

# The structure that sustains life: nourishment and exchange among the Kogi

<https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.n36.04>

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How to cite this article: Parra Witte, F. (2020). The structure that sustains life: nourishment and exchange among the Kogi. *Tabula Rasa*, 36, 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.n36.04>

Received: February 14, 2020

Accepted: May 28, 2020

## *Abstract:*

This paper focuses on Kogi «payments» (*zubihi*) and «confessions» (*aluna ishguashi*) as knowledgeable practices that illustrate the ecological nature of exchange on the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia. It shows how reciprocity is a matter of nourishment framed by complex orders and associations that resemble Andean arrangements of cosmos, landscape and society. In Kogi terms, these are not simply «analogist» forms of classification but constitute a multifaceted web or fabric of relations and flows based on the regulation of ecological balance as the maintenance of supporting cosmological structures. This unity amounts to a living, thinking organism that generates and sustains all beings and things, while integrating their substance and form, spirit and matter. In this way the paper throws further light upon the ontological dimensions of the Isthmo-Colombian region, and ends by stressing their relevance for current environmental issues around the Sierra Nevada.

*Key words:* Kogi, cosmology, exchange, ecology, nourishment.

## **La estructura que sostiene la vida: alimento e intercambio entre los kogi**

### *Resumen:*

El presente artículo enfoca los «pagamentos» (*zubihi*) y las «confesiones» (*aluna ishguashi*) Kogi como prácticas de conocimiento que exponen el carácter ecológico del intercambio en la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta en Colombia. Muestra cómo la reciprocidad es una cuestión de alimento y se enmarca en órdenes y asociaciones complejas que se asemejan

<sup>1</sup> This article is the product of the author's doctoral research that resulted in the thesis: *Living the Law of Origin: The Cosmological, Ontological, Epistemological and Ecological Framework of Kogi Environmental Politics* (University of Cambridge, 2018)



**2012 - Mamas kogi modelando la estructura cósmica que sostiene la vida**  
*Falk Parra Witte*

a la composición de cosmos, territorio y sociedad andina. En términos Kogi, dichos patrones no son simplemente un tipo «analógico» **de clasificación**, sino que constituyen una multifacética red o tejido de relaciones y flujos que regula un equilibrio ecológico basado en el mantenimiento de estructuras cosmológicas. Este organismo vivo y pensante genera y sostiene todas las cosas, al mismo tiempo que integra su forma y esencia, materia y espíritu. Así el artículo contribuye a esclarecer las dimensiones ontológicas del Área Istmo-Colombiana, y termina resaltando su importancia para entender el actual deterioro ambiental de la Sierra Nevada.

*Palabras clave:* kogi, cosmología, sustento, ecología, intercambio.

## **A estrutura que sustenta a vida: alimento e intercâmbio entre os Kogi**

*Resumo:*

O presente artigo trata os “pagamentos” (*zubihi*) e as “confissões” (*aluna ishguashi*) Kogi como práticas de conhecimento que expõem o caráter ecológico do intercâmbio na Serra Nevada de Santa Marta em Colômbia. Estabelece como a reciprocidade é uma questão de alimento e se enquadra em ordens e associações complexas que se assemelham à composição andina do cosmos, território e sociedade. Nos termos dos Kogi, esses padrões não são simplesmente um tipo “analógico” de classificação; mas eles constituem uma rede ou tecido multiforme de relações e fluxos que regula um equilíbrio ecológico baseado na preservação das estruturas cosmológicas. Esse organismo vivo e pensante gera e sustenta todas as coisas, e simultaneamente, integra sua forma e essência, matéria e espírito. Consequentemente, o artigo contribui a elucidar as dimensões ontológicas da Área Istmo-colombiana, e finalmente, evidencia-se sua importância para compreender a degradação ambiental da Serra Nevada.

*Palavras-chave:* Kogi, cosmologia, sustento, ecologia, intercâmbio.

## **Introduction**

In this paper I draw on long-term anthropological research (Parra Witte, 2018) among the Kogi of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in northern Colombia, to define and contextualize the nature of exchange within their broader ontological disposition. I focus on the practice of *zubihi* or *pagamentos* (payments), a key ecological principle of reciprocity that despite some variations is typical of exchange practices for all Sierran groups (Arenas Gómez, 2020; Cordoba, 2006; Ferro, 2012; Morales, 2011).

Building on the Sierra Nevada's Tairona past, this exchange takes place along pre-defined, overlapping structures, associations and complementarities that integrate cosmos, landscape and society, and resemble Andean orders of relations,

notably those of the ancient Chibcha-speaking Muisca. While the «Kogi-Tairona tradition» also suggests links to Caribbean, Central American, Mesoamerican, and Amazonian features (Bray, 2003; Oyuela-Caicedo 1986; Preuss, 1926; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1951a, 1953; Zuidema, 1992), Andean parallels help illuminate Kogi exchange as a knowledgeable regulation of ecological balance framed by cosmological orders.

More than being an «analogue» type of classification (Descola, 2013; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1987), the practical, ecological essence of Kogi relationality and exchange is better understood in *organic* terms. While Sierran ontologies may have an «homologic» element (Halbmayer, 2020), this organicity is mainly a *living*, generative manifestation of cosmological structure that integrates identification and relation, interiority and physicality (Descola, 2013) as an organized, «nourishing» *web* of relations to be sustained. This holistic, ecological focus contributes to further define a possible «Chibcha ontology» (Niño Vargas, 2020), and situate the Kogi within wider socio-cosmological dimensions of the Isthmo-Colombian area (Halbmayer, 2020).

### ***The Four Peoples***

The Kogi or Kággaba share the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta with three other indigenous groups who speak related Chibcha languages: the Ikú (Arhuaco), Wiwa (Sanhá), and Kankuamo (yet the latter are currently reclaiming much of their lost culture, Morales & Pumarejo, 2003). They refer to themselves as the Sierra's «Four Peoples», who are guided by the «thought» of the «Mother» of creation, relate to the mountain as a unified socio-cosmological complex called the «Ancestral Territory» and should jointly sustain it like the four main Spiritual Fathers support the world.

The Four Peoples' strong cultural resemblances (Reichel Dolmatoff, 1951a) have historically been perceived as a distinct «cultural circle» (Bolinder, 1925). They share architectural forms, living patterns, social organisation, clothing, knitting and weaving practices, the use of coca leaves and the lime gourd (*poporo* or *suggi*), and are led by spiritual leaders called Mama/Mamú/Mamo. The Four Peoples commit to very similar rituals and ceremonies («trabajos espirituales») performed at sacred sites, such as payments and confessions, and have variations of the same stories, deities, and spiritual principles, constituting what Arenas Gómez (2020, p. 182) calls a «common system of thought». Bray (2003) considers that the Sierra Nevada might consequently be a subsystem of the wider «Macro-Chibchan» region.

Politically, the Four Peoples consolidate their unity under a Sierra-wide council, the *Consejo Territorial de Cabildos* (CTC), that safeguards the stability of the «Ancestral Territory» as delimited by the «Black Line» (*Séishizha*), an eco-cosmic

perimeter of important sacred sites at the mountain's base. The CTC articulates all four individual indigenous organizations, which represent each group before the government and administer their respective reservations (Ulloa, 2004).

### A web of relations

In basically every detail of life the Kogi should ideally heed and look after an incredibly rich web of relations with all components and forces of the Sierra Nevada, a cosmic weave also navigated by the I'ku (Ferro, 2012). A person is a node of living threads (*shi*) held together through necessary behaviours, rites, living patterns, responsibilities and even appropriate thoughts. This is guided by very elaborate sets of knowledge, teachings and stories called *shibulama*, which roughly translates as «threads of truth and energy». Along these threads the Great «Mother», the origin of all things, conceived the world in Her «thought», called *Aluna*, and *wove* life together, «giving birth» to it. Everything was then organized through learning processes by her sons and daughters, the «Spiritual Fathers and Mothers» (*Kalguasha*).

Reichel-Dolmatoff (1978) discusses at length the importance of knowledge in Kogi society and its place in this great cosmic weave, which he terms the «Fabric of Life». A Kogi is an intrinsic part of this fabric, most tangibly manifest in the myriad patterns, forms and landmarks of the earth-as-textile, or the Mother's living body. One must know, follow and sustain all threads that hold together personal, communal and ecological life, which are spiritually «tied» to life stages, names, places, objects, the body, ancestors, practices and institutions, and involve constant exchanges.

Constituting further threads, every Kogi is a member of a lineage, which is based in a particular valley, tied to certain landmarks and sacred sites, related to natural elements such as animals, water, cardinal directions or a colour, and descended from a Spiritual Father/Mother. Each lineage has related creational stories, knowledge specialisms and ritual obligations focused on balancing these elements, and thus plays its part in sustaining the whole Sierra. Lineages are mainly based at *eizuamas*, sites of generative but also organizational power, thus called «places of governance». As Ulloa (2004, p.150) points out, here the «Law of Origin» or «Law of the Mother» materializes and is interpreted. This is the totality of cosmic principles and truths that rule life and Kogi society in accordance with the Sierra Nevada, forming an inseparable «organic composition» (Parra Witte, 2018, p. 20) of correspondences, agencies, associations and places.

The fabric's stabilizing nodes are an intricate network of sacred sites that covers the entire Sierra within the «Black Line». Being sources of spiritual power that sustain life and thus focus Kogi ritual and learning, these places are called

«mothers» (*haba*) and «fathers» (*hate*) of species, human institutions, knowledge types, fire, illnesses and all things. Here creational characters, the *Kalguasha*, brought different spiritual-natural elements into the world, organised them, and originated human lineages.

### ***Exchange as the maintenance of relations***

To maintain this web of relations and associations, each Kogi lineage is responsible for the well-being and availability of their corresponding grouping of natural elements.

A lineage related to water (*ñi*) for example (among other things), will have myths and stories about the creation and importance of water, which define how to relate to it. Further knowledge about water is stored in the sacred sites associated to it, where members of the lineage can learn, transmit and apply this knowledge or *shibulama*, which informs the particular spiritual practices (*trabajos espirituales*) that ensure continued rainfall (*ñikâla*), the flow of rivers, and so on. These observances include «payments» to the Spiritual Father of Rain (*Ñizeldañ*) for its availability, «confessing» transgressions committed towards water, or dances and songs that invigorate the water cycle, thereby returning what water provides to humans and the life it gives to the land. Finally, people must follow daily behavioural guidelines like not bathing in certain ponds and lakes, sourcing water in appropriate containers, and limiting its use to cooking and washing.

These activities are necessary *exchanges* with all aspects of the environment that maintain healthy, mutually beneficial relations, keeping the fabric of life well woven together. Exchange is here a fundamental cosmic reciprocity (cf. Ferro, 2012) that interrelates human institutions, land, sky, living beings, the weather, spiritual forces, material culture and creational entities in a great network of interdependent support. In Weiner's (1980, p. 71) words, these reciprocal exchanges are components of a larger, regenerative system, rather than «discrete [linear] acts of giving and receiving». In addition to reproducing and recreating people and things (ibid.), for the Kogi this implies maintaining already given cosmological orders, and like the I'ku, following the «ancestral law» (Arenas Gómez, 2020) or Law of Origin.

### ***The Mamas***

Such knowledgeable practices and exchanges are led by the Mamas, Kogi spiritual leaders and ritual experts that have equivalents in all Sierran groups. *Mama* means «sun», giving these men a responsibility to also shine light and warmth on all things. Every Kogi lineage or community has various Mamas who oversee its sacred sites, cosmic principles and natural elements, while being trained in those places according to their inherent knowledge. As Reichel-Dolmatoff

explains (1950, 1976), to regulate natural cycles the Mamas visit landmarks, lead ceremonies, tell myths, guide morality and social organization, and communicate with *Aluna*, the omnipresent and omniscient mind and spirit of the world. By mediating with this universal, life-giving consciousness, they balance the Sierra Nevada and align the Kogi with its forces.

Normally termed «priests» (Preuss, 1926; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1950; Uribe, 1987), the Mamas' distinct social position covers «all dimensions» of life (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1950, p. 138), and their hard apprenticeship sets them apart (Chaves, 1947; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1976). Yet rather than priestly doctrine, political power, or «hierarchy» (Arenas Gómez, 2020), the Mamas' status rests on spiritual guidance, cultural memory, and knowledge, for which anyone is respected (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1950).

## **Paying and nourishing**

### ***A form of exchange***

The main practice to sustain and preserve the Sierra and Kogi society is called «payment» or *zubihi* in Koggian. Rather than being an offering it is about «compensating», as denoted by the I'ku equivalent *zasari* (Arenas Gómez, 2020), where exchange likewise implies a three-way *obligation* to give, receive and return (Ferro, 2012). More than that, the Kogi sense of reciprocating is a cosmic *law* that affirms the very order of the world, an unavoidable *imperative* to maintain ecological balance. Ultimately, paying back the Mother for everything She provides is a *responsibility* to seek and keep «agreement» (*zhuluká*) with all the world's agencies.

Payments can be made to settle social conflict, grow crops, regulate erratic weather, for a child's birth, to sustain animals, to the sun, or to cleanse a community. They are deposited at sacred sites, which transmit payments to the spiritual father(s) and mother(s) of the natural element or issue in question. Leoni (2005) indicates that Andean sacred sites, *huacas*, equally regulate forces in the landscape through ceremonies directed at deities that guarantee successful reproductions of animals, humans and crops (Castro and Aldunate, 2003).

A payment may consist of the personal essences (e.g. bodily fluids, thoughts, feelings) of a person, family or whole village, such as sweat to nurture rainfall as its equivalent. Human body parts can spiritually focus payments to things in nature that correspond to them, like the spaces between toes as «valleys» where «rivers» flow. A ritually performed song or dance can also serve to pay, as well as simply imagining one «gives food» to a place or entity. The material paid, the sacred site where it is done, the spiritual parent (*Kalguasha*) it is directed at, and the people who should carry it out, depend on what is being paid for and why,

the time of year, and the cosmo-natural associations of lineages. As mediators, the Mamas receive and transmit collective payments from their Kogi communities, yet they often do special payments themselves, and some other individuals can perform simpler ones.

In the Andes, powerful objects and «artefacts of high ritual and social value» were employed at ceremonial centres to do offerings (Lorandi, 2009, p. 41). To pay the Kogi equally use different kinds of objects, which moreover clearly resemble Tairona ones employed to regulate natural forces at sacred sites (Bray 2003). They include leaves, shells, crystals, seeds, or stone-beads (*tuma*) that contain different spiritual essences based on colour, shape, and material with many overlapping functions. These objects also transmit a person's energies to the (parents of) natural elements paid for, and at important life-stages such as birth, adulthood, or marriage, thereby strengthening spiritual connections, restoring imbalances, and treating diseases. Red stones may involve blood, black ones death, and white crystals (*ñikwitsi*) harmonize people with water (*ñi*) or lakes on which e.g. healthy children depend.

### *Paying is nourishing*

Balancing the Sierra Nevada requires a steady exchange of substances and forces, including human ones. Arenas Gómez (2020) notes that I'ku exchange involves a mediation between persons, animals and objects that transforms and positions them within webs of relations, called *makruma* (Ferro, 2012). The nature of Kogi paying is akin to the Amazonian Napo Runa term *tucuna*, a convertibility or transformation of energies through a «self-replacement of both things and people», that is, a «transfer of essences» in the «cosmic web of interrelatedness» (Uzendoski, 2004, p. 898). As in the Pacific, these exchanges involve a «deep interconnectedness of [reciprocal] relationships» far beyond the human realm (Weiner, 1980, p. 81). In daily giving, a common Kogi response is *hi shala?* («in exchange for what?»), and the Mamas' spiritual work for their communities is returned with contributions of cultivated food.

The concept of «giving back» is also expressed as «asking for permission», for it is by paying for something that one can take it, and this involves a conscious acknowledgement from the giver. Mama Luntana, a respected, earnest Mama from the upper *eizutama* of Takina, illustrates this well. «The Mother explained to us that [...] we as people or persons would have to ask for permission to obtain food» by paying *Húgukui*, the «owner [and organizer] of all foods [and seeds] in the world». According to *Húgukui*, «when crops are ready to be consumed, we cannot simply go there, cut them, and eat, we have to ask permission [and pay]» to sow and cultivate. This permission in turn, granted by paying, ensures that foodstuffs keep growing.



In other words, to be nourished the Kogi must also nourish in return. As among the I'kú, the reciprocal transfer of essences is hence a matter of «feeding» that conveys creation, renewal and consolidation of human and non-human relationships (Arenas Gómez, 2020), and equally joins the notion of knitting/weaving the cosmic fabric to growth, food, and cultivation (Ferro, 2012). Paying then, is a form of feeding in exchange for what spiritual parents, sacred sites or natural elements provide, i.e. *feed*, to all beings, which in Kogi terms is part of a natural cycle of *nourishment*. Rather than «feeding» and «compensating» being two dimensions of exchange (Arenas Gómez, 2020), in Kogi payments (*zubihi*) they are a single phenomenon.

The Kogi word for foodstuffs or nutriment, *gakue*, is formed of the verb *gald* (to eat) and the suffix *kue* (indicates plurality). It relates to *gaka*, a term for sacred site that resembles the Andean *wak'a* or *huaca* (Bray, 2003; Nuñez del Prado, 1995). These places thus «eat» what the Kogi pay there/them, and in turn nourish the territory with their life-giving forces. They transmit the sustenance that nature receives from the spiritual world, and what the Kogi pay back, being centres of cosmo-ecological exchanges. While e.g. birds also «nourish the Mother» with their song in return for Her sustenance, payments are a human way of tapping into these cycles. Beyond the Andean concern with making the earth bear fruit (Harris, 2000), or the Sierran aim of fertilizing the world (Arenas Gómez, 2020), Kogi fertility and exchange are part of a wider management of ecological balance as cosmic structure, as I will show.

### *Aluna ishguashi*

One cloudy, sticky morning before the rainy season, I sat between bushes on a sacred site and listened intently to the story about the creation of the sea, narrated by Mama Shibulata. He is one of the few Mamas that travel internationally to represent his people, and is restoring a sacred site on the Black Line deteriorated by settlers. Suddenly he announced that given it was *nebeshizha*, a cultivation period and the new moon, he had to visit the village to collect spiritual «confessions» from people. The Mama would turn these collections into payments to the spiritual Fathers and Mothers of Water and Foodstuffs to call the rain, make crops grow, stop the sun from smouldering them, and return communal use of water, hence preventing sickness.

«Confessing» is the Spanish version of *aluna ishguashi*, a type of payment common to the Four Peoples. The I'kú name it *gun'gawun*, which denotes feeding, cleansing, and the renewal of relationships (Arenas Gómez, 2020). Whether individually or collectively, the Kogi mentally («in aluna») discharge personal essences like thoughts, emotions, dreams, actions, and memories into bits of cotton held between two fingers. Once returned to the Mama, he gently shakes

the cotton while concentrating to «speak to» or «advise» the person's essences. He then spiritually sends them to an appropriate *Kalguasha* as payment, leaving the cotton on the sacred site to «tie» these energies to it, stabilizing them. Confessing also «registers» people at these places, akin to how the I'ku «sew» or «plant» thought and vitality «into the fabric», thus connecting «threads» (Arenas Gómez, 2020, p. 189).

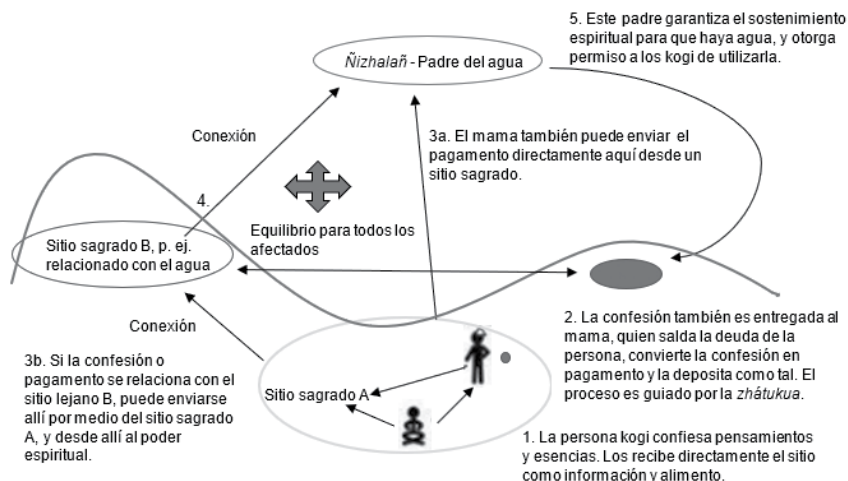


Figure 1: The Kogi system of confession (Parra Witte, 2018).

*Aluna ishguashi* may pay for the use of materials, consolidate a learning process, contribute to «name» a baby, imbue it with «value» and tie it to the physical world, expose people's inner intentions and thus resolve conflict, align and cleanse past experiences, or serve to «ask permission» to arrive in a place. In every case, people's essences constitute energies and information that «nourish» the sacred site, they are «spiritual food» (*aluna gakue*) used to pay the *Kalguasha* (spiritual parents), thereby «feeding» plants, marriage, animals or anything they created.

According to Mama Manuel, a humorous man who explains Kogi concepts well and is from Tungeka, a low-lying «barrier» village to the outside world, what people deposit are «spiritual loads» or «used *aluna*». Hereby persons and communities relieve themselves of burdens, align with the Sierra Nevada, and harmonize thoughts and energies, while making payments that balance the flow of natural forces. *Aluna ishguashi* is therefore «purification, emotional therapy, spiritual alignment, and ecological sustenance all in one» (Parra Witte, 2018, p. 92). In this exchange of forces and substances that reinforces and balances environmental relations, the health of the Kogi is the life of the Sierra Nevada and vice versa.

### *Conversion and communication*

The conversion of substances into food via confession is expressed by a story told to me by Mama Shibulata. Trees called *Kaxsouggi* were once persons that tricked the Kogi into confessing to «open them up» and extract their body contents as both food and valuable information. The Kogi then retributed this with the same operation on the *Kaxsouggi*. For this reason, the Mama added, «when we confess spiritually with words, we are sending a payment there, to the home of the Father and Mother of Trees». In *Aluna*, «they see this as food», and so we «ask for permission to fell and use trees. That is why we confess and pay to all things, because that is their food».

The Kogi continue to be food for trees, who are still persons in the spiritual realm, while these provide the Kogi with materials, also nourishing them. This reciprocity rests on how both humans and trees are people and share a transferrable spiritual essence. In this natural cycle of nourishment, consumed physical food turns into the very spiritual essences that the Kogi then confess and pay (feed) to produce more food. Upon death, the human body itself becomes food for the same earth that grew those trees, plants and crops, reproducing things once more. After all, says Alejo, Mama Shibulata's Spanish-speaking son-in-law, «we are the flesh of Mother Earth».

Providing a creational background to this, Mama Luntana explains that «in the beginning» food was spiritual, *aluna gakue*. Eating simply entailed «thinking one was fed» crops or whatever, which is why in the otherworld (*Nuhuakála*) people and beings still nourish themselves with our human spirit when we pay or confess. The cycle of nourishment therefore originates in and depends on *Aluna*, the life-spirit that makes plants, trees, animals and all things grow. For the Kogi, «good thought» (*aluna hanchigatsé*) is nourishing, and nourishment is motherly and caring. Arenas Gómez (2020) argues that the core of exchanges in I'k rituals is «thought-vitality» (*ánugwe*), returned to the «ancestral parents» as a creative, fertile, powerful agency.

In Kogi *aluna ishguashi* moreover, the «transfer of essences» (Uzendoski, 2004) is simultaneously an exchange of *information*. By discharging thoughts, feelings, and memories, the Kogi give something of themselves to a sacred site, which is partly information about their inner state. Paying is not only about exchanging a substance or quantity, but equally about the content or qualitative aspect of what is given, so that nourishing is also *communicating*. Sacred sites are conscious entities, «mothers and fathers» that sustain the world and in addition «think». They «eat» Kogi payments and confessions, but also «listen» to and understand what is said to/at them. Following Mama Luntana, this is because any mother is «happy» when knowing about her children (human or not), and that equals

receiving something from them. It is like «telling the [sites] how one is doing, which comforts and sustains them». Accordingly, to confess the Kogi often visualize leaving foodstuffs at the site.

For payments to reverberate on earth, the Kogi need to communicate and interact with *Aluna*. The cycle of nourishment and reciprocity is based on continuous flows between the spiritual and material realms, which is what makes *aluna ishguashi* an act of sustenance. For the Napo Runa, the «soul substance» animating the world also allows the «shared flow of things» as transformation and reproduction, and hinges on the complementarity of «this world and the otherworld in a constant, mutually transformative relationship» (Uzendoski, 2004, p. 886, 894). Since *Aluna* is «thought» moreover, deposited as payment, «thinking well» amounts to nourishment.

### ***Consulting what and how to pay***

The mechanism to learn what payments and confessions are required at which site, when, by whom, and to which spiritual parents and respective natural elements, is divination (*iltueld*). These «spiritual consultations» navigate *Aluna* to gain knowledge, find the cause of an issue, or seek advice. It is a way to trace or monitor personal or ecological needs, illnesses or imbalances and prevent disorder, determine solutions, and maintain well-being. Water divination is the most common spiritual consultation.

Sitting on stones at a sacred site, where spiritual connection is strongest, the Mamas focus while repeatedly dropping tubular stone-beads called *tuma* into a bowl of water (*zhátukua*). Whether it is about community rituals, a drought, mining projects in Kogi territory, conflicts with the state, or personal misfortunes, in doing so they mentally ask questions in *Aluna* to learn which payments regulate or «heal» such situations. The size, number, duration, and movements of the emerging bubbles form «multiple codes» (Arbeláez Alborno, 1997), «read» as meaningful replies. According to Mama Luntana, the spirits «speak» from *Aluna* through water and the *tuma*'s «mouths», just like conscious lakes communicate with the Mamas, or how humans first think and then speak into the physical world. «We use the *zhátukua* [...] to communicate with the Mother and the sites», and «converse with the Spiritual Fathers», Mama Manuel adds, using this information and knowledge to care for things and reciprocate.

### ***A flow of life***

The *kualama* principle synthesizes the Kogi ontology of exchange and nourishment. *Kua* means to heal/renew/purify, and *lama* means life and growth. According to Arregocés Conchacala, an ex Kogi Council Governor, «*kualama* is a law, the great prevention, the great improvement, the indigenous well-being». All things must

pass through the «filter» of *kualdama* to be «processed and polished». During these ceremonies and «dances that sustain the world», which follow natural cycles and complement everyday payments and confessions, the Mama «heals» not only natural cycles, but also human ones of birth («**sowing children**»), growth, adulthood, and death (OGT, 2009, p. 66).

While being primarily a fertility ritual, *kualama* foments the growth and re-growth of all things and regulates seasons, rainfall, sunshine, and other phenomena, invigorating nature itself. Since «everything grows», Mama Manuel clarifies, there are various types of *kualama* for different things, such as rain, fire, earth, animals, or stones, performed at corresponding sacred sites and by Kogi lineages with the appropriate knowledge. The music played is mainly a technique to attain vibrations that transmit spiritual powers and messages, being another form of nourishing communication, just like the wind or a chorus of frogs. The song of the jaguar or the turtle, contacts their spiritual parents by imitating their sounds, who are nourished by the music and in return renew the animals' life force.

Overall, paying and confessing are variants of the same onto-ecological cycle of nourishment and exchange, along with communicating, thinking well, playing music, getting permission, divining, dancing, and singing. Nourishment and exchange are therefore types of a wider *feedback* based on «**agreement**» (*zhulukua*) that manifests in different forms, at different levels and via different entities. This underlying *flow of life* relates all things in purposeful, balancing ways, and along a definite cosmic and territorial system. *Aluna* allows this flow as both medium and source, being thought, vitality, information, communication and knowledge all in one. As among the Canadian Chipewyan, this «multifaceted communicative interrelationship between human and nonhuman beings» imbues all areas of life (Smith, 1998, p. 427). A Kogi may perceive that two roars of thunder «talk to each other», the messenger bird *shikaka* alerts travellers, and people feel in the chest that someone is coming.

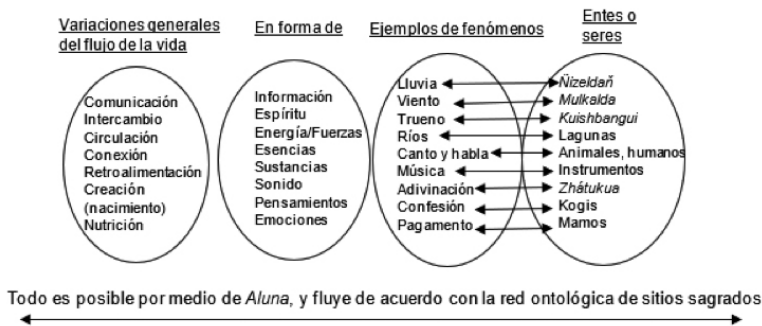


Figure 2: Different levels and manifestations of the flow of life (Parra Witte, 2018)

## **The framework of nourishment**

### ***Exchange as territorial order***

In summary, Kogi payments are a controlled and targeted mechanism to strengthen and vitalise specific threads (*shi*) or relations in the «Fabric of Life» (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1978), which interweaves everything via conscious reciprocal exchanges in the flow of life. Nourishment is therefore an inherently ecological matter «tied» to territorial spaces. The nodes holding these threads together as receptors for the exchange of «food» are the sacred sites, which communicate with and sustain all other beings and landmarks of the territory-as-fabric. Their truths, powers and associations make these nourishing fathers and mothers focal points of Kogi practice, learning and discourse, anchoring lineages, payments, confessions and divinations. Geographical features are the physical manifestation of the web of relations, «mapping» human and non-human exchanges.

### ***Regional parallels as socio-cosmological associations***

In turn, the landscape is framed by a complex and unified structure of cosmological principles, interlinking categories and correspondences. As with the Kogi, in the Andes «care lavished on the earth» follows mutually dependent networks and associations of divinities, astronomical features, mountains, descent groups, priests, ceremonial centres, objects, political divisions and agricultural patterns, via principles of reciprocity and symmetry (Bastien, 1985; Lorandi, 2009; Murra, 1984, p. 120). To safeguard the reproduction of crops, animals and humans, make the earth fertile and control weather patterns, practices are directed at these patterned forces (Castro & Aldunate, 2003; Leoni, 2005). Like in the Sierra Nevada, in this «ancient widespread Andean tradition» (Zuidema, 1992, p. 251), society, mountainous territory, and cosmology form an ordered, holistic composition regulated through offerings along sacred sites (Castro & Aldunate, 2003; Leoni, 2005).

More specifically, the ancient Chibcha-speaking Muisca chiefdoms on Colombia's eastern cordillera addressed remarkably similar cosmological principles and analogies between territorial, socio-political, and mythical astronomical orders (Correa Rubio, 2004, 2005) framed human exchanges with the natural and spiritual world, channelled through a comparable lineage system and ritually important coloured stone-beads (Bray, 2003; Casilimas-Rojas & López-Ávila 1987; Gonzáles de Pérez 1996; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1951a). Like Kogi Mamas, the Muisca *Jeque* or priest directed these offerings to placate natural sanctuaries and sacred landmarks with communal support (Londoño Laverde, 1996).

The pre-Columbian chiefdoms or polities of the Tairona, who inhabited the north-western slopes of the Sierra Nevada (Bray, 2003; Oyuela-Caicedo, 1986), seemingly performed offerings at sacred sites resembling Kogi payments, while

directing them to equivalent deities and with similar objects (*tuma*) through priests (*Naoma*) that were trained and functioned much like current Kogi *Mamas* (Oyuela-Caicedo, 2002; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1951a). As Kogi houses and villages do (Duque Cañas *et al.*, 2004; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1975), the Tairona «lost city» (*Ciudad Perdida*) and its stone terraces, canals, and stairways may have reflected cosmological and moral orders (Giraldo, 2010, p. 7) and unified landscape with architecture (Zuidema, 1992, p. 251), thereby framing these exchanges.

### ***Creational complementarity***

Vertical andean «ecological complementarity» (Murra, 1984), which integrates environmental, social, and economic relations and exchanges along altitudinal levels, is among the Kogi ultimately one of cosmological structure. The Sierra Nevada's climatic and bio-geographical zones are a meso-cosmic instantiation of the nine layers of the universe (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1978, 1987), constituting an overarching scaffolding that orients Kogi payments and ceremonies accordingly. Nine Kogi songs for instance, gradually «ascend from the beach to the peaks» in a spiritual alignment that «strengthens» these levels. Following Kogi creation stories, sacred sites were created in a downward, expanding development from the mountain peaks to the sea and beyond, giving rise to everything that exists in a great pattern of landmarks and associated natural elements. In this «generational descent» (Parra Witte, 2018, p. 76) of «mothers, fathers and children», each level holds linked forces and elements that the *Mamas* navigate through divination and visit to pay and nourish them.

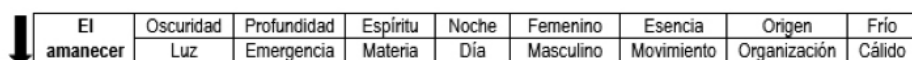
The balance of this vertical network is sustained by the exchanges between the sea below and the mountains above as separate but mutually constitutive creational domains. Mother *Zaldziwê* was «born» in the Sierra and descended to become the Sea. Aided by male characters, she «confessed» in different places along the way, creating life-sustaining sacred-sites related to water that spiritually communicate peaks, high lakes, and *eizuamas* with estuaries, mangroves and lagoons by the beach. Mirroring this cosmic interrelation, in the water cycle rivers and rainwater flow down to «nourish the sea» with substances and spirit from the valleys. After water confesses there and renews its *aluna*, it rises again to the Sierra via winds, vapour and clouds to recharge it with rain, paying back the Sierra what it paid the sea.

The story shows that confession (*aluna ishguashi*) is not just a human type of exchange (Arenas Gómez, 2020; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1951b), but essentially an *environmental process of reproduction*. Discharging thought and spirit, as in the water cycle, cleanses the giver and nourishes the receiver, renewing energies through a balancing exchange. Payments and confessions are variants of the ecological principle of «healing», derived from *Zaldziwê's* own confessions as a cosmological blueprint of how discharging thought is a creative force. To reinforce and regulate

this creational complementarity, the Mamas make payments on the beach with substances from the high tundra and pay on the mountains and lakes with materials from the beach, as e.g. in coastal northern Chile (Castro & Aldunate, 2003). Mamas who specialise in protecting the sea complement others who focus on the mountains, and Kogi men recreate this exchange by chewing coca leaves from the hills with powdered seashells, thus contacting *Zaldziwê* «in aluna».

### ***Ecological balance as cosmological structure***

Complementary relations between distinct but interdependent spheres are the framework in and through which nourishing and cooperative exchanges take place. Whether between the earth and the sky, water and fire, male and female, or in Kogi institutions (see below), these cosmological structures support ecological balance. In turn, this draws on a *duality* of principles typical to the Four Peoples. The relationship between Sierra and Sea is also one between above and below, inside and outside, earth and water. Following Kogi cosmogony, the world emerged *upward* from a spiritual «profundity» and then materialised *downward*, coinciding with the «dawn» of light from an original darkness, or the I'ku «coming of the sun» (Tayler, 1997). As the Mamas say, this matched a fertilizing union of organising male and generative female powers, just as the Muisca marriage of sun and moon, light and dark as an astral complementarity of genders in the illumination of the universe (Correa Rubio, 2005).



El amanecer	Oscuridad	Profundidad	Espíritu	Noche	Femenino	Esencia	Origen	Frio
	Luz	Emergencia	Materia	Día	Masculino	Movimiento	Organización	Cálido

Figure 3: Basic Kogi cosmic dualities or complementarities (Parra Witte, 2018)

What creates life and ensures balance is a union or middle ground between these opposed but complementary creational domains, primarily spirit and matter. This becomes a basic ecological interdependence or living exchange mediated by the Kogi through payments, dances, and communal confessions. Reproducing these (gendered) dualities, Mamas (the sun) work during the day and are complemented by their knowledgeable wives, who are the moon (*Saha*) and have night-time powers (e.g. dreams). Jointly, Mamas pay spiritual mothers and Sahas pay the fathers, while Kogi male (*tuhke*) and female (*dahke*) lineages define compatible marriages, which create human life, according to associated natural elements.

Similarly, Kogi headmen (*Comisarios* or *Húgukui*) and Mamas should support each other in a political-ceremonial complementarity (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1950) that mirrors the Tairona «civil-religious» one (Oyuela-Caicedo, 1986). *Comisarios* ensure that villages follow the Mamas' knowledge and divinations along lineage parameters at sacred sites, while the Mamas should respect and



facilitate the Comisarios' authority as «organizers» of nature and people (OGT, 2017). In the Muisca «isomorphism of political and religious spheres», the religious organization of priests (*Jeques*) and the social structure of chiefs (*Caciques*) were «two sides of the same coin» (González de Pérez, 1996; Londoño Laverde, 1996, p. 65, 73). Kogi cooperation is ultimately a mutuality between the spiritual and physical, cosmic and social, non-human and human that sustains cycles and exchanges of the ecosystem.

Kogi material culture embodies the way ecological exchange follows cosmological correspondence. In the context of a Tairona-Kogi «priest-temple complex» (Oyuela-Caycedo, 2002), the circular «world house» (*nuhué*) described by Reichel-Dolmatoff (1975) and Duque Cañas *et al.* (2004), recreates the nine vertical cosmic levels, split into the complementary worlds of upper physicality and light and lower darkness and spirit. The *nuhué* is further divided into halves and quadrants that capture horizontal dualities such as the positions of sea and summits, and are occupied by Mamas and Comisarios respectively. By also tracing solar movements and cardinal directions (and thus the four original Kogi lineages), this building recreates both cosmos and mountain, and inside men discuss communal matters like payments and confessions.

When Kogi men weave clothes on the cross-shaped loom, they imitate how the sun fertilizes the earth, and women «think» along the Mother's threads to knit bags that embody the nourishing cosmic womb, representing a well-led life (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1978). Andean woven bags and architecture equally embody organic, social and cosmic values like balance, fertility and gender complementarity (Cereceda, 2009; Harris, 2000). Overall, the Kogi ecology of nourishment and exchange is embedded in an integrated cosmological framework manifested in territorial order. Recreating the system via institutions, objects and balancing rites upholds the «Law of Origin».

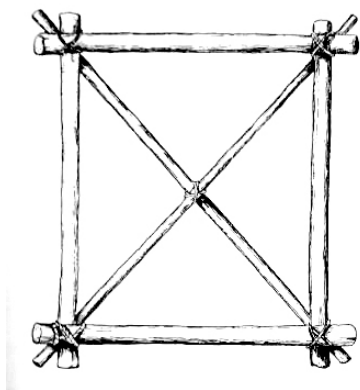


Figure 4: The Kogi loom, resembling the world-cross. Reichel-Dolmatoff (1975).



*Figure 5: Like the cosmos, bags originate in the bottom middle, expand concentrically, and rise along the vertical levels. Author.*

## **Analogy as order and order as exchange**

### ***Chains of associations***

This Andean «system of classification» that orders society, space, time, and the universe in congruence with the land (Murra and Wachtel, 2009, p. 5) has been interpreted in terms of interrelated *analogies* at different levels. Taking a similar approach, Reichel-Dolmatoff (1987, p. 78) articulates how the «Kogi universe» interweaves cosmos, nature, social structure, objects, the life cycle, behaviour and aesthetics. For him this means that the Kogi «operate mainly by analogy» along «chains of associations on specific level[s] of categories». *Everything* is part of these overlapping configurations and patterns, being full of meanings and «structured into significant units, forms, and clusters». Likewise, I found that «aspects of the structure of the whole viewed from different angles repeat elements of the overall pattern in a simultaneous, unifying expression at all levels» (Parra Witte, 2018, p. 197).

As we have seen, nourishment is a primary spiritual force that also manifests in many forms and levels, be it foodstuffs, information, music, birdsong, bodily substances, communication, or thought. Accordingly, payments integrate and reproduce different facets of this complex web of relations. They are personal essences paid to spiritual parents; framed by the latter's myths; deposited at dependent sacred sites; directed at related natural elements; led by Mamas trained in those sites who specialise in each element; conducted via objects of matching

qualities; aligned with respective Kogi lineages; and powered at *kualama* ceremonies where the spiritual parents are impersonated. Each aspect or relation is a facet, recreation, or version of another.

Seen as analogism however, principles like reciprocity, complementary opposition, or duality tend to be analysed as conceptual and symbolic categories that pertain to a «logic», and «project» human social and physiological «paradigms» onto Andean territory (Bastien, 1985, p. 597, 599). This structuralist approach is summarized by Descola (1992, p. 110) as one that sees people as objectifying nature and human relations through «mental procedures» and «modes of representation» that have roots in «cognitive universals» and lead to «folk taxonomies». In this light, Reichel-Dolmatoff (1987, p. 78) states that the Kogi «imbue» nature with «multireferential [...] configurations of symbolic meanings» and analogies, «coding» it with their thought.

Instead, Descola (2013) treats these categories as ontologies whereby societies relate to the world and order differences and resemblances between things and beings based on appearance, behaviour, properties, and their interiority (intention, soul) and physicality. «Analogism» (dissimilar interiorities and physicalities), is one of four types of ontology next to «animism» (similar interiorities, dissimilar physicalities), «naturalism» (dissimilar interiorities, similar physicalities), and «totemism» (both similar). These «modes of identification» are based on «modes of relation» such as exchange, predation, and gift, or production, protection, and transmission.

Though seeking to overcome the idea that people have cultural interpretations *of* nature, Descola admits being influenced by structuralist analysis «according to which an element in the world acquires meaning only by contrast to other elements» (2013, p. 305). Modes of identification are ultimately integrative «schemas» to apprehend reality, and «stem from the kind of cognitive, emotional, and sensorimotor structures that channel the production of automatic inferences, orientate practical action, and organize the expression of thoughts and feelings according to relatively stereotyped patterns». These logics «establish» collectives and «bestow form and content» upon relations. In particular, «analogical subjectivities» constitute «models» for imposing order and bring meaning into the world (Descola, 2003, p. 298, 310).

### ***A structure that sustains life***

According to Kogi ontological understanding, these multiple layers of associations where each thing is a unique composition of various comparable features, are actual relations between the qualities and functions of the Sierra Nevada's components. Structure is not a construct or conceptual classification of difference. Just as Ingold (2000) and Harvey (2006) argue that animism is not

about attributing meaning and agency to the world but about recognising that it is already meaningful and alive, in Kogi terms they do not «operate analogically» but relate to a world already structured and patterned. What links beings, landmarks and objects are shared principles and shapes inherent to nature. Rather than analogies, these are *cosmological structures* that manifest as an *ontological order of correspondences* lived via *ecological relations* and known as *threads (shibulama)* to follow. Cosmological structure is ecological balance, and keeping this balance is maintaining those structures. This is based on exchange, and exchange is based on nourishment. Kogi payments and confessions are types of flows (*Figure 2*) that sustain this fabric of life.

Mama Shibulata emphasizes that the Spiritual Fathers carefully thought and planned the world so all things have their place and role in sustaining the interrelated whole. The purpose of cosmic structure is to make the world «strong and stable», and hence the earth (the middle level supporting the four above and four below), «fertile, plentiful, and full of life». Mamas Manuel and Luntana affirm that the central World-Tree (*Kaxbuánkua*) that holds the nine levels together, was created to «always sustain and nourish the world», being «like the heart and soul» that circulate vital flows, allow thought, and keep the life of body and spirit. Along this Pillar the Spiritual Fathers distribute their life-giving powers while supporting the world from its four corners. In this way, trees' roots gather the earth's strength (lower cosmic half), while branches interact with air and sky (upper cosmic half), exchanging forces. The shape and ecological function of trees is a feature of their cosmological structure. Analogy as concept cannot properly capture this role, and neglects *growth* and *development*. Reichel-Dolmatoff's (1987) «chains» of associations, analogies, and patterns are what he terms the Kogi «Fabric of Life» (1978).

## From Homologism to Organism

### *Integration*

Considering this structure that sustains life, in Kogi terms not only is «everything in everything» by virtue of their analogical relations and similarities (Descola, 2013, p. 306), but all things share a physicality as living parts of this great fabric. At the same time, the fabric is woven by the Mother's «thought», *Aluna*, meaning there is also a common «interiority» to everything. «We are the flesh of Mother Earth», Alejo declares, yet likewise the Four Peoples say that they and the Sierra «share one thought». Initially in line with «analogism», beings and things are different entities or types, both spiritually and materially, but in contrast to it they *simultaneously* also share both aspects, which may partly divert from Andean societies. Ultimately, all creation shares essence and substance, even if assembled into closer degrees of inter-group similarity that mirror relations within all groups, between groups and across their corresponding categories: «we are family with all things».

Since mind-bodies are unique expressions of the same overall spiritual-physical structure, the convertibility of essences applies to both interiority and physicality. As Kogi payments and confessions show, exchange and nourishment involve material and spiritual substances and flows. In Kogi terms, this is because all elements are not only analogically speaking «constitutive units» in a universal «collective that is coextensive with the whole world» where «cosmos and society are equivalents» (Descola, 2003, p. 268), but also form part of a unifying organization with a common creational *origin*. The Great Mother is the source and model of all unity and variety, substance and form, spirit and matter, integrating and organizing all levels and facets of the universe. This includes what for analogism Sahllins' (2014, p. 282) calls «cosmocratic god-persons», in this case Her sons and daughters, of which all things and phenomena are different instantiations. Yet more than ruling different domains (Sahllins, 2014, p. 286), these *Kalguasha*, and their children, created increasingly specific categories or *threads* of the fabric of life, such as the groups of sacred sites, natural elements and lineages.

To conceptualize the complex ontological dimensions of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Halbmayer (2020, p. 16, 17) usefully proposes that such an «all-integrative» ontology or all-embracing «ontological continuity», where everything shares an identity by virtue of having a common origin, should be termed «homological». In the Kogi case, this homologism is not just about a continuity of physicality and interiority «on a cosmic scale» derived from a common phylogenetic origin (Matthews, 2017, p. 277). Beyond individual beings, the *territory* itself embodies the ontological correspondences that tie cosmological structures to ecological relations that need balancing, and sacred sites focus this order of nourishing exchanges, spiritually and physically. Since this living web of relations regulates growth and development, associations and patterns also constitute knowledge of *how* to relate and pay. This is specified by the principles and truths of the monistic Law of the Mother or Origin that guides thought and action (Mama Pedro Juan, 2009) as a conscious *epistemology*.

### ***A nourishing and nourished organism***

To bring out this living and nourishing quality, the notion of homologism (Halbmayer, 2020) needs to be complemented with that of *organism*. The Kogi relate to the Sierra Nevada as the Mother's body, whose growth and formation was the creation of the world. The peaks are the brain, lakes are eyes, rivers are veins, trees are hair, oil is blood, rain is sweat, rocks are bones, and soil is flesh. Yet because this entity is also conscious, thinks and has *aluna*, it is better understood as an organism that integrates mind and body as the dynamic flow of life.

In light of the comparable notion of Earth as «Pachamama» (Castro & Aldunate, 2003; Harris, 2000), the Bolivian Qollahuaya (Bastien, 1985) understand and relate to their mountain as «one geographical and anatomical unit» with inner organs and vertical levels that go from head to feet. This «organic wholeness» provides a «model» for human bodies that unites land, ecological zones, descent groups, shrines, and exchange networks (Bastien, 1985, p. 596). More than that, the Kogi consider all mountains of the Sierra Nevada to be an organism which generates all bodies and things, not only humans, and continually emphasize the universal thought or *Aluna* of the Mother, a person who in the end is the layered cosmos itself.

The ontology of organicity should hence not be reduced to an overarching analogy, or any other mode of identification, and adds a functional, ecological dimension to «homologism». As her «children», the dances, payments, confessions, songs, and *Kualama* ceremonies of the Kogi are about nourishing the «health» of this motherly organism in return for Her life, just as each *Kalguasha*, animal, plant and object has a place and a function in sustaining this *organisation*. Next to exchange and nourishment, this living holism comprises many overlapping modes of relation or «bodily cycles», notably the variations in the flow of life (communication, circulation, creation etc., *Figure 2*).

Given this «organic composition» (Parra Witte, 2018) of essences and substances, spirit and matter, interiority and physicality, cosmology and ecology, Kogi and Sierra, Mama Luntana says that «we are like the mountains», nourished and guided by our *aluna* «to live well». Kogi cosmological orders and spiritual-natural associations *are* ecological relations and exchanges experienced daily, like the Ojibwa, as a «unified phenomenal field of thought, values, and action» (Hallowell, 2002 [1960], p. 19). Consequently, analogism as a «mode of identification» and nourishment as a «mode of relation» not only mutually shape each other Descola (2013) but are inseparable.

### ***Debt and imbalance***

Such a living organicity has serious implications. Reichel-Dolmatoff (1976) captures well the responsibility, and even obligation, the Kogi feel in maintaining equilibrium in society, nature and between the two realms as an unavoidable necessity. Failing to pay and reciprocate in this organism causes what the Kogi understand as «debt» (*shalá*), which may manifest as storms or drought, less animals, family misfortunes, agricultural failures, and even illness and death.

Such events are not «severe supernatural punishments» (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1950, p.182), inflicted damage for not «propitiating» Andean deities (Leoni, 2005, p. 152), or «revenge» and «retaliation» for ignoring the will of I'ku ancestral

parents (Arenas Gómez, 2020). Rather, the Kogi explain this as ways in which the *Kalguasha*, who are «hungry», are forced to «reclaim» what they are not paid or «fed» in return for what they provide. People are hereby «charged» for their inobservances of the «Law of Origin». Negative phenomena are the consequence of social disorder, a sign that the organism is sick and fails to nourish well, and simultaneously constitute warnings to pay and resettle the debt if order is to be restored and greater damage avoided. In this Law, balance *must* exist to hold the fabric of life together.

### **Concluding remarks: ontology as practical ecology**

By drawing out the centrality of exchange within the Sierra Nevada's web of relations as a living territory, this paper has shown how nourishing is reciprocating, reciprocating is maintaining balance, and maintaining balance is sustaining cosmological structure. The Kogi ontology of nourishment is a necessary and knowledgeable exchange of forces that goes well beyond romantic notions of harmonious reciprocity, or a concern with sameness and difference (Descola, 2013). Kogi relationality even discloses an arguably somewhat «conservationist» type of environmental management that seeks to maintain predetermined natural orders. As Reichel-Dolmatoff & Dussan (1977) suggest, the balancing of forces is the principal problem of the human condition. For Kogi leaders, this is the Mother's «mandate» to care for the «Ancestral Territory» *as it was created*.

Such an ecological, holistic approach provides a dynamic dimension to the creational orders, perceptual categories and modes of relation in the Isthmo-Colombian area, into which the Sierra Nevada's cultural traits (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1953) and ontological features (Halbmayer, 2020) do not fit easily. The paper hereby contributes to Halbmayer's (2020) important quest for a comparative and fuller understanding of the region's complex, heterogenous socio-cosmological patterns, and follows Hoopes & Fonseca's (2003) intention to define it beyond linguistic, archaeological, genetic and ethno-historical information. Considering the parallels between Kogi, Tairona, Muisca and Andean systems moreover, the Kogi are a well-conserved, functioning example of how such cosmic orders play out as a way of being based on exchange and a regulation of ecological balance that must be heeded, lest natural forces get out of control and generate different kinds of «debt».

Considering this ecological pragmatism, ontology also becomes relevant to current environmental issues, allowing to better appreciate how the Kogi understand the Sierra Nevada's current deterioration through economic, demographic and industrial developments, and respond to it through legal battles and eco-political negotiations (Ulloa, 2004). These activities turn sustaining exchanges and complementarities into conflicting, imbalanced relations that have disastrous consequences which the Mamas' payments seek to repair or at least ameliorate.

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