

# Lost in Translation?

Parks, Preserves, and territoriality in the Colombian Amazon

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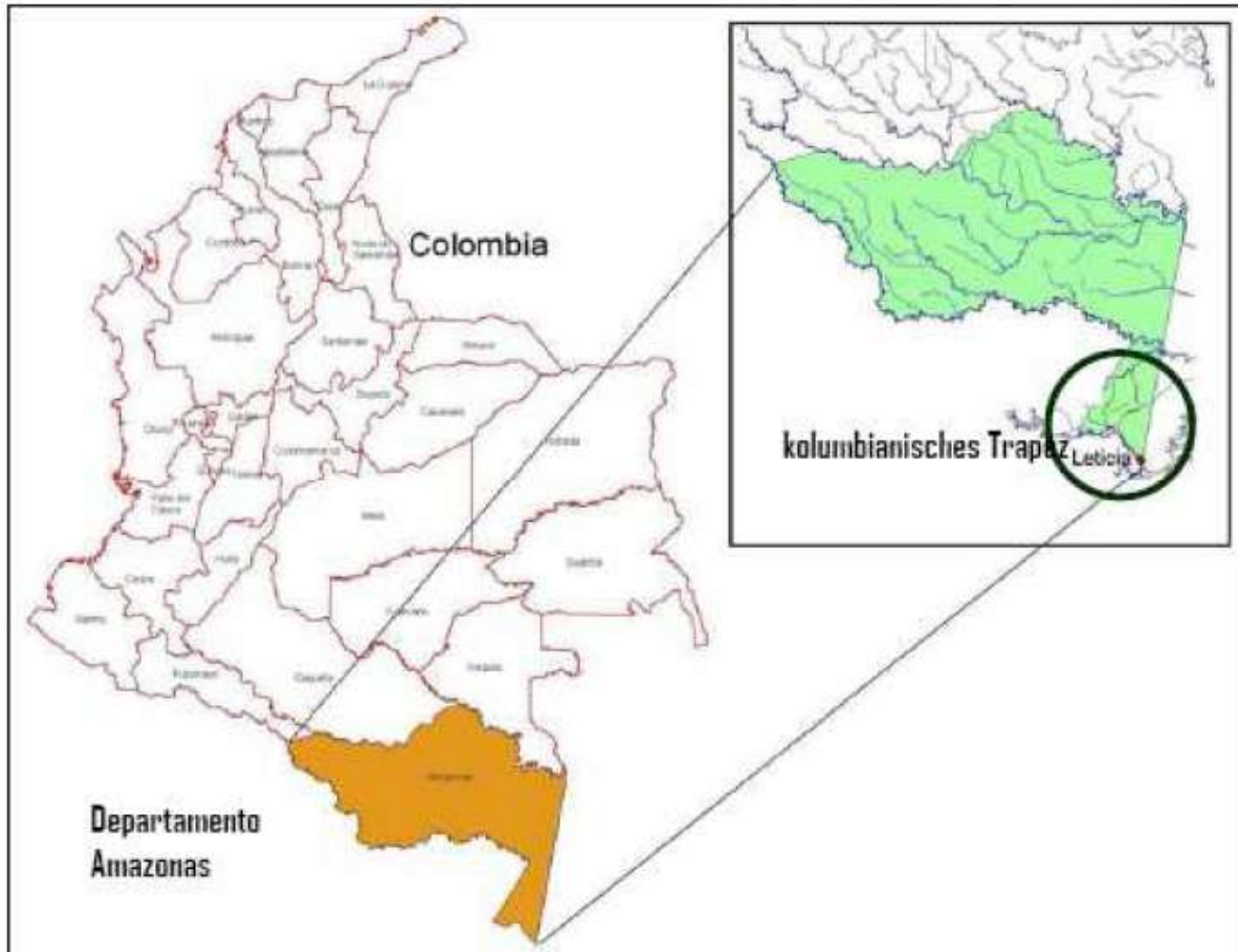


Abb.1: Geographische Lage des Untersuchungsgebiets (Quelle: SINCHI, modifiziert)



## Structure of presentation

- How I got involved
- Research questions
- Historical overview
- The new Constitution: 'territoriality' & *Resguardos*
- A *coup* in the Amazon
- 'Territoriality' strategies
- "So what?"





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how can we best achieve territorial ordering?



how can we help put in place a good governance system?

how can we best cohabitate with the Park?



how to carve out economic prospects?

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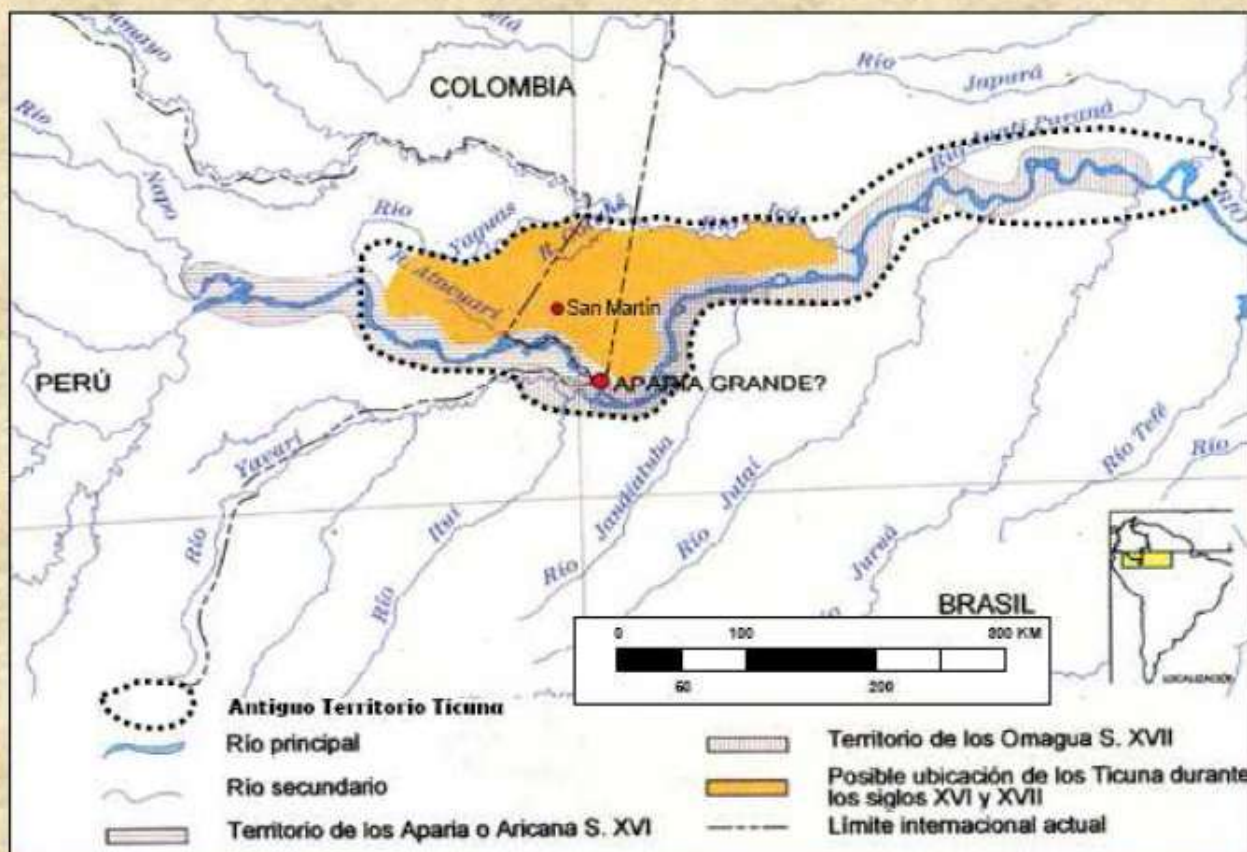
## In the beginning...

- A very long story...
  - 1500 - 1920s: ethnocide & diseases
  - 1940s - '60s: slow movement towards *bocanas*





# El Territorio Ticuna



## In the beginning...

- A very long story...
  - 1500 - 1930s: ethnocide & diseases
  - 1940s - '60s: slow movement towards *bocanas*
  - 1972: founding San Martín de Amacayacu



# In the beginning...



## The arrival of 'modernity'

- 'Enjoying the good life' (1970s & '80s)
  - school, water, white man's medicine
  - drug & hide *bonanza*
  
- 'Selling our soul to the devil' (1980s - '90s)
  - demise of shamans
  - erosion cultural identity (health, education, religion)
  - envy, alcoholism, drug addiction
  - clashes with Park (54 instead of 22 families)
  - plundering of natural resources



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## The new Constitution ('91)

- Consequences Constitution for indigenous people
  - Colombia a 'pluri-ethnic and multi-cultural country'
  - recognition indigenous languages
  - Preserves raised to constitutional rank
- 'Territorial reordering' at top of political agenda
  - redefinition existing entities (Departments, Municipalities)
  - creation new entities (Provinces, Regions, ETI's)
  - macro-Preserves can become ETI's



# 'Territory' and its semantics

## ■ Political-jurisdictional

- geographic space that defines & delimits sovereignty
- Nation-state, private property: precise polygon

## ■ Natural sciences (ethology)

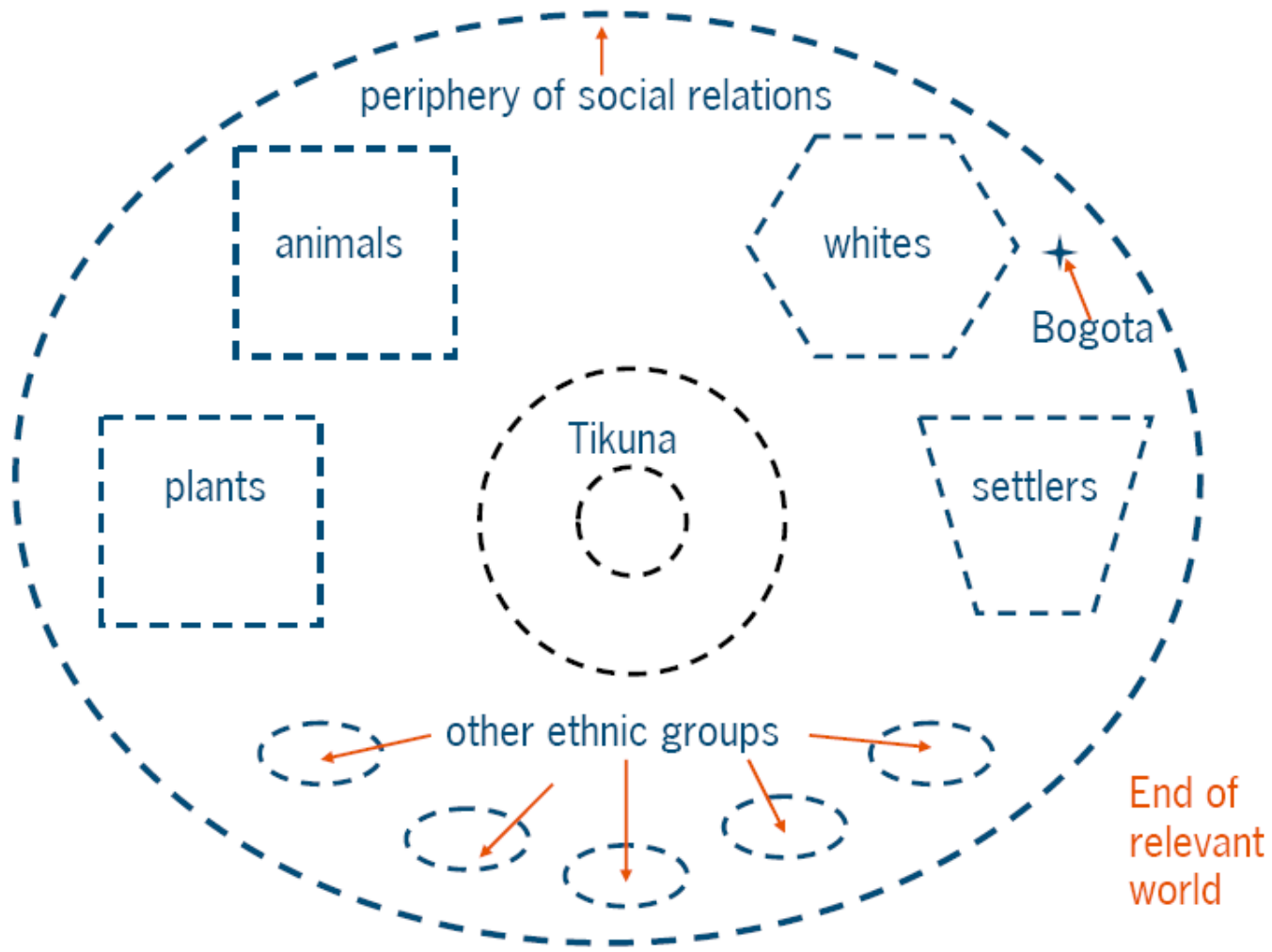
- space in which individuals or species reproduce
- *territoriality* = delimitation by occupation marks, combats
- different territorialities within same area (competition, coexistence, complementarity)

# 'Territory' for indigenous Amazonian people

- Common elements, but ...
  - geographical marks (bond humans, landscape & history)
  - territory as 'bodies' ("all are people")







## 'Territorial ordering' in practice

- Two meanings
  - technical (often conflated with 'environmental zoning')
  - political (reordering of the electoral districts, the distribution of resources, competences & jurisdictions, as well as possibilities for autonomy)
- Two different territorial management programs
  - Park: based on environmental zoning methodologies
  - indigenous people: based on political notion





Abb.2: Territoriale Ordnung des Trapezio Amazónico Colombiano (Quelle: SINCHI)

## New chances? The creation of a *Resguardo*

- 1999: *Resguardo* TICOYA
  - 23 communities in 2 municipalities
  - *Cabildo Mayor* chosen by members
  - 'territorial ordering programme' (*planes de vida*) as first step to becoming ETI
  - 'zoning' is far from the main concern
  - key issue: reproduction of 'people'
  - support by GAIA & ACITAM ('go slow!')
  - 2002: *Cabildo Mayor* replaced
  - CORPOAMAZONIA, *politiquerías*, and permits...
  - 2004 - present: *de facto* open access to resources





**CONVERGENCIA  
CIUDADANA**

**Felix Acosta**  
**GOBERNADOR 2011**  
*Un Gobierno con Proyección Humana*



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## Hi-jacking the notion of 'territoriality'

- Dutch money at work...
  - Embassy involved in 'territorial ordering' and ETI's
  - GAIA rejects
  - CODEBA & the 'pressure to spend'
  - creation of ATICOYA





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## Recovering *perfeccionamiento*

- 2004 - present: San Martin shows its teeth
  - fed up with appropriation of their life space by others
  - linkages with Dutch NGOs
  - seeking independence from TICOYA



## The elaboration of a *Plan de Vida*

### ■ Internal policy

- workshops (indigenous rights)
- health, education, energy, normativity, research, culture, leadership & governance, youth, economy, tourism
- rules on fishing, forestry, agriculture, hunting, mining, transport, garbage

### ■ External policy

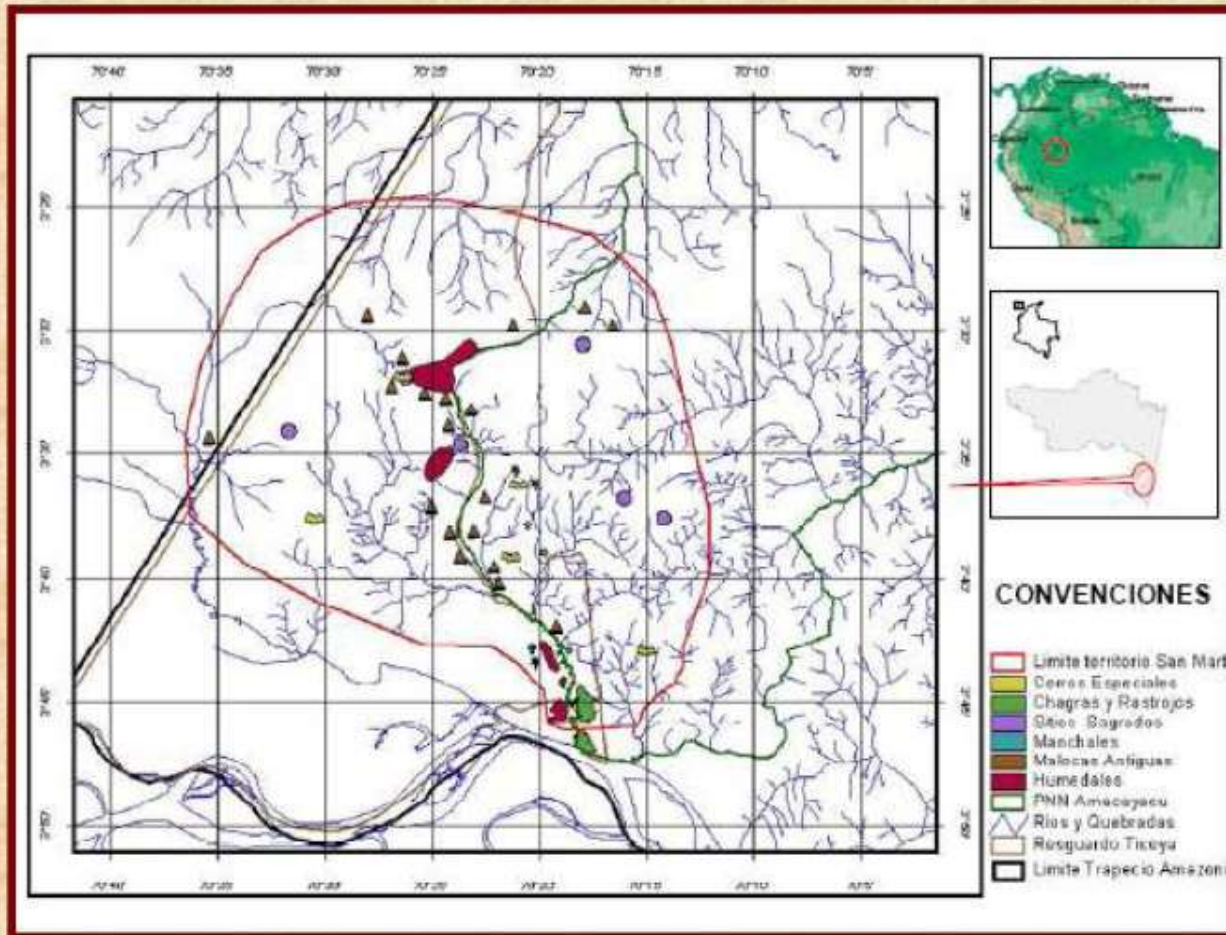
- workshops with ACITAM, ATICOYA, CODEBA, GAIA, Park authorities, CORPOAMAZONIA, municipality
- counter-mapping





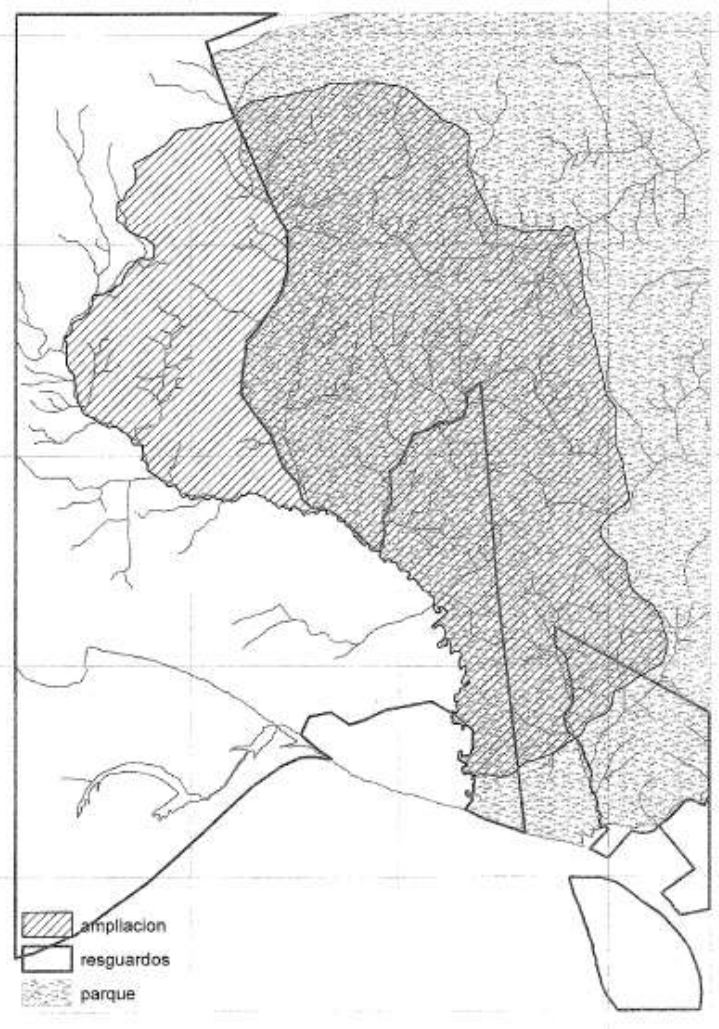


## TERRITORIO TRADICIONAL SAN MARTIN DE AMACAYACU





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## Creation

After all, the imagery of indigenous eco-cosmologies - including that of the Tikuna - is not that different in kind from the concepts and metaphors used by ecological science to grasp the complexities of biological reality, i.e. 'food webs', 'nutrient cycles', 'communities', 'mutualism', all implying subtle forms of interaction and interconnectedness among different life forms...





Thank you!