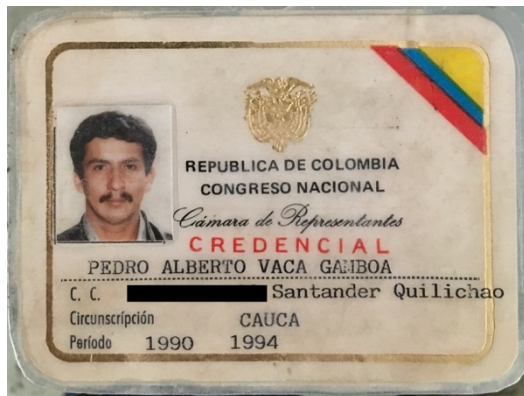


Figure 2.9: Official ID of Pedro Vaca as congressman.

Pedro and I always met at his house. We did two interviews in total, one prior to and one following my visit to Tumburao. Both were carried out in a peaceful atmosphere, of great silence, sweetened by the comforting sound of the small fountain in the dining room, an atmosphere precisely opposite to the life Pedro keeps in his memory, as a social activist and political leader in the turbulent waters of the fight for power in Colombia.

Due to his impeccable memory, a surprising level of precision in recalling the names of persons and places, and ample descriptions of events, his doubts on certain topics appeared to me, more than proof of his forgetfulness, proof of his carefulness – the same that allowed him to survive until today. As with Jeremías Peña, Pedro Vaca possesses an archive of great value, one he would frequently return to in our interviews, presenting everything from minutes from official meetings of *cabildos* to original political statements of indigenous leaders in the 1930's. It was at the end of our first interview, when I was still insisting on the original topic of this thesis, that Mr. Pedro Vaca mentioned Tumburao for the first time.

“Pedro Vaca: fortunately the *zona veredal* [FARC demobilization camp] was established in Caldon. It was possible to build it there because there is a strong political presence of the Party, in the *cabildos* of Caldon, Pioyá, Pueblo Nuevo and Tumburao. I emphasize Tumburao because they are the comrades who are politically most determined, and because they have influenced others.

(...)

Diego Marin: And where is Tumburao, is that in Silvia?

PV: Tumburao is a *cabildo* which, on one side has Pueblo Nuevo, then Laguna, Quizgó and Aguada. Those were four *cabildos* that were part of CRIC, they were managed by CRIC and to them it was infuriating that communist *cabildos* were organizing themselves there.

DM: What year was that *cabildo* established, the one in Tumburao?

PV: It started in the year 1981 and we had it officially recognized in 1984.

DM: And where is the history of that *cabildo*?

PV: They have it. You see, I'm like, one of the elders.

DM: And where can I find the recorded history of how all of that began?

PV: It has to be written!”⁹¹

With only a year of activism (1972), Pedro was chosen to accompany Abelino Ul – a renowned communist indigenous leader and one of the historical figures in the indigenous movement in Cauca – to work with the political organization in and around Toribío. This is a geographical area at the very core of the indigenous resistance (the *five ancestral territories*) in Toribío, Jambaló and Corinto, where the Communist Party held majority presence in the municipal councils during the 1970's and well into the 80's.

In the majority of the indigenous *cabildos* of northern Cauca, the influence of this political organization was evident, on one hand, due to the historical trajectory of the Communist Party in the indigenous movement. On the other, it was so because the communists participated in elections, contrary to the practice of other left-wing parties at the time, and contrary to the very CRIC, whence the elections of the indigenous *resguardos* were disputed between the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party and the Communist Party.

In his account of the story, Pedro vehemently insists that the Communist Party was never foreign to the indigenous struggles, and, to the contrary, was a significant actor in the blossoming of these struggles in the second decade of the twentieth century, and the only political force capable of directing the defense of the *cabildos* and *resguardos* during *La Violencia*. According to Pedro, the objective of *La Violencia* in Cauca was to eliminate the largest possible amount of *resguardos* in order to facilitate the appropriation of land into the hands of a few landowners.

“When CRIC was established in 1971, the CP already had a strong presence, since 1930, and from earlier on in the regions, because of José Gonzalo Sánchez”⁹², this is how Pedro describes the history of the Communist Party and the indigenous movement.

“José Gonzalo Sánchez was the secretary of Quintín Lame, in 1913, in the famous *Quintiniadas*⁹³, until 1917. In 1917, when Quintín Lame was defeated by Pio Coyo in Inzá, Pio Coyo was another indigenous man, but trained in the army, he [Quintín Lame] moved to Ortega, in Tolima, he went there. But the one who continues the struggle here in Cauca is José Gonzalo Sánchez.

⁹¹ Diego Fernando Marin Rios, "First Interview with Pedro Vaca," (2017).

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Indigenous uprisings, particularly in Cauca, led by Quintín Lame between 1913 and 1917.

While Quintín Lame had no education, José Gonzalo was a lecturer, an indigenous professor. In 1928 José Gonzalo Sánchez is part of those who make up the Socialist Party of Colombia, and in 1930 he is among the founders of the Communist Party of Colombia (...) The one who was at the forefront of the struggle against *terraje* and the defense of the *resguardos* is José Gonzalo Sánchez, a communist. It is in the name of the Communist Party that he leads all those struggles. He also took part, together with Cesar Niño, in founding the indigenous *resguardos* of Sierra Nevada in Santa Marta. He founded the indigenous *resguardos* of the Caldas area, of the Embera, together with the Guapacha family. So the most important man in the history of the indigenous struggles is José Gonzalo Sánchez.”⁹⁴

At the end of the nineteenth century, the strong Cauca State, which extended from the border with Ecuador in the south to the border with Panama in the north, was fragmented, creating a new administrative division based on departments. Popayán lost its role as the great capital and, the Caucan elites - conservative families whose wealth derived from slavery and servitude - were forced to expand their *haciendas*, appropriating indigenous communal lands and violently restoring the system of *terraje* - the mode of exploitation and semi-slavery which had been abolished by Colombian law in 1850.⁹⁵

The landowners began a violent campaign to dismantle the *resguardos*, due to the aforementioned economic reasons, and subsequently, motivated by the political conflicts associated with the arrival of the first liberal governments, the opposition to the Law of lands in 1936 and by *La Violencia*. It is in this context that the loss of land of Tumburao's *resguardo* in 1886 must be understood. This is the backdrop of the *García-Marquezian* scene of the cockfight between the defeated liberal *caudillos* of Silvia, who had just lost the Republic, and the indigenous Gonzalo Osnás, land holder of Tumburao.

It is due to this economic and political framework of conflicts over land in the first half of the twentieth century in Cauca, that the defense of the *resguardos* and *cabildos* and the eradication of *terraje* became the main objectives of the indigenous movement. Thus arise the two indigenous leaders who marked the central lines of thought within the indigenous movement until today: Manuel Quintín Lame and José Gonzalo Sánchez. These two indigenous leaders

⁹⁴ Diego Fernando Marin Rios, "Second Interview with Pedro Vaca," (2017).

⁹⁵ Juan Carlos Castillo Gómez, "El Estado-Nación Pluriétnico Y Multicultural Colombiano: La Lucha Por El Territorio En La Reimaginación De La Nación Y La Reivindicación De La Identidad Étnica De Negros E Indígenas" (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2006).

worked together until 1930, and from their separation emanated two differentiated and opposed ideological positions.

To Rappaport, the sum of the thought and action of Manuel Quintín Lame is the core element to understand the development of the Nasa process of interpretation - or reinterpretation - of history, or, in the words of Hobsbawm and Ranger, the "reinvention" of tradition".⁹⁶

Historically, the importance of Quintín Lame can be summarized in that he himself represents the synthesis of the indigenous thought and political action - a synthesis introduced by a sector of CRIC at the end of the 1970's. This particular understanding of the Nasa history was later adopted as the ABC of the indigenous movement: land seizure, eradication of *terraje*, understanding of the *cabildos* as the basic organizational unit of the movement, protection of the existing *resguardos* and preservation of the indigenous cultural identity, particularly their language (Nasa Yuwe).

It seems a general consensus among academics, that the division between Quintín Lame and José Gonzalo Sánchez emerges when the latter decided to take part in the foundation of the Communist Party in 1930. José Gonzalo never abandoned that ideology nor the organization, until his assassination in 1952⁹⁷, when he was poisoned by some landowners. This division, which, according to the authors, even has its roots in the profound Catholic devotion of Quintín Lame - for whom the Communists' atheism was incomprehensible⁹⁸ - marked a political breach in the indigenous movement. Above all, it is the major ideological turning point within of the growing indigenous movement of the twentieth century.

“Pedro Vaca: José Gonzalo Sánchez is the one who remains, leading the indigenous movement, because Quintín Lame left.

(...)

Diego Marin: So Quintín Lame was the symbol?

PV: A symbol which was superimposed, or brought, by those anticommunist sectors in CRIC, because the intention was to erase the name José Gonzalo Sánchez within the indigenous movement.

DM: It appears they have managed to do so until now.

⁹⁶ Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory*, 118.

⁹⁷ The lack of reliable analyses on José Gonzalo Sánchez role in the indigenous movement is evidenced in the continuous discord among authors, in this case, the date of his assassination is by some placed in 1950, and by others in 1952. I have opted for the 1952-date as it coincides with Pedro Vaca's account. Further on, the selection criteria will be to assume the data which coincides with the primary sources, as valid, indicating which of the data are the subject of discussion.

⁹⁸ Marta Herrera Ángel, "Manuel Quintín Lame," *Biografías Biblioteca Virtual Banco de la República*, <http://www.banrepultural.org/blaavirtual/biografias/lamemanu.htm>. Luz Ángela Nuñez Espinel, "Quintín Lame, Mil Batallas Contra El Olvido," *Anuario colombiano de historia social y de la cultura*, no. 35 (2008): 104. Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory*, 217.

PV: Yes. Look, the 8th front of FARC was called '*Frente José Gonzalo Sánchez*'. When they established the 8th front they published a text where the FARC justified why they gave it that name '*José Gonzalo Sánchez*'. (...) José Gonzalo had been in the Soviet Union, and his library was very valuable because he was the one who wrote everything Quintín Lame published, it was he who wrote all the memorials, but unfortunately the children of Manuel Tránsito Sánchez turned evangelical and burned the library."⁹⁹

For Pedro Vaca, the result of the reinterpretation of Nasa history that today constitutes the dominant narrative within the indigenous movement, is a functional history to the interests of a sector of the leadership of the CRIC at the end of the 70's, a sector that identified itself with the anti-communist element.

In keeping with Pedro Vaca's story, it was the Communist Party, under the leadership of José Gonzalo Sánchez, who led the defense of the *resguardos* and the self-defense groups that formed in the region, to safeguard the structure of the *cabildo* and the Party. According to his account, this is what happened:

“in all the agrarian and indigenous zones of Inzá/Belalcazar, Jambaló, Toribío, Corinto, *La Violencia* began with the death of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán. In the regions of Toribío and Inzá/Belalcazar, there was the presence of paramilitary groups, *pájaros*, and their objective was to put an end to the *cabildos*, destroy the leadership of the *cabildos*, because the persecution was directed towards the governors and the leaders of the *cabildos*”¹⁰⁰

Pedro, as a member of the Communist Party, was from the beginning involved in the construction and defense of the *cabildos* and *resguardos* (he participated in the construction of four of them; La Cilia in the municipality of Miranda, Munchique-Los Tigres and Guadualito in Santander de Quilichao, and Tumburao). To him, the "CP is rooted in the indigenous communities because of the relationship of communal property, collective property, so for that reason the Party has been well received in the indigenous communities since 1930".¹⁰¹ This important influence of the Communist Party on the indigenous movement is ratified, according to Pedro, in that Manuel Tránsito Sánchez, the brother of José Gonzalo Sánchez and also a communist leader, was the first president of CRIC following its foundation in 1971.

“**Diego Marin:** So at what point does CRIC initiate the path of rejecting other types of political influences?

Pedro Vaca: Well there, in the confrontation, and that has to do with the international level, with the presence of the social democracy, which is very

⁹⁹ Marin Rios, "Second Interview with Pedro Vaca."

¹⁰⁰ "First Interview with Pedro Vaca."

¹⁰¹ "Second Interview with Pedro Vaca."

strong, and hence the instructions of doing away with the communists in the CRIC.

DM: Basically you're saying that it was an ideological position made by the CRIC.

PV: Yes, of course!

DM: But that would deny its vocation as social movement, because the CRIC is not a political party, the CRIC is supposed to be a social movement in which they should...

PV: No, at its core it is a political movement. What they are up to in CRIC is not so much the objective of the social movement, but the interests of their political movement with a political stance.

DM: So, between 1971 and '83, what occurs is the development of the ideological alternative of establishing CRIC as the indigenous' political apparatus, and that's why the exodus of the communists is seen as something natural?

PV: More than natural, it is necessary for them, for their political project. That's why the CP's exit from the indigenous territories is bloody, to the death!

That's the reason for the murder of many of our leaders, there in the indigenous areas, because they would hit the principal heads of the indigenous leadership (...) it is paradoxical that in those regions the Liberal Party or the Conservative Party also have been present, and the majority in the municipal councils are either liberal or conservative, but they didn't touch them. The liberal and conservative leaders, they wouldn't touch them at all, they still have political presence in those municipalities. All of it was directed towards the CP and the FARC. One could say that this was the first paramilitary group formed in this region, because the Quintín Lame never confronted the army, the system, or the police, but rather its action was against the peasant, and people who did not share the ideology of CRIC.¹⁰²

It becomes evident, as explained so far, that this *anticommunist* position within the indigenous movement extends throughout history, even in the division between Manuel Quintín Lame and José Gonzalo Sánchez - with the very birth of the Communist Party of Colombia in 1930 - a position spearheaded by Quintín Lame himself. This *anticommunism* has a decisive impact on the development of the events that occurred in Tumburao in the 80's, particularly in the position and actions undertaken by the CRIC, with the aim of preventing the establishment of a *cabildo* supported by the Communist Party. This is what I, from here on, will call *the ideological component* in the dispute over the constitution of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* - an element that also adds to the ancestral, territorial, political and kinship, as the basis of the subsequent historical analysis.

¹⁰² "First Interview with Pedro Vaca."

In 1981, Emilio Viveros, a communist indigenous activist from Santander de Quilichao, invited Pedro Vaca to go together to Tumburao, an indigenous area of the Silvia municipality, where a friend of his, the doctor Héctor de Jesús Ríos Gallego, had a *hacienda*: La Asunción. Pedro - a veteran of the successful struggle for the foundation of the *cabildos* Munchique-Los Tigres and Guadualito - accepted.

“Pedro Vaca: So yes, we arrived and there was a friend who was called Floresmiro Peña. Floresmiro Peña worked on the *finca* ‘La Asunción’, so he was the first I had a talk with, suggesting to him the struggle of the party, its program. It was with Floresmiro, it was with him first.

Diego Marin: In what conditions were the people there, how did they live?

PV: Let's see, when I arrived, there was no *resguardo*, no *cabildo*, there was some political leadership managed by the Liberal Party. Politically they were members of the Liberal Party (...) Then, with this friend Floresmiro, we spoke and agreed that I would return in eight days, he committed to call on more people, so when I arrived there were already five, we were five, and I began shaping it, a small cell of the Party.

DM: But those five were related?

PV: Yes, they were all related, the brother Alfonso Peña, Delfín Peña, there were other friends of the surname Isoto, there were various families, Elmiro Yotumbo. We started to work from there, the next meeting, the next month. So every time there was a meeting it would grow, that was a process of two years, more or less, of political consolidation”¹⁰³

In these clandestine meetings they would, as Pedro tells it, discuss the ideology and the program of the Communist Party, but he always made sure he kept the focus on the issue of the indigenous and their lands. None of the indigenous persons had experience as members of left-wing parties, nor had they been exposed to the permanent presence of guerrilla groups in their territories.

“Pedro Vaca: we were more or less a group of 70, 75 persons who would meet, so I suggested we organize the *cabildo* of Tumburao. So, everyone agreed on establishing the *cabildo*, and then I began doing the legal procedures for the official recognition of the *cabildo*, which was through the Mayor's Office of Silvia.”

In 1981, Tumburao was entirely isolated, it had no form of road connection with its surroundings - one would arrive walking or on horseback - the indigenous persons were still subject to the oppression of *terraje*, and the only existing school taught, at most, until third grade of primary.

“Alfredo Peña: The elders, they tell the story of how, to make the *cabildo*, they couldn't have meetings openly, so they had to have a meeting far away, hidden,

¹⁰³ "Second Interview with Pedro Vaca."

where no one would see them, because at that time there were a lot of landowners and there were many *pájaros*. They took great care and in that way they kept organizing. In those days they lived off of the *terraje*.

Diego Marin: And how would you describe to someone in Norway what the *terraje* was?

AP: The *terraje*, well, we lived on a very small piece of land, it was tiny, but the landowners ruled there too. Only on a tiny piece where we had the house and we grew a few things, but everything had to comply with the landowner. It was a piece for growing crops, of about 50 square metres, a tiny piece (...) And to do a big job, one had to ask for permission from the landowner, to plant maize, and one had to pay the landowner half of the product.

DM: And at what age would you start working?

AP: The children?

DM: Yes.

AP: Us, already in 87, when I was a boy [Alfredo was born in 1978], my uncles already took me to work. Already at age 8 or 9 one would be a worker."¹⁰⁴

The days in Tumburao begin at early sunrise. Inside their houses, families gather in the kitchen and, at the time adults depart for work, the roads fill with boys and girls, from the most minute ones, with their colourful *mochilas*, on their way to school. They walk by themselves or in small groups of children gathering along the road - for some, the journey is measured in hours - arriving at the primary school, located in what used to be the ranch 'La Asunción', the former property of Héctor de Jesús Rios Gallego.

Figure 2.10: The children at the school in Tumburao, together with elder Isidro, the governor Alfredo Peña and the teacher Jairo Fernández

¹⁰⁴ "Interview with Alfredo Peña."



“Nicanor [Velazco] died in his ranch, the one we called culebrero, and Nicolás [Hurtado] sold it to Cervelión Orozco from Silvia, who lived there and left it to his heirs; he bought it for \$1000 off Nicolás, the whole land with titles. The heirs sold it by pieces to a man named Gentil Paz from Caldono, for \$1.900, \$4.000 and \$15.000 the pieces, that was around 1939. From there, the lands passed to Dr. Héctor de Jesús Ríos Gallego, for \$450.000... ¡Ah! First it was to Hernando Barrera Sánchez, a priest in Silvia and Caldono, who, yes it was he who sold it to Dr. Ríos Gallego from Popayán, in the year 1973, for \$450.000, the priest didn't earn much because he had bought it for \$400.000. (...) Ah! Mr. Ríos Gallego leased land to us, but later he denied it, so we took the titles of *cacique* Juan Tama and together with the INCORA we made him leave. He brought *pájaros*, killed animals and the people from Pueblo Nuevo helped us, and they called us *subsidiary cabildo*. The CRIC opened their door to us, but they wanted us to be part of Pueblo Nuevo, but we didn't want to and then they stopped helping.”¹⁰⁵

This is how elder Leonél Tombé (police inspector and liberal leader) recalls the succession of owners of the lands that are now part of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, and the way in which the community initiated the recovery of these lands, claiming their rights based on what here has been termed *the ancestral component* of this history. This decision of life, of self-determination of the indigenous community of Tumburao, which fits perfectly into the political and social agenda of the indigenous movement and its historical demands, in addition to introducing the natural conflicts with the landowners, it also gave way to the emergence of *the territorial component* in the dispute with Pueblo Nuevo and unleashed the political rivalry with the CRIC, as a result of the historical development of what I have already termed *the ideological*

¹⁰⁵ Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria and Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación, "Estudio Socioeconómico De La Comunidad Indígena De Tumburao, Municipio De Silvia, Departamento Del Cauca," 25-27.

component of this history. The testimony of the elder Leonel Tombé exhibits precisely each one of these elements, in a very complete, however, extraordinarily summarized, account.

“**Alfonso Peña:** That's how they went subdividing. There were many people here, but some left, others died. Those landowners subdivided and that man Nicanor Velazco, he was *mojano*¹⁰⁶, he was not just any man. He was *mojano de tigre*.

Diego Marin: What is that?

AfP: That is, for example, he is a person, but he would also shape himself into an animal, a tiger. So then the *terrazgueros*, they use medicine to blow on him, and because the *mojano* is a traditional doctor, then he would always show up: "you continue to bother and I will kill you", "go somewhere else". There were people that didn't withstand and others that left. Some withstood, some yes, but few. That story was told by a woman named Tomasa Méndez, she was 110 years old.”¹⁰⁷

This is how Alfonso Peña appeals to what has been termed *the ancestral component* in the historical account, following the story told by his great-grandmother to explain the violent expulsion of the indigenous people of Tumburao at the end of the nineteenth century. It was exactly a century later, in the 1980's, that, with the permanent presence and support of the Communist Party in the territory - in particular that of Dr. Pedro Vaca - the current communist activists of Tumburao came to the conclusion of forming, together with the community, their own *cabildo* and establishing their own *resguardo*. The grounds for their justification were the same ancestral rights (the property titles of the *cacique* Juan Tama) with which other *resguardos* also justified their existence. In the particular case of the Peña, we must take into account, in an addition to all the above, the motivation stemming from the last will of Tomasa Méndez.

It being so, in the political and social framework and the set of actors and motivations exposed thus far, following the principal tenet of the indigenous movement -learned from both Quintín Lame and José Gonzalo Sánchez -, the next step for the leaders of Tumburao was to initiate land seizures.

¹⁰⁶ “Some one who made fun of the rocks transformed into kub’, into *mojano*, but this one has a specialty in his transformation, at day he is Nasa [human being] and at night, between six in the evening and six in the morning, he is animal, he transforms into any animal like dog, boar, tiger, horse among others. To this ‘Nas-animal’ sticks the trait of stealing. The *mojano*, in his transformation, doesn’t lose his ability to speak, even though he has the body of a dog he speaks Nasa Yuwe.” “Mito Nasa De Cauca T'iwe N'hi' Yu'n'i' Nasayak,” in *En Busca De La Tierra Sin Mal. Mitos De Sueños De Futuro De Los Pueblos Indios*, Iglesia, Pueblos Y Culturas (Quito: Ed. ABYA-YALA, 2002), 204.

¹⁰⁷ Marin Rios, "Interview with the Brothers Alfonso and Jeremías Peña."



Figure 2.11: elder Delfín Peña

Diego Marin: Do you remember the names of the landowners?

Miguel Ángel Isoto: Yes. This here was Dr. Ríos', (...) we recovered this from doctor Ríos, Héctor Ríos was his name. There was someone called Publio Paz, and in the lower part there was another one called Daniel Vallejo, over there lived Raúl Paz. Justino Echeverría was another landowner and that area over there was Salvador Paz', another landowner. That's why the *cabildo* finished, because they came in to rule and they appointed a police inspector. Those are Spanish, they are not indigenous, they were white, they were Spanish. Over on this side it belonged to another, he was called Alfonso...

Delfín Peña: Cabras, the surname was Cabras.

MAI: From there followed Alfonso Caicedo. Alfonso Caicedo, that was the last ranch we recovered, the ranch was called 'Carrizal'”¹⁰⁸

The elders agree that the meetings to organize and prepare the land seizures should be held in the bushes, at night, where not even the people of Tumburao could see them, because someone could, voluntarily or involuntarily, give them away. In these meetings, the actions to be undertaken by the group were discussed and prepared, whether they were activities of political formation, organization or land seizures.

“Miguel Ángel Isoto: In '85 we already had this ranch ['La Asunción'] and 'Culebrero', the ranch of Publio Paz. At that time I made a house for myself here [in 'Culebrero'] and I've lived here until now. Yo era el más metido, porque yo me metí allá e hice una casa ahí y hasta ahora vivo ahí. They tried to kill me, but I'm still going, thank god. I was the first to build a house there, in a land recovery.

Diego Marin: When was that recovery?

MAI: in 1983 I believe.

DM: Was that the first?

MAI: Yes, that was the first. Back then, building a house was a problem, because one had to sleep on the hill. One would make a house and leave the woman there, because they would persecute the men, because the women didn't organize, so it was the men they went after. It was a hard struggle because we had to sleep outside on the hill.

DM: So the landowners didn't do anything to the women.

MAI: No. At that time the *pájaros* would say...

Delfín Peña: they were the ones killing the leaders.

DM: Who were the *pájaros*?

¹⁰⁸ "Collective Interview with the Elders."

MAI: it was people hired from Valle [neighbouring departament to the north of Cauca], they arrived at the landowners' houses and they stayed there, and during the day you couldn't see anything, but at night they would come out.”¹⁰⁹

Alfredo Peña was born in 1978 and remembers how the land was recovered.

“**Diego Marin:** And how are land seizures done?

AP: well, in those days, first they organized and then they went to chop the earth, that is, to prepare the soil for planting. But at that time it was controlled by the *pájaros*, but also by indigenous who were organized. Some went to chop, others to cook, others to stand guard to prevent the landowners from getting close

DM: What was the objective?

AP: The objective was to chop the earth, to show that that land would be occupied by the indigenous. But they didn't say that they were from Tumburao, they just showed up, chopped the earth and they left without anyone being caught (...) But that ranch [‘La Asunción’] was also in the sights of other territories, of Pueblo Nuevo, of Caldono, of Jambaló, with the same objective. So, to not let them seize the ranch first, we went ahead with the seizure.

DM: So the seizure of ‘La Asunción’ is done against the landowners and against CRIC?

AP: Yes, that was the clash. That was a tough fight at the time. The landowner sued the *cabildo* of Pueblo Nuevo, so that's where the fight began. So then the *cabildo* of Pueblo Nuevo were looking to find who were responsible and to punish them.

DM: Did they punish anyone?

AP: No, they didn't make it.

DM: Was there ever a confrontation with the people of Pueblo Nuevo?

AP: Yes, but verbally (...) the only *cabildo* that didn't exist was ours, but it had existed before. All the other *cabildos* of this territory were against us, they supported Pueblo Nuevo.”¹¹⁰

Certainly, the elders coincide in stating that the final drop that overflowed the glass and irreversibly unleashed the conflict with Pueblo Nuevo and CRIC, was the unilateral decision, by the community of Tumburao, of seizing the ranch 'La Asunción', a ranch that were already in the sight of the *cabildos* of CRIC, and whose appropriation by Pueblo Nuevo would have meant the material impossibility of constituting an independent *cabildo*, due to the geographical location of said territory. In other words, although the underlying tensions produced by the *ideological component* in this story, it was the *territorial component* that decisively distanced the two communities, giving way to the open confrontation with the leadership of the CRIC. The punishment scene narrated by Alfredo Peña, as a measure of Pueblo Nuevo's retaliation against the leaders of Tumburao, coincides with the episode narrated by elder Alfonso Peña (transcribed above), where he explained how the *cabildo* of Pueblo Nuevo was looking to

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ "Interview with Alfredo Peña."

punish him, to put him in the *cepo* and whip him, to point him out as one of those responsible for what was happening in Tumburao.

To INCORA - the state institution responsible for managing land issues and granting approval for the establishment of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* - "The problem of land ownership in the indigenous communities of Cauca has been, is and will be the center of the conflict, where other aggravating elements converge"¹¹¹, as demonstrated in the case of Tumburao, whose final trigger is the *territorial component*, but in which other elements converge as well, such as those we have termed the ancestral, the political, the ideological and the kinship components.

“The ‘CRIC’ policy of recovering their ancestral territories, have (sic) reached all communities, even those that are not affiliated with any organization, as is the case of Tumburao, and the request or invasion of farms no longer obeys to the greater or lesser need of land, but to the degree of organization or capacity of self-management of each community (...) [the community of Tumburao] have ancestrally occupied the path of Tumburao; previously assigned to the *Cabildo* of Pueblo Nuevo. With it they began in the first invasions on ranches (...) which once ‘recovered’, remained in the hands of the families of the neighbouring villages. In view of this situation, the Tumburao *comuneros* decide to become an independent *cabildo*.”¹¹²

This INCORA-report – the official document of the Colombian State whose final recommendation is the approval of the constitution of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* – contains elements of utmost importance, such as the clarification that the community of Tumburao was not affiliated to any organization, that is, ratifying its independent character. Furthermore, this coincides with what has been said about the role of the Communist Party, pointing out that the land seizures, at that moment, corresponded above all to the degree of organization and the self-management competency of each community. Finally, and after ratifying the ancestral permanence of Tumburao's inhabitants in their territory, this report shows that, for some reason, despite working together in the first ranch seizures, the neighboring *cabildos* never assigned land to the inhabitants of Tumburao, which, in the end, was the cause of the rupture, according to INCORA. At the end of the conclusions, this report summarizes this under the concept of 'internal problems' over the possession of recovered lands.¹¹³

“Diego Marín: Did the Liberal Party help in any way?

Pedro Vaca: No, to the contrary, at that time they were hit hard because they had lost an area. Because CRIC firmly opposed that the *cabildo* be constituted,

¹¹¹ Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria and Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación, "Estudio Socioeconómico De La Comunidad Indígena De Tumburao, Municipio De Silvia, Departamento Del Cauca," 69.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 78.

and they always suggested why not instead establish a small *cabildo* dependant on Pueblo Nuevo (...) then, at that moment, we had recovered the ranch 'Culebrero 1' and 'Culebrero 2' and we already had possession over 'La Asunción' (...) the landowners did not take legal action, they did not file any lawsuits [Culebrero 1 y Culebrero 2].

(...)

'La Asunción', in '83, because that one was handed over to us, the owner hands over the possession, but the owner keeps the title because we got there to avoid that the *cabildo* of Pueblo Nuevo take it. So it gave us the ability to block, to manage the situation, then, Pueblo Nuevo seeing how we were there on the ranch, it was too difficult for them to enter.

DM: And from here, which follows?

PV: Then 'Las Cabras' follows, around the year '86, '87. After that the 'Carrizal', in the year '88 or so, that was also agreed upon. 'Las Cabras' was an estate of more than 800 hectares which was abandoned, so I began, through the INCORA, to request the termination of the ownership rights. At that time I was finishing my studies in Law, I graduated in '86. I always functioned as the legal attorney of the *cabildo*.¹¹⁴

The chronology presented by Pedro Vaca, shows the developments in the land seizures, which finally, in 1992, ended up being the properties assigned to Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* for its legal constitution as a *resguardo*. In his account, Pedro also talks about the tension with Pueblo Nuevo due to the ranch "La Asunción". However, in that same interview, Pedro also spoke of an issue that separates him entirely from the account told by the elders of Tumburao:

DM: But did you also have to defend yourselves from landowners or not?

PV: No. We never had any issue with them.

DM: No *pájaros* were ever found here?

PV: No. The rough action we had was with the presence of Quintín Lame¹¹⁵, who in 1986 murdered Floresmiro Peña.¹¹⁶

While, in the accounts of the other elders - including the transcribed testimony of elder Leonel Tombé - the presence of the *pájaros* and the violent actions carried out by landowners are a recurrent theme, to Pedro this is not of great importance in the case of Tumburao. Notwithstanding, the accounts of the elders and that of Pedro Vaca, do fully overlap when speaking of the violent tensions that took place primarily in regards to the Quintín Lame, the M-19 and the Ricardo Franco guerrilla groups.

Diego Marin: Why did you want a separate territory [separate from Pueblo Nuevo]?

¹¹⁴ Marin Rios, "Second Interview with Pedro Vaca."

¹¹⁵ He's referring to the guerrilla movement Quintín Lame.

¹¹⁶ Marin Rios, "Second Interview with Pedro Vaca."

Alfredo Peña: Because you know, there was a lot of killing in those days, back then there was the M-19, Ricardo Franco, Quintín Lame, there was much killing back then.

DM: So these M-19, Ricardo Franco and Quintín Lame organizations attacked the community of Tumburao?

AP: They attacked not only our community, but they also killed each other. The reason was any, because of the boundaries there was a lot of conflict in those days. The territory of Tumburao has always been more responsible, they observed everything very well and they did not want those organizations to get in. The elders used to say that they would not allow these things to also happen here. But they also murdered some leaders here.”¹¹⁷

Alfredo talks about the attacks from these guerrilla groups towards Tumburao, not only as a reaction against the process of establishing the *cabildo*, but also as part of the reasons to establish a *resguardo* of their own, differentiated from the leadership of CRIC. The elders wanted to prevent those same guerrilla groups from having presence in the territory.

“**DM:** What was the core of the debate with CRIC?

AP: They argued that we were creating division, that they would not allow division within the indigenous communities. But we were not creating division, we wanted to have our own territory.

DM: What did they mean by division?

AP: The left wing. They attacked the left wing (...) We also put together a guard, so we would not get killed, because otherwise... Landowners and these organizations threatened us. (...) we organized ourselves with whatever we had, clubs, machetes, rifles.”¹¹⁸

In this section of the accounts, after having showed how the *territorial component* operated in the dispute with Pueblo Nuevo for the new *cabildo*, the elders also revealed how the *ideological component*, in the dispute with the leadership of CRIC, began to appear through what in those days was referred to as “the division” of the indigenous movement.

“**Alfonso Peña:** The CRIC, the thing is they messed up. They came to the local school and said, Avirama and the others, that they could steal cattle from the farmers to eat. Here however, we did not allow that, not cattle, not anything else.

Diego Marin: Why didn’t the CRIC support you?

Alfonso Peña: They opposed us, because we were already members of The Party.

Jeremias Peña: They came in treating us as communists, saying we were divisive, that’s what they conveyed. They said that because those people are communists, they will bring darkness upon the land, they said many things, but all those elders have passed away now.

DM: Did the CRIC have supporters?

¹¹⁷ "Interview with Alfredo Peña."

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

JP: Yes, they had support from Quintín Lame.

DM: So Quintín Lame never supported you?

AfP: No!

JP: No! If anything, they wanted to kill us all.

AfP: One day we were working, they came [members of Quintín Lame] and said: 'we want no divisions'. And that famous Gildardo, the commander of Quintín Lame, called us communists. Gildardo was his clandestine name, his actual name is...

JP: Elvio Peña.

AfP: They surrounded us that day, but we felt nothing, they came with their weapons and we defended only with our tools. We didn't get scared, it was somewhat tough, but oh well.

JP: With a weapon, a machine gun, he said: 'you are divisive, I hope you fix that' (...) this was like back in 1984.

DM: Did they ever manage to kill anybody from these parts?

AfP: There were threats. A threat to end the Peña family."¹¹⁹

The *ideological component* in the internal debate of the indigenous movement took an extreme turn and in Tumburao it expressed in the form of armed conflict. This was primarily due to the constant threat of the Quintín Lame and M-19 guerrilla groups, which were armed organizations at the service of the leaders of CRIC and their *cabildos*, according to what is apparent from the accounts of the elders of Tumburao.

“Diego Marín: What year does it all begin?

Pedro Vaca: 82', 83', that is when the armed movement Quintín Lame was born. As I understand, it rises with the support of the M-19 and the CRIC leadership, the M-19 provided military and weapons instruction, and CRIC the political and economic orientation.

DM: So, Quintín Lame was the first military presence in the Cauca region, before the presence of the guerrilla M-19?

PV: No, the M-19 was already present when Quintín Lame was established.

DM: Quintín Lame was established in...?

PV: 1983.

DM: So that is when, as you mentioned, their first non-recognized military action, the massacre of San Francisco, took place?

PV: Yes, when the entire *radio*¹²⁰ of the Communist Party was murdered in Toribío. In the year '83 a milestone was set in the beginning of Quintín Lame, that was in October of '83. That's where Quintín Lame, run by Lisandro Julicué, he was the first commander of Quintín Lame, so they murdered our comrades. Among the *compañeros* that they murdered, they murdered Lino Ul, brother of Abelino Ul, and Guillermo Musicué, those are the two names I remember now, but these two *compañeros* were very distinguished in the movement, in that area. By the way, they murdered Abelino Ul in '78, over there in San Francisco, in that same place.

DM: What was the political goal of Quintín Lame back then?

¹¹⁹ "Interview with the Brothers Alfonso and Jeremías Peña."

¹²⁰ Local leadership of the Communist Party.

PV: One of the main goals was to face the FARC, because the concrete action was geared towards the Party and the FARC.

DM: What motives would they have for this?

PV: Basically, on the one hand it was about the political confrontation, the power and control over the regions, because, at that time too, the M-19 and CRIC had strong influence from the European social democracy, so much so that one of the main CRIC leaders was Pablo Tatay, a European, a Romanian, who... that organization had a lot of international support at that moment.”¹²¹

The story of the Quintín Lame guerrilla movement is told in an unpublished text, written by Mr. Pablo Tatay. In this text one can find the transcriptions of a set of exceptionally revealing interviews of CRIC leaders and the founders and first members of Quintín Lame. In the chronology displayed by Tatay, the following phases in the origin of the Quintín Lamé guerrilla movement can be identified. An initial formation phase of self-defense groups, spanning from 1976 to 1978, an intermediate phase which put in operation a group called *grupo móvil*, spanning between 1979 and 1980, and a consolidation phase between 1981 and 1984.¹²²

The continuous murder of their leaders was the principal reason behind CRIC's creation of their own indigenous armed branch. Tatay states that by 1978, 50 indigenous leaders had already been murdered. “A contact was pursued with the armed groups present in the region, such as FARC and EPL, but these were reluctant to accept the creation of defense organisms that were not under their control.”¹²³

“By that time, we were also closely related to the people of the Communist Marxist Leninist Party, the PCML, as they were called back then. Leading them were the EPL people. We began the first studies with them and the general idea we had was that we were not going to let our indigenous comrades get killed. However, later came the issue with the PCML people, who were not only talking about war, but also stating that a way to attack landowners was to steal cattle, so from that, we could almost certainly say the break-up and divorce was coming.’ (Interview with Edgar Avirama, 20th of September 1996)”¹²⁴

The Avirama Family is one of the most influential in the indigenous movement of the Cauca region. They have been first-hand protagonists in the creation and management of CRIC. In an interview conducted on November 14th 1996, Marcos Avirama explains that

“We succeeded in having many *compañeros* who sympathized with FARC or the Communist party to change over and take part in these groups. This caught

¹²¹ Marin Rios, "First Interview with Pedro Vaca."

¹²² Pablo Tatay, "Historia Del Movimiento Guerrillero Quintín Lame," 4-29.

¹²³ Ibid., 12.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 13.

their interest because the focus was completely different, no order was ever given, here everything was put on the table up for discussion.”¹²⁵

For Marcos himself, the CRIC's process of struggle was not only affected by the heavy repression of the traditional parties, but “also by some left-wing organizations that wanted to see a process unfold, but under their focus, under their group interests, and not a process of democratic struggle based on indigenous communities.”¹²⁶

Regarding the role of the Communist Party, in the interview on September 20th 1996, Cristobal Secué says:

“The late Avelino UI, before dying, because he was being persecuted for quite some time and was hiding, was sort of leader, he talked about the FARC, the CP, and the CRIC. He used to tell us: look, here in Colombia, all organizations that were formed out of the struggle of the poor, have had to organize self-defense groups so as not to be crushed. We know there are several dead here in the Cauca region, I myself am threatened. You have to fight for land with the communities, but you also have to start thinking about arming yourselves, because they’ll get us over the head. I don’t think I’ll last long, he said.”¹²⁷

A sector from the ELN named *Replanteamiento del ELN*, agreed to help the CRIC in the formation of its armed group, but *Replanteamiento del ELN* worked very closely with M-19. This is why Jaime Bateman, the most important commander in the history of M-19, was present at the school for the self-defense training that took place in Buco, a *resguardo* in Huila, during Easter of 1977. Shortly after, when this group was dissolved, they received most of the support from the M-19 guerrilla group, “mainly through Iván Marino Ospina, who was based in Cali”.¹²⁸

“We went through a learning process with them, which ended up in the creation of a group around Tierradentro, where I am initially put in charge (...) There was a *compañero* from the M [M-19] who was also part of the initial central leadership, called William, he was the *compañero* the M had assigned to us, because our weapons belonged to the M.”
(Interview with Edgar Avirama, 11th of December 1996)¹²⁹

To the board members of CRIC there were two principal motivations for the creation of their own armed group. On the one hand, there were the attacks from landowners and the State, and

¹²⁵ Ibid., 14.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 10.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 14.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 16.

on the other, the attacks of the guerrilla groups and other left-wing parties. In fact, regarding the indigenous movement of Cauca by the end of the 70's and beginning of the 80's, the reference to 'other left-wing parties' targeted primarily the Communist Party and the FARC - the only political organizations with real presence in the *cabildos* of northern Cauca able to oppose the dominant group within CRIC.

“It is at that time, that some of the indigenous began to wonder or to answer, separately, to all that aggression, to the leaders. And it is around 1979 when the official repression gets heavier, even that of insurgent groups, in this case, of FARC. Its sixth front also gave rise to a series of murders of leaders up North, where things are worse and where the self-defense groups rise with greater force, because of the initiatives of some members of the communities there, to the point where they even became an important support for those communities.’
(Interview with Edgar Avirama, 19th of September 1996)”¹³⁰

Pablo Tatay claims that the definitive breaking point between CRIC and FARC is ‘the massacre of Munchique-los Tigres’ (a *cabildo* in Santander de Quilichao), in February 1981, where José María Ulcué, leader of CRIC, is murdered. It is from this point on that the FARC and the Communist Party were openly singled out as an obstacle for the development of the indigenous organization, becoming a military objective of Quintín Lame in its self-defense phase.¹³¹

“The FARC had different self-defense groups in the areas, and these, some of which were indigenous, not always defended their leaders, but instead got on the side of landowners, who gave them money under the table, behind their commanders, and they began killing *compañeros*. This is very noticeable in San Francisco.

There were a lot of political and organizational issues with the FARC, mainly due to jealousy. They did not want the indigenous to strengthen their own armed groups, nor did they want the CRIC to grow stronger.

(Interview with Cristóbal Secue, 20th of September 1996)”¹³²

Houghton and Villa, in a very quoted book on violence against the indigenous peoples of Colombia, agree with Tatay and the elders interviewed in his book. ‘The massacre of Munchique-Los Tigres’ is the definitive breaking point between CRIC and FARC:

“The favourable position of the insurgency changes significantly from the murder of 7 *comuneros* by the FARC, in February 1981, in the *Resguardo* of Munchique. Among these was the well-known leader José María Ulcué. From that point on, the relations with the VI Front of that organization got worse, and the indigenous uprising demanding the insurgency respect their autonomy became more and more frequent.”¹³³

¹³⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹³¹ Ibid., 18.

¹³² Ibid., 19.

¹³³ Villa William Houghton Juan, *Violencia Política Contra Los Pueblos Indígenas En Colombia, 1974-2004*, 1st ed. (IWGIA, 2005), 100.

This is where the status of the ideological dispute within the indigenous movement of the Cauca region was at, in 1981. A dispute that commenced when Manuel Quintín Lame and José Gonzalo Sánchez went their separate ways. According to the CRIC leaders, it was the FARC who initiated the violent actions against CRIC. It was also that organization, together with the Communist Party, who prevented the presence of other armed organizations in indigenous territories. The massacre of Munchique-Los Tigres - especially the murder of José María Ulcué - was the point of no return in the CRIC-FARC rupture. According to the accounts given by the CRIC and accepted by academics, this was a massacre perpetrated by the FARC, against civilians who resisted the communist presence in their territory.

“Diego Marin: Because too often texts show that Quintín Lamé was created to defend against the despotism of FARC, and they mention the murder of several indigenous persons in Munchique in 1981, as part of the justification of the creation of Quintín Lame.

Pedro Vaca: Look, in the creation of Quintín Lame, they organized two groups, one in Toribío and another in Santander. The Santander group was based in Munchique, because of an incidence when the CRIC and the M-19 began to form a group of some 18 young men, and began committing criminal acts, theft in the community and rape of young girls, many were raped. One leader, José María Ulcué, he was one of the main leaders of the Communist Party in the area, and it was with him that the *cabildo* of Munchique was created. That leader [José María Ulcué] is later co-opted by the CRIC, and the one in charge of this group of young men. It then came a time when no one from the Party could get to the *resguardo*.

DM: So there was a difficult security situation.

PV: Yes. So the people from the sixth front [of FARC] get the news and they send three young men to see what’s going on. This other group, the Munchique group, knows that three young men from the FARC are coming, so they say that three gunmen are on their way with machine guns and if they ambush them, that would mean three more machine guns for the group. But then, within this group of 18 young men, one of them was sort of infiltrated, and managed to inform the other three that they would be ambushed. So the three young men from the FARC who were going to spot the problem, instead of being ambushed, they themselves ambushed the ones who were waiting for them. That is when José María Ulcué and another 5 or 6 lose their lives.”¹³⁴

Pedro Vaca’s version of what happened to José María Ulcué matches Marcos Avirama’s account on some communist leaders who decided to lead the CRIC self-defense groups. Further, the accounts of Houghton and Villa and that of Pedro Vaca coincide in the number of victims of that unfortunate confrontation. However, the official version of the CRIC, accepted by

¹³⁴ Marin Rios, "First Interview with Pedro Vaca."

Houghton and Villa, maintains that it was a massacre against civilians. While in the account of Pedro Vaca, it was the result of a combat action between two military units willing and ready to engage each other.

““The northern *compañero* José María Ulcué was murdered. He was a *compañero* from the communist party, their leader, a leader who left them to join the indigenous organization. The *compañero* became the leader of the self-defense group of Munchique-los-Tigres, and the FARC got news of this, followed him, found out who everybody was and killed seven *compañero* there. They not only killed them, but they also stole their weapons. We reported this, one of the first public accusations filed by the indigenous organization against FARC.’

(Interview with Marcos Avirama, 14th of November 1996)”¹³⁵

This account, which comes from one of the historical leaders of CRIC, fit the accounts told by Pedro Vaca in key points such as the political origin of Ulcué, his work as a leader of a CRIC self-defense group and the way the incident unfolded, as, in Avirama’s words "they not only killed them, but they also stole their weapons". This challenges the conception of the massacre against civilians being perpetrated by the Communist Party.

From the conception of *La Masacre de Munchique*, CRIC built their anticommunist politics. This decision made by the board of CRIC and had gruesome consequences that unfortunately are counted in human lives.¹³⁶ It was precisely at this point of the ideological dispute between the CRIC and the communists, that the community of Tumburao began its own process for the creation of a *cabildo* and a *resguardo*. They found themselves caught in the turbulent crossfire of the Colombian left-wing. It is out of this turmoil that come the bullets that took the lives of Floresmiro Peña and Agustín Almendra, leaders of Tumburao. Floresmiro murdered by Quintín Lame and Agustín murdered by the Ricardo Franco group, according to some versions.

Adelmo Isoto, deputy governor of Tumburao, remembers what he names FARC's violence in Tierradentro and Toribío, as the reason behind the creation of the indigenous self-defense groups, to defend those territories. He ensures that in some cases they allied with the landowners and even worked for them, similar to what is stated by the elders of CRIC. Adelmo provides a

¹³⁵ Tatay, "Historia Del Movimiento Guerrillero Quintín Lame," 19.

¹³⁶ As a sign of the rivalry between the CRIC and the FARC and/or as part of a large scale political strategy or simply as the *garciamarquiano* detail in this point in history, the name given by the CRIC board to its guerrilla group in 1983 was Quintín Lame, when on the other hand, as we have already transcribed here, the FARC had named their Eighth Front José Gonzalo Sánchez, the first front to come out as a product of the growth of the Sixth Front in the Cauca region.

new element for the evaluation of the rupture between FARC and CRIC, “they [CRIC] had politics of not dividing the territories, at that time the majority of those working in CRIC were from Pueblo Nuevo, Caldono, Coconuco, and they had the advantage of having an armed group, the M-19”.¹³⁷

To Adelmo, this was also a factor that made matters worse in Tumburao, as these types of radical leaders in CRIC did not allow for greater dialogue between the organization and Tumburao. At the beginning of the collective interview, elder Adelmo Isoto was quite wary about the idea of collecting the history of Tumburao, he spoke of the importance of History for the construction of identity, for the defense of Nasa culture and in particular about the dangers of history being manipulated. It was only at the very end, after lunch, that elder Adelmo Isoto, former member of Quintín Lame, took the floor again.

“Adelmo Isoto: There was a time when none of us could go to Pueblo Nuevo. Not even the youngsters. Nobody went to Pueblo Nuevo. For that reason all of us *remesiabamos*¹³⁸ in Siberia.

When the recoveries began they *chambaron*¹³⁹, those from Pueblo Nuevo, they got in here and dug those ditches.

That's why the elders were so fearless. Despite not speaking Spanish well, they managed to maintain the territory. I remember the late Leonel [Tombé], his granddaughter is here, I don't know if he had studied, but he wrote very well, he was the amanuensis, until 1995, when I became governor, he was the one who wrote the minutes, until he died. His whole life he was the secretary of the *cabildo*.

That's why no agreement was made, the leadership was very radical. Things changed when those leaders left, it was a young man, a young governor in Pueblo Nuevo who fixed it, who signed [the agreement].

Jeremías Peña: Omar Ulcué, in '92, he was the one who did everything, who signed. He was later mayor of Caldono and now he is a pastor. The most rude ones [most radical against Tumburao] were Alberto Chocué, Güetia, Manuel Díaz and Marcos Chocué. But all of those rudes are no more, and we are here.

AI: Many people later gave us reason, now they are *compañeros*, friends. Before we couldn't even speak to each other.

Olga Patricia Tombé: Actually, even the women couldn't pass through there, or they would be raped.

Diego Marin: ¿In Pueblo Nuevo?

OPT: Yes, in Loma del Carmén, all that area over there. I remember that the elders would say, they recommended us not to go there. Now one can see that all is well, but before it wasn't so.

¹³⁷ Marin Rios, "Collective Interview with the Elders."

¹³⁸ *Remesiar* is the name given to the periodic purchase of provisions, usually done each week. Until today, the inhabitants of Tumburao continue to do their shopping in the markets of other towns, especially in the market of Silvia, every Tuesday.

¹³⁹ *Chambar* means to open a ditch in the road, deep enough and wide enough to deter the passing of any mode of transport.

Alberto Yotombo: I remember the elders telling all those things. Because they heard of all that evil, and here in Tumburao they wanted a separate territory, because here they weren't people who made trouble. That's why they wanted to organize their own *cabildo*. That's why an independent territory.

AI: Now, since they didn't manage before, now they come here with the story of the Great Nasa Nation, and that is domination from above, it is a concentrated power. And they are whites who are doing that, it's not Nasa people. It's like a State, like the same authorities that we didn't want [to have], it will be the same with the Nasa nation, the same thing will happen. You see, there are some that only care about the money."¹⁴⁰

2.3. Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*

Every morning, elder Alfredo Peña, governor of Tumburao, wraps himself in his *ruana* and goes around town to inspect what happened at night. As I walked with him during his Thursday round, the governor called the coordinator of the *indigenous guard*¹⁴¹ on his walkie-talkie - there is no mobile phone signal in Tumburao. The day before, in an assembly after a *minga* in a coffee plantation, they had discussed the need to reinforce security on the roads, after receiving information of the sighting of strange people. In Tumburao it is the authorities of the *cabildo* who are responsible for the safety and security of the territory, as well as for the administration of justice. This seems to exemplify the notion of politics and the paradigm of a good leader within the Nasa people. It may also be understood as a trail from the violent times of the formation of the *cabildo* and the confrontation with CRIC and Pueblo Nuevo.

“Isidro Fernandez: because I was just a boy, this leader, a governor, asked me if I wanted to belong [to the Quintín Lame], to join the military part. But at that time I had the opportunity to go study, to finish high school in a small town called Usenda. I told the elder "I want to study, I have only 5th grade". And the elder was very smart, he told me "go study, because this guerrilla thing is not easy".

Diego Marin: What year was that?

IF: 1981. It is said that for the Nasa it comes in the blood, we are warriors because it goes through our blood. The elders have been fighting, warring, always."¹⁴²

To Pedro Vaca, without a well-organized resistance in Tumburao, the constitution of the *cabildo* and the *resguardo* would not have been possible. Pedro draws a historical line from the indigenous self-defense groups organized by José Gonzalo Sánchez in the 40's, through the

¹⁴⁰ Marin Rios, "Collective Interview with the Elders."

¹⁴¹ An indigenous civilian body for surveillance, affiliated to each *cabildo*.

¹⁴² Marin Rios, "Interview with Isidro Fernandez."

indigenous self-defenses in the 70's (also organized by communists, such as Avelino UI), and to the struggle against the anticommunist leadership of CRIC.

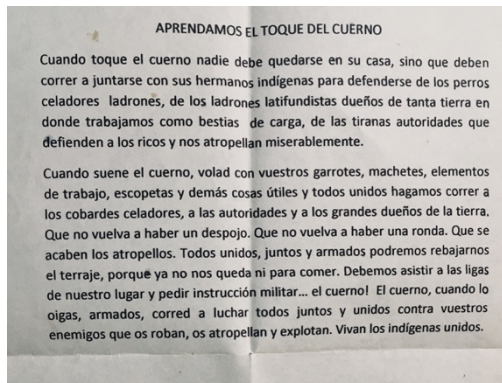


Figure 2.12: statement by José Gonzalo Sánchez, Totoró, Cauca, 1936. Source: Pedro Vaca.

“**Diego Marin:** Why did the people who joined a political party also assume the military part in such a normal way?

Pedro Vaca: Let's see, here in Cauca there has been the presence and experience of armed struggle since '45, '46, '48 (...) But the armed experience is mostly in the indigenous regions, mainly because of the presence of the Communist Party. In Toribío and Inzá, and Belalcázar, Jambaló, there was the presence of right-wing groups that provoked the violence from '48 on, the objective they decided was to destroy the *cabildos*, but that had its reason, because *the cabildo* became an obstacle to the commercialization of the land.

And since there was a strong presence of the Communist Party in the indigenous communities, the party directed the armed defense, initially the self-defense groups, and this is how in Tacueyó, as in San Francisco, as in Toribío, as Jambaló, there were very strong armed encounters at that time, in the year '48, '49, '50, directed by the Communist Party. And it is the Communist Party that ultimately allows for the *resguardos* to survive until today. If that battle had not been directed the way it was, surely the *resguardos* would have disappeared.

(...)

DM: So in the *cabildos* you kept that heritage?

PV: Of course, it became almost a cultural action of the indigenous people, of the *compañero*, because it came to a point when the family would take the boy to the guerrilla commander, for them to receive him, so that he can become a good leader for the community.

DM: So, like a form of educational process?

PV: Yes, like enrolling in the military service, because those are things one also has to learn. So that's why today, despite all the attacks that have been made, the lack of knowledge of the new leaders in the indigenous movement, despite all of that, the FARC movement still keeps an almost ancestral presence within the indigenous communities.”¹⁴³

Each and every narrator of this story agree that armed clashes never took place between the community of Tumburao and Pueblo Nuevo. However, the violent nature of the relations that existed between these two communities is evident.

“**DM:** But if, in the case of Tumburao, there was no political tradition, why did the people there turn out so fierce?

PV: I will say that being indigenous is not so much about being, as about feeling. And the indigenous man is culturally a warrior. When we began the work in

¹⁴³ "Second Interview with Pedro Vaca."

Tumburao, the Quintín Lame had practically installed there, so all of us ran the risk of an aggression, and the way we defended ourselves was to show our capabilities for warfare. We organized militias and that way we defended ourselves.

DM: Because the elders said that you couldn't even go to Pueblo Nuevo, that the women there couldn't cross to the other side because there were threats that they would rape them..

PV: Of course, that's why I'm telling you that the situation was very difficult. And I imagine that the directions CRIC gave to Quintín Lame were to destroy Tumburao. But when they once tried, once they responded.

DM: FARC responded?

PV: No, the organized community did. That was in '88 and when someone spoke of Tumburao in other places, for example in Siberia, in Pescador, the image that they had of Tumburao was of an armed region.

DM: ¡A soviet!

PV: [laughter] More or less, that no one could go in there, that was the idea they had when one would arrive to Siberia and speak of Tumburao. So that image did serve some good.”¹⁴⁴

The oldest teacher of the school of Tumburao, Jairo Fernández, shares that impression about the external image of Tumburao. He has worked at the school since 1993 and remembers that "when one said that he works in Tumburao, everyone would go: oh, how dangerous. It was an area that was the *troll* in the municipality of Silvia.”¹⁴⁵

To the narrators of this story, there are two determining moments to overcome the confrontation with Pueblo Nuevo and CRIC, and to finally achieve the legalization of the *resguardo* in 1992. The first of these is the meeting between the two communities, Pueblo Nuevo and Tumburao, where, under the presence of the president of CRIC, they managed to agree on the borders of the future *resguardo*.

“**Pedro Vaca:** (...) when we were determining the boundaries with Pueblo Nuevo, that day, in an area called Piedra Negra, the meeting had been called upon, and from Pueblo Nuevo there were about 300 people, and from Tumburao about 200 people. It was about the year 1984 and those of Pueblo Nuevo got very aggressive, because there was already a stronger presence of the armed movement Quintín Lame, a movement that had a very strong impact, as CRIC, on Pueblo Nuevo.

The president of the CRIC, who at that time was Jesús Avirama, one of the renowned leaders of the CRIC, was there. The tension was very strong; that day we were defining the boundaries! Then I speak with the president of the CRIC, Jesús Avirama, and I tell him to please stop that behaviour because what we wanted was to talk. Then it continues, the difficult situation does not stop and I saw that the *compañeros* of Tumburao tightened the grip on the machetes. The

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ "Interview with Jairo Fernandez."

others, from Pueblo Nuevo, it was so they already attacked me, the aggression was mainly towards me, then there comes a certain moment when I snatched the megaphone from Avirama and climbed up on a table and started talking, the speech about what we thought, about the struggle of the land, the indigenous struggle. And when I continued with the megaphone they did not pull me down, they let me talk, and I talked for almost an hour. When I got off that table the tension had lowered, and that day we were able to sign the document defining the boundaries of the *resguardo* Pueblo Nuevo with Tumburao.

Diego Marin: Like a form of conciliation?

PV: Yes. So on that day I was telling Jesús Avirama "but you as indigenous leaders, why did you never bother to organize the community here in Tumburao?", and the same Avirama told me: "we didn't know that there were indigenous people here".¹⁴⁶

The second decisive moment is a visit to the government ministry in Bogotá, where a group of leaders of Tumburao voiced their stance to the government, which for them was crucial in the endeavor of the recognition of the new *resguardo*.

Jeremías Peña: Manuel Santos Collazos, he was the *compañero* that went to the capital of the Republic to fight against the Government Ministry. Claiming the constitution of the *resguardo*. The late Pedro José Yotombo, Alfonso Peña, Leonel Tombé, the late Magdalena Osnás and myself.¹⁴⁷

Jeremías Peña: There was a politician, Edgar Papamija, from the Liberal Party. He bought coffee, sheep, hens. He was a congressman and he helped organize the meeting at the Office of Indigenous Affairs of the government in Bogotá. He gave testimony that from when he was a child he knew that the people of Tumburao had a *resguardo*.

Diego Marin: What date was that meeting?

JP: in the year 1988 we went to Bogotá.

DM: Why was that meeting so important?

JP: Well, since nobody managed to solve things here, we had to go all the way to the Colombian State, in Bogotá.

Alfonso Peña: And also a mayor, his name was Heriberto Velazco. The councilors, many people in Silvia supported [us].

JP: A mister from Indigenous Affairs, Efraín Dago Fernández, he got in touch with Edgar Papamija and they supported us.¹⁴⁸

Alfonso Peña: I didn't know anything, I didn't even speak Spanish, it was through fighting that we learned something (...) At the end we went to fight in Bogotá (...) We didn't have anything, but the Communal Action Board gave \$100.000¹⁴⁹ and pure fundraising and doing traditional medicine. It's like one cannot even sleep, losing a territory is very difficult, one thinks and thinks and doesn't sleep any, one doesn't feel like eating.

Diego Marin: With who did you meet in Bogotá?

¹⁴⁶ "Second Interview with Pedro Vaca."

¹⁴⁷ "Collective Interview with the Elders."

¹⁴⁸ "Interview with the Brothers Alfonso and Jeremías Peña."

¹⁴⁹ Approximately 760 USD in 2017.

AfP: With the ministry of government, Mr. Martín Boris, just like you, he was bearded, he used a brown jacket, brown trousers, brown shoes. He was with anger, when he arrived at the table he changed the subject, he said: "you, communists, few people, brought here by your *patrones*¹⁵⁰, you are not indigenous, you are going to have yourselves killed by Pueblo Nuevo". "That makes you a murderer", I said, "you are killing men, women and children, so if you don't adhere to the formation of our *cabildo*, then we will have to take up arms". "Not that way guys, not that way", he said, and then he left. We were waiting for six months and then a message came that they would approve. Here everyone and the people from the Party treated us badly for going to Bogotá, take aeroplanes, but if we hadn't gone we wouldn't have *cabildo* (...) You have to be tough, because as long as you are kneeling, how will you manage?"¹⁵¹



Figure 2.13: elders of Tumburao NXUN CXAMB

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In 1992, the *resguardo* of Tumburao was legally established, with 2.511,98 hectares. Holding 54 families, 281 people in total, 137 women and 144 men, 122 below the age of 14. A community whose central axis of organization was the family. Where 94% of its inhabitants had Nasa Yuwe as their first language, a Nasa worldview and a system of communal land ownership. Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* was not only constituted with the lands of the haciendas

¹⁵⁰ Local term to call the landowners.

¹⁵¹ Marin Rios, "Interview with Alfonso Peña."

that were recovered by the community, but also by the lands of 35 families who delivered the titles of their properties to be included in the *resguardo*.¹⁵²

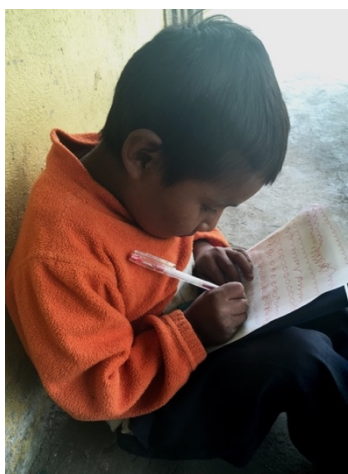
“Diego Marin: Why your own *cabildo*, autonomous, in Tumburao?

Pedro Vaca: It was a decision at the time, of consolidating the movement, with the presence of the Party. We got together and we made that decision (...) Tumburao is a school, and if what was done in Tumburao had been done in other places, they [CRIC] wouldn't have thrown us out.”

“Diego Marin: What good did the formation of the *cabildo* do?

Alfredo Peña: To gain territory, the ownership of the land. I strongly believe in our organization, even if we don't have anything, but we must not leave the organization, we must maintain it, more than anything, the cultural identity that we have.”¹⁵³

It was a sunny day, Edilberto – my host in Tumburao – and I had been walking for an hour and a half, since 6:30 a.m., in order to get to the *minga*. After the work day at the coffee plantation was over, the community would discuss the proposal of writing the history of Tumburao. While the majority of men and women went to work in the fields, three women, a boy, a girl, a dog and I, stayed in the house. After about thirty minutes, sitting on the floor, leaning against a wall close to the wood stove, I found myself being observed by the boy, as I was writing in my notebook. He wanted to see how I was writing, so I suggested he sit next to me and the boy observed for a while. I tore off a page from my notebook, took one of my pens and suggested we both write, but I seemed to understand from him that he didn't know how. So I began to draw some scribbles and asked the boy to do the same. He joyfully accepted and together we filled a whole page with the letters and scribbles of each one. At the end, when he decided to finish our game, I asked if he would gift me the page, and I showed him how to write his name on it. In that way we signed together, with his name, what we had both written. That was, in fact, my first interview in Tumburao, and the way I have attempted to tell this story.



¹⁵² Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria and Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación, "Estudio Socioeconómico De La Comunidad Indígena De Tumburao, Municipio De Silvia, Departamento Del Cauca," 2, 24, 29-37, 79, 80.

¹⁵³ Marin Rios, "Interview with Alfredo Peña."

CHAPTER 3: TUMBURAO *NXUN CXAMB*

The history of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* has been presented, in the previous chapter, through the dominant founding narrative of the *cabildo* and *resguardo* in Tumburao. According to this history, Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* is a *cabildo* and a *resguardo* created by the initiative of its people, in a multiple counterhegemonic action, in opposition to the landowners and the State and to the dominant group within the indigenous social organization CRIC, particularly to the neighbouring *resguardo* of Pueblo Nuevo.

This life-decision of Tumburao's community found its justification, first, in the same ancestral rights claimed by other Nasa communities, and in the tradition of struggle shared by all of them. Furthermore, the community of Tumburao legitimized their actions in accordance with their oral tradition, which outlined the existence of their own *resguardo* until 1886 and their own *cabildo* until 1949. The developments in the dispute with CRIC and Pueblo Nuevo, as well as the political context of the early 1980's, led the community of Tumburao to also discover contentions for the legitimization of their autonomy. Contentions stemming, on one hand, from the threats, persecution and repression by the Quintín Lame, M-19 and Ricardo Franco guerrilla groups - functional to the interests of CRIC in that territory - and, on the other, from what they call poor management and bad 'tricks' in the leadership of said indigenous organization and their *cabildos*. In the performance of this multiple counterhegemonic action, Floresmiro Peña, the first leader of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* and Agustín Almendra, one of the founding leaders, were murdered.

The history of the struggle of the community of Tumburao is, then, a struggle for the recognition of their own social, political, ideological and territorial identity, for the recognition of their particular place in the history of the indigenous movement in Cauca - in short, a struggle for their dignity, held up with what they have been constructing as their particular collective identity as a community.

The primary argument against the foundation of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, by the CRIC, was the accusation of divisionism wrought by the leaders of Tumburao. Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*

is a *cabildo* created with the support and guidance of the Colombian Communist Party. Tumburao was not the only *cabildo* created under these conditions, but it is the only one that has survived until today, and hence, an exceptional case. However, more than anything, the history of Tumburao is a Nasa history.

3.1. Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*: a Nasa history

To the question of where the history of Tumburao begins, with the exception of Pedro Vaca, all the narrators commence their stories at the end of the nineteenth century. Prior to this, we only find the stories or references made by the elders Isidro Fernández and Leonel Tombé about Juan Tama and the legality of the property titles over the *resguardos*, granted by the Spanish crown.

The distinct moments or periods of history in the stories told are; the bet of roosters for the land of Tumburao (1886), the violent expulsion of its inhabitants perpetrated by landowners (including the appearance of the *mojano*), the Thousand Days' War in which Venancio Peña participated, the aggression of the Conservative Party and the violent removal of the *cabildo* in 1949 during *La Violencia*, the arrival of Pedro Vaca to the territory and the start of the community organization process (1981), the first land seizures and the beginning of the dispute with CRIC and Pueblo Nuevo (1981-84), the official recognition of the *cabildo* in 1984, the most violent period of aggression by the guerrillas and the violent episodes with Pueblo Nuevo, the murder of Agustín Almendra, the meeting with the interior ministry in Bogotá (1988), the meeting of Piedra Negra where the boundaries with Pueblo Nuevo were defined (1988), the murder of Floresmiro Peña in 1988 and, finally, the legal recognition of the *resguardo* in 1992.

The content of this narrative, as we can see, enables the use of this history in the three forms indicated by the definition of Nasa history: as a source of knowledge on the oppression of the community, as a source of information about their rights, and lastly, as a starting point for their redefinition as a community.

Regarding the narrative model, it can be affirmed that the history of Tumburao presents a clear notion of continuity between past and present, however, here, the contextual adjustment in the historical reinterpretation is not made concerning the tense relationship with the State, but rather from their tense relations with the leadership of CRIC. For this reason, the political action aimed

at the determination and empowerment of the community - which is also presented in the history of Tumburao - is not dominated by relations with 'Colombia' as the dominant society (as in the original model of Nasa history), but with CRIC and the neighbouring *cabildos*. In the historical narrative of Tumburao, the dominant subject which maintains the oppression of the community is not the State, but rather CRIC and the neighbouring *cabildos*.

Consequently, the counterhegemonic action of the Tumburao community is dislocated on three fronts. First, the counterhegemonic action against the landowners, second, the fight against the State, and third, the confrontation with the leadership of CRIC. When assessing the importance of these stories, according to the level of success in relation to the survival of the community - understanding survival as the positive progress in their collective aspirations - it is evident that the resistance against CRIC is of great relevance. This front of Tumburao's multiple counterhegemonic action is the cornerstone of the very definition as a community in this narrative of their history. Hence, it is this political action that performs the crucial function, as much in the internal as of the external ideological use, of the history of Tumburao.

The narrative structure of the history of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* also presents the characteristic features of the Nasa history, organized as a series of non-chronological events and in the mode of overcoming unimaginable difficulties. The dominant narrative in Tumburao on the creation of the *cabildo* and *resguardo* also includes constant reference to the territory. Therefore, with the objective of empowering the community, the narrative analyzed here creates the same type of moral connection with the past, in the people of Tumburao, as exists in the dominant Nasa history, the connection which leads to the mobilization of the community in order to reach political objectives in the present.

In any case, although the narrative of the history of Tumburao adopts the political agenda of Juan Tama and Quintín Lame, the change in the main oppressive subject in the narrative includes the opposition against a misguided leadership of CRIC along with the elimination of *terraje*, the protection of the territories and the preservation of their culture. A visible sign of this is the opposition that the deputy governor, Adelmo Isoto, has towards CRIC's new plans to create a 'Nasa Nation'. This, as he considers it a new attempt of the central power in order to achieve the subjugation of the *cabildos*, precisely what they have not managed thus far. Adelmo is a former member of Quintín Lame and one of the critical voices against the dominant

narrative in Tumburao, however, it is clear that Adelmo has integrated the autonomy versus CRIC as a central part of his political discourse.

Although this narrative does not include new elements to be emphasized in the definition of 'being Nasa', it does make a creative reinterpretation of that 'Nasa being' common to the entire ethnic group, in order to explain the reasons for their preference of autonomy and independence vis-a-vis the leadership of CRIC. In this case, the point of rupture with the dominant ideology in the CRIC, is when it becomes evident that the possibility does not exist that there be indigenous people with differing ideological and political positions associated with other left-wing organizations than the CRIC, without these being persecuted or discriminated against.

The sources of the oral history of Tumburao also meet other characteristics indicated in the model of Nasa history. It is a traceable path from Tomasa Méndez, through the descendants of the Peña family, reaching Leonel Tombé, the generation of leaders who led the construction of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* in the 1990's, and the new generations of leaders who have assumed the leadership of the *cabildo* and the task of continuing to recreate this narrative and to protect the community.

The personal stories of these oral sources also confirm that their legitimacy is based, both in the genealogical aspect (degree of kinship with Tomasa Méndez or the founders of the *cabildo*, the *kinship component*), and on the assessment of their role as political leaders. The latter referring to their ability to interact with the mestizo society, their military capabilities or the capacity to physically defend the territory, and the practice of traditional medicine (Venancio Peña served in the army during the Thousand Days' War and Leonel Tombé, the first Nasa intellectual of Tumburao, was also a soldier and police inspector. The founding leaders formed the groups for the physical defense of the territory and, at present, the leaders of the *cabildo* continue those practices of territorial control through the indigenous guard, as well as practicing traditional medicine).

Finally, with what has been said thus far, it is clear that this historical narrative is both an internal symbolic system within the community and a moral history articulated by activists as an intermediation of the community with the outside world.

Therefore, after applying the model of Nasa history, according to the theory developed by Rappaport, it can be said that the history of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, based on the dominant founding narrative in Tumburao, is a Nasa history. The narrative construction of said history, its ideological use and the reinterpretation of it, fit the presented definition of Nasa history remarkably. The history of Tumburao, the dominant narrative in the community, is therefore the founding history of the collective identity, and, at the same time, a founding element of a political community with particular characteristics that differentiate them from all other Nasa communities in Cauca. This is, certainly, the confirmation of the exceptional character of the case of Tumburao, on an ideological level, in the dispute over the indigenous historical narrative in Cauca.

The history of Tumburao can also be understood as a recreation of Nasa history from the particularity of a *cabildo*, whose sole existence generates tensions in the background with the official history of the CRIC. The consequences of these tensions will be evaluated in the following chapter. However, it is important to note that, although the history of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* may reach the aforementioned scope, it is not very clear what level of awareness the community and their leaders have in this regard, as their political agenda seems limited to the borders of their territory and its surroundings.

It is also important to highlight that, without major inconveniences, the leaders of Tumburao integrate their communist activism or the support of the Communist Party, to the history of the *cabildo*, without there being cause for division of the indigenous movement. This will be one of the central issues in the dispute over the official historical narrative of CRIC.

3.2. The Historical Narrative of Tumburao

Following White's three narrative dimensions, it can be observed that the *chronicle* dimension in the history of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* is entirely defined as a Nasa history, narrated episodically and 'disconnected', with no apparent distance between the events of the past and the actions of the present, as previously explained. However, the existence of Pedro Vaca's account helps to chronologically place the events in the founding process of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. This, in turn, evidences the enormous distance between the temporal and thematic horizons of Pedro Vaca's account and the horizon of the elders.

The disparity is such that two different narratives could be constructed. This distance allows us to ask ourselves to what extent each of the parties recognizes the other's story, if the relationship established between the Communist Party and its activists in Tumburao is a relationship fostered by the pragmatism of achieving each one's respective objectives (land ownership, political and administrative autonomy, greater recognition within the Nasa people, the advance of the party and the revolution), or if we are facing a deeper integration of ideologies, if the people of Tumburao consciously inscribe in the communist tradition in the indigenous movement narrated by Pedro.

In relation to the *process* dimension, the disparities may also be considerable. While in the case of the elders we can affirm that it is a story about the recovery of a *cabildo* and *resguardo*, lost in a deceiving and violent manner at the hands of leaders of the Liberal Party (1886) and members of the Conservative Party (1949), to Pedro it is about the creation of a communist *cabildo* and *resguardo* within CRIC and the resistance of the communists to be violently erased from the official indigenous history. The end result of this process has been the constitution of an autonomous political and administrative community, with a common identity based on a common historical narrative, with the possibility of challenging the official indigenous history of CRIC. The scope of the result of this historical process thus appears in line with the motivations and agendas of the actors in this process, yet with greater magnitude than what they seem to have imagined.

The plot of this history is the least controversial of the narrative dimensions. All of the accounts match the narrative structure typical of *romance*, that is, a struggle with several enormous difficulties for its protagonists to face, and who, in the end, triumph. Following Teodorov, Portelli defines plot as “the way in which the narrator arranges materials in order to tell the story”.¹⁵⁴ Hence, although it is outside the Western canons of history, the Nasa chronology allows us to identify the elements of greater or lesser importance, from the point of view of the narrators, and the associations of meanings that these create, thus being able to evidence important variations or contradictions between different accounts.

¹⁵⁴ Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 100.

The first discernible contradiction is the opposing position regarding the existence of groups of *pájaros* in Tumburao and the role they played throughout the historical process. While the stories of the elders affirms this, the story of Pedro Vaca does not. Even in the transcript of Leonel Tombé's testimony, Hector de Jesús Ríos is directly pointed to as a sponsor of *pájaros*.

Pedro Vaca maintains that one of the special characteristics of Tumburao is that the lands were negotiated with their owners, while for the elders of Tumburao, the situation with the *pájaros* was extreme. From the point of view of the plot, it could be affirmed that the exaggeration of the role of the *pájaros* is unnecessary, as the fundamental confrontation in the narrative is with the guerrillas that support CRIC. They could also be interference from other similar events that occurred nearby. However, this situation is connected to the murders of Floresmiro Peña and Agustín Almendra, where a further contradiction appears. To Pedro Vaca it is clear that these *compañeros* were murdered by Quintín Lame and Ricardo Franco, respectively. For the elders of Tumburao this seems to still be a sensitive issue as all of them avoid naming (in the collective interview), clearly, the responsible, even going so far as to affirm that they were murdered by landowners. The relatives or colleagues of Floresmiro and Agustín did not, in any of the interviews, manifest or refer to these murders as pending or unresolved cases, nor did they show a particular desire to stir up these issues. Thus, everything seems to indicate that the murders of Floresmiro and Agustín are a delicate subject within Tumburao that may affect the balance of the internal political relations and the relations with CRIC.

The importance assigned to kinship is another recurrent theme in the stories. In such a small community, it is only natural that close family relationships exist, both in the community at large as well as among the political leadership of the *cabildo*. However, members of the main families do not use kinship as a habitual narrative resource. Hence, although it is clear that kinship is an important factor of power (one of Quintín Lame's orders was precisely to end the Peña family, according to one of the stories), it is not a claim commonly present in the narrative. In part, this may be due to having such a local historical horizon that the narrators assume their family ties as public, or, in part, because they do not wish to grant the issue further importance.

What we do know is that, in Tumburao, the *kinship component* of the history is determinant insofar as it ensures the path of knowledge transfer, composed chiefly of María Tomasa Méndez (the oldest source), Leonel Tombé (the last governor of the *cabildo* in 1949, police inspector until 1984 and the lifelong secretary of the *cabildo*, related to Tomasa Méndez), the founding

leaders (among them the Peña, great-grandchildren of Tomasa), who in turn have found their children to be the main responsible of passing on this historical legacy. Certainly, the last will of Tomasa Méndez appears as a decisive part of the motivation for the political action of her descendants.

The stories that make up the dominant historical narrative in Tumburao are, on the whole, quite coherent and they do complement each other more than they contradict. Naturally, the chronological theme is a challenge, though not an impediment, to the analysis of the narratives or their historization.

3.3. Tumburao and the Political Counterhegemonic Action

In his renowned work on the moral economy of the English crowd, E.P. Thompson states that direct popular mobilization, disciplined and with well-defined objectives, does not occur as the result of spontaneous reaction to external stimuli.¹⁵⁵ Hence the importance of the three main elements for the historical evaluation of any human action: motive, behaviour and function. That is, an evaluation of how and why people change their behaviour at a given moment in history, acquire new social aspirations, integrate new behaviours according to their new objectives and, finally, how all this is determined by and helps to determine their context. To think that organized social actions are the product of spontaneous reactions or circumstantial interventions in history, is what Thompson calls “a spasmodic view of popular history”¹⁵⁶. To Thompson, the basis for the definition of all action is the popular consensus on what is considered legitimate and illegitimate. The breach of this consensus - which in itself would be an attack on the traditional or established social norms and obligations - is the beginning of popular political action.¹⁵⁷

To legitimize or not legitimize becomes even more complex when we examine the ethical element. To Ricoeur, as explained above, the decision to legitimize or not legitimize an action contains a decisive ethical element due to what has been outlined as the Narrative Identity. That is, the tension between the shared system of values and the individual values in the process of narrativization of history, which is at the same time a process of construction of one's identity. To both Ricoeur and Thompson, this is the core of the meaning of each narrative.

¹⁵⁵ Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," 78.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 76.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 79.

In the case of Tumburao, the shared system of values is defined by belonging to the Nasa, a people who, as we have already observed, have a common identity deriving from Nasa history, which in turn is a regular intellectual exercise of interpretation and reinterpretation. At the centre of this common identity is the century-old tradition of struggle and resistance for the survival of the community, the defense of the territories and the strengthening of the *resguardos* and *cabildos* and the defense of Nasa culture. In addition, CRIC, as a social organisation and at the same time a superior administrative organ of the *resguardos* in Cauca, since its creation in 1971, has become the principal political and social reference and has the role of official representation of Nasa history, deciding the terms and limits of the official or hegemonic narratives within the Nasa people.

The situation in Tumburao evolved to a point in which the leadership of the community made the decision to break with the leadership of the organization that holds itself as the single and true container of the Nasa history and political action; the CRIC. That is, the rupture of the consensus established in the territory and the beginning of the confrontation with the superior indigenous authorities and with the neighbouring *cabildos*.

Following the accounts, everyone in Tumburao knew that a *cabildo* had existed until 1949 - the last governor of said *cabildo* and the target of conservative violence was precisely one of the sources of this story and one of Tumburao's main leaders. In like manner, the descendants of Tomasa Méndez made sure that the history of the *cabildo* was preserved, in such a way that the certainty of the previous existence of a *cabildo* and *resguardo*, in itself, would not be sufficient to produce the rupture of the existing consensus and to activate the counterhegemonic action.

Simultaneously we know, from the accounts themselves, that most of the political knowledge and leadership of the elders began to form in the heat of the struggle for the new *cabildo*. Only Leonel Tombé was recognized for his high intellectual level, while the other elders admit to not even have been able to communicate correctly in Spanish before (a reflection of the ideal notion of leader that underlies the Nasa culture).

Including the INCORA report, the accounts indicate the existence of a short period of collaboration with Pueblo Nuevo for land seizures, which came to an end when the CRIC demanded, as consideration of their support, that Tumburao be added to the *resguardo* of

Pueblo Nuevo as an auxiliary *cabildo*. The INCORA report goes further and points to the non-compliance of the agreements on the distribution of the seized lands. Hence, it is in the territorial component we find the first signs of dissolution.

By 1983, when the lawsuit took place for the hacienda 'La Asunción' (the moment of definitive rupture with Pueblo Nuevo), Pedro Vaca already had two years experience of continuous counselling of the leaders of the territory. The refusal to be part of Pueblo Nuevo can, therefore, find its reasons both in the original arguments of the people of Tumburao, as well as in the politicization due to the affinity with the Communist Party. Here, we may speak of an overlap of agendas and political interests, which initiates what will later prove to be a successful alliance. It is important to note, however, that neither in the narrative structure nor in the content of the stories are there any traces of the traditional left-wing political language (there are no dialectizations of concepts or similar signs). Moreover, the historical horizon laid out by the narrators, is quite local, without much reference to the world outside their territory, leads one to think that the external political factors did not, to the people of Tumburao, have great impact on their daily life in the 1980's.

The violent response on behalf of CRIC, through the guerrilla organizations that supported them, is a frequent and accepted argument used to legitimize the existence of an independent *cabildo*. The violence unleashed among those same guerrilla groups (M-19, Ricardo Franco, Quintín Lame) is also an important argument in support of Tumburao's autonomy (the episode with greatest impact is the massacre of Tacueyó between November 1985 and January 1986, where about 160 guerrilla fighters of Ricardo Franco were assassinated).¹⁵⁸ Lastly, the constant threat to the well-being of the community of Tumburao (especially the women), practically besieged in their territory, is also a crucial reason to legitimize the establishment of their own *cabildo*.

We should not rule out the personal motivations' possible influence on the decision-making process. As previously mentioned, the Nasa people value political activism and leadership greatly, which could have generated personal aspirations within Tumburao. In addition, the possibility of having their own *resguardo*, as the INCORA report assures, increases the possibilities of direct resource management and political dialogue. Furthermore, inhabiting a

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territory forgotten by CRIC (they were not even aware that there were indigenous people there, according to the confession made by the president of CRIC, Jesús Avirama, to Pedro Vaca), in the midst of such representative *cabildos* with leaders who, at that moment, held key positions in CRIC, may have caused a sense of injustice in the leaders of Tumburao.

Finally, the legitimacy of Tumburao's claims was not only based on Nasa history and their ancestral rights, but rather, it also included aspects related to the Colombian conflict: the illegal appropriation of land by the Cauca elites at the end of the nineteenth century, participation in the *Thousand Days' War*, *La Violencia* and the bipartisan aggression, and, later, anti-communism as a policy of CRIC's leadership.

Thus, what happened in 1981 was a sum of political, ideological, economic, territorial, family, cultural and conjunctural factors, combined with a series of unfortunate institutional and political responses by CRIC, at a time when the guerrilla struggle was on the rise in Colombia, which concentrated the main guerrilla groups of the country in that area of Cauca. In this context, the primary group of community leaders decided to break with the existing state of affairs, supported by the emergence of the Communist Party, led by Pedro Vaca, as the organization that could provide the necessary guidance for planning and successful execution of Tumburao's counterhegemonic action. The last drop that broke the consensus and drove the people of Tumburao to act politically was the land issue, as could be expected in the context of the Colombian conflict. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge the confluence of a wider range of subjective and objective factors in that decision-making process.

Each of the narrators, according to their own particularity and the development of the story itself, emphasizes one or the other of the mentioned elements, to legitimize the actions undertaken with the aim of establishing Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*. The conclusion was the consolidation of an autonomous community, with a particular historical Nasa narrative that today claims its own place in the history of the indigenous movement, and from whose historical experience we can derive interesting developments and challenges for the study of the indigenous movement and the conflict in these territories.

CHAPTER 4: TUMBURAO AND THE DOMINANT NARRATIVE ON THE INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT IN THE CAUCA

As we have seen, the motivations of the people of Tumburao for the formation of their own *cabildo* and *resguardo*, are exactly the same as the motivations of the other Nasa communities. Likewise, the arguments they use to legitimize this social and political aspiration are based on the same ancestral rights and Nasa history, to the point that their own history, the history of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB*, is a Nasa history in its form, content, function and use. Furthermore, the actions undertaken by the Tumburao community to achieve their objective are the type of actions that stem from the "handbook" of indigenous activism. Unlike in the other Nasa communities, in Tumburao we find a separate historical narrative in which the CRIC appears as part of the set of factors and actors that generate the condition of subordination of the community in question, so that the counterhegemonic action carried out was directed towards them as well.

The result of this history was the constitution of an autonomous political community, with their own political identity, based on a common history. In this work we have accounted for the particularities of the history of Tumburao and the way its people narrate it, and must, therefore, turn to the analysis of the possible impact of Tumburao's history in the history of the indigenous movement in Cauca.

As mentioned, the current 'official' history of the indigenous movement in Cauca, as Nasa history, is the result of the most recent reinterpretation of this history, which begins with Juan Tama (myth and history), whose legacy can be summarized in the property titles of the five ancestral territories, the ideal type of indigenous leader (wise and warrior-like with both mythological and political legitimacy) and the emphasis on the preservation of the Nasa culture.

The referent that follows, in this dominant historical Nasa narrative, is Manuel Quintín Lame. The one who continued the struggle for land and the defense of Nasa survival, and whose legacy is highlighted by the struggle against the *terraje*, the organization of the communities in *cabildos* and the defense and expansion of the *resguardos*, the emphasis on maintaining the

language, Nasa Yuwe, and the rejection to any political organization different from the organization of the indigenous themselves.

As Castillo Gómez shows,¹⁵⁹ this reinvention of history and of heroes, which today is the official history of the indigenous movement in Cauca, is part of the foundation of what the authors term the modern indigenous movement, i.e. the historical process initiated with the establishment of CRIC in 1971. This organization, and the Nasa people in particular, established themselves as a paradigm of the indigenous movement in Colombia. CRIC is the organization responsible for the administration of the *cabildos*, the political leadership of the indigenous social movement and the production of their official history. This is the organization that the people of Tumburao, a small indigenous Nasa community located on one of the ribs of the Andes, had to face in order to construct their own *cabildo*.

What we might call the modern Nasa history is thus born, marked by the debate between two clearly defined ideological positions within CRIC: the peasant-class position and the *indianista* position.¹⁶⁰ To the former, supported by sectors of the Marxist left, the indigenous movement is part of the peasant movement together in the struggle for power, while in the second, the ethnic factor, the cultural specificities compel the existence of a social movement of its own, of local and regional scope.¹⁶¹

In 1971, the manuscript by Manuel Quintín Lame titled "The Thoughts of the Indian who was Educated in the Colombian Jungles" was first published, a manuscript dictated by one of the leaders of the indigenous uprisings of the early twentieth century. This aided Quintín Lame in being placed, along with Juan Tama, as one of the paradigmatic Nasa leaders.¹⁶²

Consistent with the theory about Nasa history described above, we may observe a feature of this official Nasa history, it passes from leader to leader. What is particular now, then, is that due to the development of the indigenous struggle itself, it is not a person or the image of a person, who writes and manages history, but rather, the CRIC. As an institution, CRIC manages

¹⁵⁹ Castillo Gómez, "El Estado-Nación Pluriétnico Y Multicultural Colombiano: la Lucha Por El Territorio En La Reimaginación De La Nación Y La Reivindicación de La Identidad Étnica De Negros E Indígenas", 203-300.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 254-61.

the *cabildos*, administers justice, and operates as the highest organ of the indigenous autonomous government. As is natural, the official history produced will be the result of an internal debate in the organization, in this case, the ideological debate on the scope of the indigenous project and its articulation in the Colombian social struggles.

This is the ideological debate referred to by Pedro Vaca, a debate that according to him was won by the *indianista* line, as a result the influence of international political organizations. It is in this way that he explains the absence of José Gonzalo Sánchez in the official indigenous history.

The existence of José Gonzalo Sánchez is, thus, a recognized fact - he was a political figure of national public scope and the authors concede in him a central role in the indigenous struggles of the early twentieth century. José Gonzalo Sánchez was the major collaborator of Quintín Lame, who did not know how to write.¹⁶³ It was precisely José Gonzalo Sánchez who led the defense of the *cabildos* in Cauca during *La Violencia*,¹⁶⁴ and the Communist Party was the most important political left-wing organization within the indigenous movement until the ideological debate took place within the CRIC.¹⁶⁵ Unlike Quintín Lame, José Gonzalo Sánchez never declared himself a direct descendant of Juan Tama or any other mythical figure.

Though in the available literature, the reasons behind opting for Quintín Lame as the reference of modern indigenous struggles are well clarified, what no author addresses is the reason why the reinvention of the hero, Manuel Quintín Lame, implied the disappearance of José Gonzalo Sánchez and the role of the Communist Party within the indigenous movement. It is my opinion that this has directly to do with the development of the *ideological component* in Tumburao's history.

Tumburao occupies an important place in a historical line of ideological disputes within the indigenous movement. The development of this ideological component began in 1930, when Manuel Quintín Lame decided to break off his political relations with José Gonzalo Sánchez.

¹⁶³ Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory*, 22, 114.

¹⁶⁴ Castillo Gómez, "El Estado-Nación Pluriétnico Y Multicultural Colombiano: la Lucha Por El Territorio En La Reimaginación De La Nación Y La Reivindicación de La Identidad Étnica De Negros E Indígenas".

¹⁶⁵ Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory*, 144, 217.

The reason for such was the participation of José Gonzalo Sánchez in the establishment of the Communist Party. At the end of the 1970's, in the exercise of reinventing the Nasa history that correlates him as the new "leader" of the tradition, CRIC decides to promote the figure of Quintín Lame. This occurs simultaneously as the *indianista* line of the ideological debate communicate they will break with any 'external' influences of the left-wing in the indigenous movement, a position which in practice implied entering into contradiction with the presence of the Communist Party in the *cabildos*.

In this context, at least two scenarios are to be outlined. The first, that the same *indianista* line decisively influenced the reinvention of Quintín Lame to promote his ideological struggle against the communists. The second, that the *indianista* line did not influence at all on the issue of Quintín Lame, but in any case saw its position strengthened in the internal debate. In any of the cases, the space is opened to highlight the anticommunist character of Quintín Lame as part of the official Nasa history. Considering things from this perspective, it is not surprising that CRIC's guerrilla group, which according to the accounts was the main agent of violence against the communists in Cauca, was Quintín Lame. Juxtaposed in the debate, the communist guerrilla FARC gave its new front, the eighth front, the name of José Gonzalo Sánchez.

The case of Tumburao is hence embedded in Nasa history, through the historical development of the ideological component. In this way, the struggle to avoid the foundation of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* ends up being a crucial moment in the ideological struggle developed against the communists within CRIC in the 1980's. An importance reinforced by the ancestral and territorial component in this history, elements that appear to be an important source of authority in the narrative of Nasa history.

In addition to the above, the Tumburao case presents a challenge to Nasa history in terms of the narrative itself. According to the official narrative, any external influence of some political organization would divide the indigenous movement and violate the autonomy of the territories. Yet, in Tumburao, in their own reinvention of the history, the presence of a political organization (CCP) was a trigger and a determining factor so that the political action of the community would provide good results. Namely that, in the case of Tumburao, a historical precedent is outlined which contradicts the official history.

As follows, there are enough elements to affirm that Nasa history, as we know it today - with the emphasis placed on its internal and external ideological function - has deliberately and systematically denied the contribution of other political and social sectors in the indigenous movement. This is not about advocating a change in the narrative of Nasa history, but a call for historians to broaden the scope of our historical research on the indigenous movement in Cauca, necessarily looking for new sources - the voice of the indigenous people excluded to the circles of power in CRIC.

More urgent still, is the need to conduct a historical research exercise based on the events in the conflict within the indigenous movement. Tumburao is a case that draws our attention to the level of violence practiced and promoted by the social and political organizations themselves. Unfortunately, in the contemporary Nasa narrative, there is no place, as yet, for the research on these events, and it is certainly not on the political agenda of the leaders either.

CHAPTER 5: TUMBURAO, CONFLICT AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE NATION-STATE

The history of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* is a Nasa history whose events are embedded in the violent political reality of Colombia, a society whose political and social history is necessarily the history of the conflict. A conflict, which, as we have already stated, is an integral part of the formation process of the Nation-State and a characteristic feature of all political relations.

The Tumburao case is about a Nasa community, located in a place practically isolated from Colombia, with homogeneous cultural characteristics and a well-defined identity. A rural community which, until the early 1980's, lived under colonial conditions of exploitation, and who decided to act, to recover the property over their lands through an exercise of self-determination within the indigenous movement.

This community has built their identity based on a territory of which they claim ancestral belonging. The actions undertaken in order to recover their lands are, then, understood without difficulty, however, how they ended up in the midst of an ideological confrontation of violent nature with their own Nasa brothers, results more troublesome to explain.

It is necessary to clarify why the central characteristics of the Colombian conflict are reproduced in the confrontation between CRIC and Tumburao, reaching even the most violent expressions. They were two communities tied by the same cultural identity, with mutual social and political aspirations, in a common territory and with enough land for all the inhabitants of both communities. Even in that exceptional place, in a country whose war is rooted in the issue over land, the population wind up confronted over soil.

The political component was present from the very beginning of the history of Tumburao. In 1886, Nicolás Hurtado, member of the Liberal Party and the brother of Ezequiel Hurtado, former president of the Republic of Colombia, illegally appropriated the lands of Tumburao. Since then, Tumburao was an area of the Liberal Party. With the onset of *La Violencia*, conservatives assaulted the liberals of Tumburao (1949) and terminated the *cabildo*. The episode ends with the appointment of the last governor of the *cabildo*, elder Leonél Tombé, as police inspector.

Tumburao remained in the most remote areas and excluded from the government plans of the *Frente Nacional*. In Tumburao, owing to the failure in the implementation of the agrarian reform in the 1960's, the lands were divided and the system of *terraje* prevailed until the 1980's.

It is nigh impossible to believe that Tumburao has not only been left out of government plans, but also by the plans of CRIC, that the community of Tumburao was nonexistent to the indigenous organization. Finally, with the arrival of Pedro Vaca, a member of the Communist Party, the community found a way to recover their territories. Regrettably, they also encountered the opposition of CRIC.

The reasons for CRIC's opposition to the formation of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* coincide with the causes of the Colombian conflict. In first instance, a dispute over the ownership of the land, and second, an anticommunist ideological dispute with counterinsurgent features, which reached the use of armed groups against Tumburao and, consequently, the formation of self-defense groups by the community. Thus, the place of the State and the landowners in the initial litigation for the land, was occupied by CRIC and the M-19, Quintín Lame and Ricardo Franco guerrilla groups, in a new variant of the conflict over land in Colombia.

In the case of Tumburao, the traditional practices present in the course of the Colombian conflict are reproduced within the indigenous movement, reaching, unfortunately, the most violent expressions.

Tumburao is the story of how the struggle for the land of an indigenous community, which comes into contradiction with the territorial aspirations of a neighbouring community, ends up as part of the political and social tragedy Colombia has been hauling since the dawn of the twentieth century. This is the representation of the objective and subjective causes of the Colombian conflict, in a remote community in the Andes, where war - the common way of doing politics in Colombia - came from the hands of some of those who wanted to end it.

CONCLUSIONS

In this work we have presented the history of how Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* was founded, a *cabildo* and *resguardo* of an indigenous Nasa community in Cauca, Colombia. The construction process of Tumburao *NXUN CXAMB* took place between 1981 and 1992, however, the roots of the *cabildo* and the *resguardo* extend well until the end of the nineteenth century, passing through core events in the history of Colombia and the political, social and armed conflict.

The history of Tumburao has been presented in the voice of its own protagonists, giving a face to the elders and a voice to the community of Tumburao, to its teachers and to the people who were part of the process that resulted in the legal recognition of the *cabildo* in 1984 and the *resguardo* in 1992. This is a successful story of a community that has acted to defend what they have considered to be their right. A community which, in that process found their own collective identity.

After collecting, listening, transcribing and presenting the history told in the voice of their elders and main leaders, the dominant narrative about the formation of the *cabildo* and *resguardo* in Tumburao was presented in the second chapter of this thesis. The mentioned narrative is the basis of the collective identity that engender Tumburao as an autonomous and differentiated political community within the Nasa people of Cauca.

Diverse research methods were put to use, for the analysis of this history, from the field of anthropology and sociology, examined from a social perspective of history. The collection, transcription and presentation of the oral stories of Tumburao was an exercise based on oral history methods, in combination with traditional methods of historical analysis.

For the analysis of the history of Tumburao, the definition of oral story put forth by Joanne Rappaport was applied, allowing for the observation of both the way oral stories are produced, their contents, function and use, both as an internal and as an external ideological tool.

Therefore, after an in-depth analysis of the literature on the issue of the Colombian conflict and construction of the Nation-State, what was presented here are what I consider key elements of

the history of said conflict and its development over time, thereby constructing a more general historical perspective of the Colombian conflict.

The story of Tumburao is a Nasa history. That is the first conclusion. The way the elders have compiled and transmitted the history, the way of telling it and its function within the community, all correspond to the traditional form of the Nasa history. Moreover, by being able to understand the content of this history it was possible to dive deeper into the reasons, actions and conflicts of the people of Tumburao, to sense their pride and satisfaction over the obtained result, as well as the frustrations and dangers they had to overcome in order to achieve it.

The community of Tumburao rose, fought and resisted to get their own *cabildo* and their own *resguardo* because they found, in the Nasa history, the reasons to support their claim as they did not see any difference between them and the other neighbouring, Nasa *cabildos*. This was so, due to their condition of exploitation under *terraje*, as they were forgotten by the State, but primarily because they were not taken into account by the very indigenous organization that was meant to represent them, to defend their rights. For ancestral reasons, because the property titles of Juan Tama also included them, because that's what their grandparents told them - especially the elder Tomasa - because *La Violencia* also reached them, because they were also soldiers of the motherland in the Thousand Days' War. But the inhabitants of Tumburao decided to risk everything, even their own lives, for the land. Essentially, the people of Tumburao engaged in a multiple counterhegemonic action, against the State, against the landowners and against CRIC's leadership, for the land.

In Tumburao, the whole community consisting of 54 families, 281 people in total, 137 women and 144 men, decided to fight for the land, because they did not have it. The CRIC decided to confront them, also over the land, not for lack of it, but because in the Colombian countryside having land is equal to having power, and they did not want communists holding such power. The power to speak and to demand dialogue of those in power, the power to patrol and control an area, the power to produce, power to write and to tell the history, the power to be governor, to do something for your community, or the power to exploit them. The people of Tumburao decided that they wanted to have that power in their own hands, to define, for themselves, their own future.

Tumburao, a place still isolated, though physically close to the urban Colombia, has a history that challenges some of the pillars of the official indigenous history. Tumburao is evidence that there is struggle and resistance within the indigenous movement, too, but which has, as it is currently presented, no place in Nasa history, and thus they have begun searching for their place in history.

In small Tumburao, up there in the Andes, violence also came as the predominant form of action in the political life of Colombia. It did not matter that they were Nasa brothers or neighbour - there, the political disputes for power were also attempted to be resolved through shooting, persecution, threats. The case of Tumburao is an illustration of the deep rupture in the Colombian political culture.

Tumburao is the successful story of a small indigenous Nasa community that decided to take the future in their own hands and to make history in the attempt to achieve it.

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