

Crafting Textile Knowledges

A decolonial study of the Iku/Arhuaco material culture in the
archives of the National Museum of World Cultures in
Gothenburg (Världskulturmuseet)



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ABSTRACT

The return of objects that belong to ethnographic collections to their places of origin is one of the topics of discussion that, despite not being new, has been gaining more and more relevance today. Taking the Iku indigenous craft collection in the archives of the National Museum of World Cultures in Gothenburg as a case study, I pursue to develop an object-based methodology that increases and deepens the understanding of the notion of ethical stewardship, while joining current debates on indigenous heritage and decoloniality. This work aims to reveal material and immaterial aspects embedded in textile objects. The methodology included field visits to the museum archive, material culture analysis, and semi-structured interviews. The work evokes a decolonial discussion regarding the need to engage with epistemologies from the “South” and with methodologies not fully recognized by the dominant western-modern educational frameworks in order to achieve a more inclusive and assertive production of knowledge.

Keywords: material culture; indigenous heritage; object-based research; ethical stewardship; decoloniality

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In this work I cannot help but feel more than grateful to my country, Colombia, for having granted me such a rich and diverse cultural heritage. I want to especially thank my grandmothers and aunts, who from a very young age taught me and connected me with the beautiful and nourishing work made with the hands - the crafts. This work is part of a long path of personal encounters with my roots. Today more than ever, with love and nostalgia I remember moments from my childhood at my maternal grandmother's house in Huila, southern Colombia. With great admiration, I reminisce her traditional knowledge in the use of plants, herbs and roots from her patio used to cure all the ailments of her children and grandchildren and her handicraft scattered on the orange mosaic floors. Today, I know that the multicultural legacy runs not only in my veins but also in the legacy of the indigenous material culture that is alive now more than ever.

To my dearest family, mom, dad in heaven, aunts, brothers and husband for always accompanying me and supporting me on my way regardless of my geographical location on earth.

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Research aims and questions	3
Theoretical framework	5
Indigenous collections in action	5
Methodology	11
Previous research	16
Chapter 1. Re-threading the Iku collection history in the Världskulturmuseet	20
From La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta to the archives of the NMWC	20
Coloniality and decoloniality in the National Museum of World Cultures	25
Ester Bolinder. The feminine touch of the time	29
Chapter 2. Iku material culture in action – An object-based study	32
Human and non-human interactions	33
Engaging with the Iku material culture	36
Learning, Unlearning and Re-learning	49
Chapter 3. Discussing the Iku collection in southern latitudes	51
Value	52
Memory	54
Representation and ethical stewardship	56
Material culture, agency and epistemodiversity	60
Object-agency methodology	64
Discussion	66
Conclusion	69
Bibliography	74
Appendixes	79

INTRODUCTION

According to Ochoa-Jiménez¹ the collections of archaeological and ethnographic objects seem to be of great interest for both the so-called countries of origin and for countries of destination, that have massively received objects of this type over several centuries. The return of these objects, or some of them, to their original places is one of the algid topics of discussion that has been gaining more relevance today. Judicial decisions have recently been adopted, for example, in Colombia, which establish the obligation of the Government to make all possible efforts to recover both iconic ethnographic and archaeological collections for the country.

According to Reyes-Gavilán, both in Europe and in North America, objects from Colombian territory are kept: pieces of goldsmithing, ceramics, attire, ritual objects, and everyday objects². All of them were collected throughout different acquisition mechanisms and have for several centuries nurtured ethnographic and archaeological collections in Europe. This thesis explores the ethnographic collection of Iku objects at the archive of the National Museum of World Cultures (henceforth, the NMWC) in Gothenburg, Sweden (Världskulturmuseet in Swedish). The indigenous³ (first nation) Iku⁴ or Arhuaco people, is one of the four indigenous communities that until today inhabit the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta region in northern Colombia. The term Arhuaco, as the Iku people have generally been called, was coined by the Spanish to name the region located on the southern slope of the massif, differentiating it from other provinces such as Tairona and Chimila. The term was generalized to these indigenous people of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta who survived the conquest until the 19th century and nowadays it is used without any pejorative sense.

Currently, the NMWC archive stores approximately 600 objects, among them: photographs, tools, fibres, plant samples, bags, dresses, hats, jewellery and other textiles and objects that once belonged to the Iku people and were later on collected by the Swedish ethnographer Gustaf Bolinder in the early XX century. Bolinder was a prolific writer, among his work at least a half dozen books were dedicated exclusively to the Iku indigenous people.

¹María J. Ochoa, *Colecciones y repatriación de objetos arqueológicos y etnográficos: Una mirada Multidisciplinar*, ed. María J. Ochoa (Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia, 2019), 40-45.

² Aura Reyes Gavilán, "Objetos etnográficos, viajeros y prácticas de coleccionismo", in *Colecciones y repatriación de objetos arqueológicos y etnográficos: Una mirada Multidisciplinar*, ed. María J. Ochoa (Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia, 2019), 118

³ Indigenous" is an umbrella term for First Nations, Inuit and other groups, either collectively or separately. Is also the term used in the 'United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' (UNDRIP).

⁴ Other names: Arhuacos, Ika, Iku, Ijku – Ijka.

As the extraction and transfer of archaeological and ethnographic objects outside their places of origin occur in different ways, their return or restitution also takes place in very varied ways. Although there is regulation supported by the evolution of international standards in recent decades, obstacles may arise that prevent the objects from returning to their place of origin through legal means. In several cases, the repatriation can take place in a negotiated manner, as a result of previously acting through legal channels, as was the case of the statue No. 155 of San Agustín repatriated from Denmark to Colombia in 2011, or with the objects of Machu Picchu repatriated in 2011-2012 to Peru from the University of Yale in the United States⁵.

For some authors, the topic of repatriation and the importance of heritage objects has been deeply debated in the destination countries, however, it has received relatively little attention so far from the Latin American academy and from official institutions⁶. In this thesis, I seek to be part of this call, since I pursue to develop a method that increases and deepens the uses of material culture for engaging with debates in relation to stewardship, decoloniality and representation. This study proposes a methodology based on the analysis of ethnographic objects, in this case Iku artifacts, for building communication bridges between the academy, the museum and the Iku people. In the search for material and immaterial narratives in the Iku/Arhuaco craft collection, I will resort to the object-based and material culture analysis proposed by Prown in his work *"Mind in matter"*⁷. The chosen methodology will be complemented with some important notions given by Alexandra Palmer⁸ and Giorgio Riello⁹ in regards to other relevant methodologies when studying material culture, such as oral accounts and documental and visual analysis. The object-based methodology is complemented with semi-structured interviews that helped to reflect on values and contemporary uses of the collection, agency, and indigenous representation. The methods included field visits to the museum archive, photographic and video record keeping, material experiences, and semi-structured interviews. The academic Lou Taylor¹⁰ indicates that in order to establish an

⁵ María Ochoa J., "Algunas cuestiones iniciales", in *Colecciones y repatriación de objetos arqueológicos y etnográficos: Una mirada Multidisciplinar*, ed. María J. Ochoa (Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia, 2019), xvi

⁶ Ibid., xvii.

⁷ Jules David Prown, "Mind the matter. An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method". The University of Chicago Press. Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring, 1982): 1-19.

⁸ Alexandra Palmer, "New Directions: Fashion History Studies and Research in North America and England." *Fashion Theory* 1, no. 3 (April 21, 1997): 297-312.

⁹ Giorgio Riello, "Things that shape history" in *History and Material Culture*, (Oxon & New York: Routledge: Karen Harvey, 2009), 24-46.

¹⁰ Lou Taylor, "Artefact-based approaches: collection, identification, conservation" in *The Study of Dress History*. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press), 2002, 4-23.

accurate study of the history of dress or clothing, artifact-based approaches are useful when examining collections as well as identification and preservation proceedings.

This thesis is also based on questions that seem to emerge from the current debate in regards to ethical management and care of objects and clothing with indigenous content. The article by Veronica Reyes and Wendel Cox¹¹, gives some important suggestions on how to consider the notion of stewardship when managing collections with indigenous content. The ethical stewardship concept refers to working in partnership with indigenous peoples to ensure a better practice, management, and access to indigenous archival material. They emphasize that mutual obligation, shared responsibility, and two-way communication is very needed when it comes to ethical stewardship. Since this work seeks to connect theoretical knowledge produced in English with both theories and interview material in Spanish, I consider myself to have the abilities that are appropriate to undertake this type of study. Since I am Colombian, I also speak the Spanish language which means that I can communicate easily with key actors in Colombia. The Spanish language also enables the access to Latin American literature, documents and other information that I consider is necessary to achieve a good analysis of this matter. On the other hand, I have been able to study the Iku material culture in previous theoretical works. As an artisan myself, I have a familiarity with the Iku material culture, its technical processes, materiality and history.

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

My study takes a special interest in the Iku material culture collection in the NMWC and is justified by the fact that I aim to join global debates in relation to ethical stewardship in handling and care of collections with indigenous content. I aim to generate a discussion regarding the use of alternative methodologies that helps to study material culture from a historical and contemporary perspective. I would also like to contribute with academic research on the problems mentioned by Ochoa-Jiménez related to the international discussion regarding the restitution of cultural objects to their places of origin. In this particular case from a perspective not only of the country of destination in Europe (Sweden), but also from the country of origin (Colombia).

This interest is manifested in the following research questions: 1; In what ways can the objects themselves serve as bridges and methodological tools to discuss material, immaterial,

¹¹ Verónica Reyes-Escudero & J. Wendel Cox “Understanding and Ethical Stewardship of Indigenous Collections: A Case Study”, *Collection Management*, Vol. 42:3-4 (October 2017): 130-138.

historical and contemporary narratives of the Iku collection in the NMWC? 2; How can people of today in Colombia re-connect with the Iku material culture from the NMWC in Gothenburg, Sweden? The general question that could encompass these questions would be: Could applying object-based studies of the Iku indigenous collection deepen the understanding of those objects considering material, immaterial, historical, and contemporary perspectives in the wider context of ethical stewardship, indigenous heritage and decolonization of knowledge and Western museums of ethnography? The specific objectives are expected to: I) offer a methodology where the objects themselves serve as bridges and methodological tools to discuss diverse narratives of the Iku collection in the NMWC II) identify how people of today in Colombia can re-connect with the Iku material culture from the NMWC archive in Gothenburg, Sweden.

The academic bases for my analysis are found in the principles of the Frankfurt school, whose main foundation is the critical reflection. The approach proposed by J. Habermas¹² in his theory of science, distinguishes three categories of research processes, one of which corresponds to critically oriented sciences or systematic action sciences, which are characterized in turn by an interest in emancipation. Since the in-depth study of the material object is important for this research, the use of a critical and decolonial lens will facilitate the production of knowledge not only in regards to aesthetic aspects, but also in regards to other implications of the collection in political, cultural and colonial terms. Following the call of Niklas and Pollen,¹³ this work explores what these authors call “overlooked categories” in fashion studies, as it seeks to study the dress of an ethnic group that has been little studied in terms of the evolution and historical facts. As a Colombian designer and craft practitioner myself, trained in Political Science, I am interested in the study and revitalization of traditional textile craft¹⁴ knowledges, indigenous material culture and decolonization of knowledge.

¹² J. Habermas is an important representative of the Frankfurt School. Habermas in his theory of science distinguishes three categories of research processes, namely, empirical-analytical sciences, historical-hermeneutical sciences, and systematic critically oriented sciences of action. To the latter he confers three cognitive interests: technical interest, practical interest, and emancipatory interest. Habermas finds possibilities for political-social transformation by enriching the traditional analyzes of Critical Theory, proposing a greater interest in action and emancipation. Mardones & Ursúa, “Filosofía de las ciencias humanas y sociales”, in *Materiales para una fundamentación científica*, (Barcelona: Fontamara, 1982), 2023.

¹³ According to these authors, social history should draw attention to those who have been excluded from historical posterity. Taylor, according to Nicklas and Pollen, also encourages the study of everyday, working-class, mass-produced, and ready-to-wear clothing. They refer to all of them as “overlooked categories” I would add the clothing of ethnic minorities that have not been explored in a contemporary everyday use to Taylor’s list. Nicklas & Pollen “Introduction: Dress History Now: Terms, Themes and Tools” in *Dress History. New Directions in Theory and Practice*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 2-12.

¹⁴ Traditional crafts are the tangible manifestation of intangible cultural heritage. There are numerous expressions of traditional crafts: tools; clothing and jewelry; costumes and accessories for festivals; decorative art and ritual objects; musical instruments and household utensils, etc. Globalization poses significant challenges to the survival

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INDIGENOUS COLLECTIONS IN ACTION

Ethical Stewardship of Indigenous Collections: Verónica Reyes and J. Wendel Cox

Veronica Reyes and Wendel Cox give some important suggestions on how the notion of stewardship operates when managing indigenous collections. The authors reference the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives, and Information Sources and the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials (PNAAM) in the United States as an invaluable guide for professionals concerned about the ethical management of collections with indigenous content. These protocols are the result of the recent efforts of indigenous and non-indigenous archivists, librarians, and curators in search for more ethical management of indigenous materials.

The authors' work provides some important notions to take into consideration in the study of the Iku collection at the NMWC, one of them being the importance of working in partnership with indigenous peoples to ensure a better practice, management, and access to archival material. Sensitive materials with sacred or secret knowledge, is for example, a relevant topic to consider when it comes to ethical stewardship. A fundamental issue identified in indigenous material culture management, is for example, the offensive, sometimes racist, sexist, derogatory and abusive language used in archives and museums to describe the material.

Objects with agency that continue shaping history. Bruno Latour and Giorgio Riello

In this thesis, Giorgio Riello's¹⁵ work on object analysis serves as both a method and a theory. Riello reflects on the relationship between the methodologies and conceptual categories used by historians and their commitment to the study of *material culture*.¹⁶ Riello suggests that it is possible to extract the history directly from things, and although my work is not based on the field of history, the historical events that happened to these objects are an important part of the analysis. Since the Swedish ethnographer and writer Gustaf Bolinder is a key character in the

of traditional forms of crafts since many artisans struggle to adapt to highly competitive market logics and to mass production. UNESCO official Web page. Accessed April, 4, 2023. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/traditional-craftsmanship-00057>

¹⁵ Giorgio Riello, "Things that shape history", 24-46.

¹⁶ What has been called the material culture turn arose in the late 1970s as a humanist reaction against scientific conceit. Later academic positions arduously defended that "material culture carried meanings constituted within wider fields of signification and figured in practice as vehicles of symbolic expression". Tim Ingold, "Toward an Ecology of Materials." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (2012): 428. Accessed February 20 2023, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23270720>.

Iku collection's history, I seek to delve into his history and the Sweden-Colombia relationship that he maintained. The role of history in my study plays a fundamental role as Benjamin points out: "nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history."¹⁷ Accordingly Riello states;

"History and objects provide a qualitative reward for historians: the ability to discover more creative and freer ways of conveying ideas about the past that are not necessarily mediated by written language."¹⁸

Giorgio Riello suggests that when it comes to relating to material culture, it is possible to treat objects much in the same way that manuscripts, diaries, or other inventories are treated - as primary sources of information and data. According to Riello, there are many different approaches to the history of things. There may be a personal interest in finding meaning and individual objects or, less personal, the quantitative analysis of ownership patterns. In this regard, he comments that the contribution of historians is the ability to expand and deepen the analysis of objects, producing new fields of study with a high degree of interdisciplinarity. Riello states that the relationship between artifacts and the concepts that historians mobilize to understand their past, and their present, can be acknowledged as "narratives". This is very relevant since I am interested in revealing hidden narratives in the Iku objects of the collection in Gothenburg in a historical and contemporary perspective.

In the words of Riello;

"History has been slow to recognize the material world's capacity to challenge the overall concept of the analysis of the past by evoking and shaping new processes of gathering, systematizing and presenting ideas."¹⁹

In this thesis, I aim to understand the Iku objects not only according to their history but also to updated narratives such as ethical stewardship, representation and decoloniality. In Riello's work, it could be inferred that it is only from questions about the nature of the object that certain narratives can be created. Descriptions that the mere object offers does not completely support

¹⁷ Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History." In *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, Volume 4 1938- 1940, Edmund Jephcott and others (trans.), ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006): 2.

¹⁸ Giorgio Riello, "Things that shape history", 26.

¹⁹ Ibid.

a narrative without being complemented by relating the objects either with a certain sociocultural practice, era, etc. In this sense, my study of the Iku objects intends to include a mixture of methodological approaches from a multidisciplinary perspective. I include historical perspectives in the analysis but also notions coming from decolonial studies, craft studies, dress studies and from the legal field. For Riello, historical questions can be raised through engagement with the object. He calls this process “source integration.” In this step, the investigators are requested to extend their observations to the non-documentary evidence as well. Following Riello, sources such as bibliographic review and oral accounts are consulted in this study of the Iku collection.

Additionally, Latour's perspective on objects is also considered in this thesis. Thus, objects are understood as *non-humans*²⁰ with agency in the same sense that he does in his Actor Network Theory.²¹ Latour proposes that actors, including objects, artifacts, and devices, are ideal experts from whom we can learn. According to Entwistle,²² the important point to note about an 'actor' in Latour's Actor Network Theory is that he not only designates a human subject with consciousness, but can encompass anything with the ability to act or produce an action. This theory suggests that we are all 'connected' or 'networked' and the actors are composed of both human and non-human subjects. The actions produced by the non-human objects affect us, provoking different kinds of reactions.²³

Latour's theory challenged the conventional view of science that tends to view humans as agency actors who deploy observational devices and instruments in order to record objects. On the contrary, ANT argues that scientists derive their descriptions as a result of forms of work and collaboration with devices and objects.²⁴ ANT changed the understanding of objects and the agency they exert. This assumes that since we do not observe a world of independent objects from a neutral and objective distance, we are part of an assembled system (with humans and non-humans). In actor-network theory, scientific and technological instruments of

²⁰ Tim Ingold offers as definition of *Nonhumans* as often used as an alternative for "made objects" or "artifacts". He highlights that nonhumans should also include living organisms of all kind. Tim Ingold, "Toward an Ecology of Materials." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (2012): 439. Accessed February 20 2023, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23270720>.

²¹ Joanne Entwistle, "Bruno Latour, Actor-Network-Theory and Fashion," in *Thinking through fashion: a guide to key theorists*, ed. Rocamora Agnès & Smelik, Anneke (London: Routledge 2019), 308-322.

²² For example, a microscope or a computer program such as a spreadsheet can be an actor because they do things and allow us to do things that we otherwise would not have been able to do. *Ibid.*, 308-311

²³ According to Tim Ingold, other fields such as the ecological anthropology, study how human beings relate to their biotic and abiotic environments. Ingold, "Toward and Ecology of materials," 428.

²⁴ Entwistle, "Bruno Latour, Actor-Network-Theory and Fashion", 308-322.

measurement and calibration, for example, are considered to perform a certain kind of agency, therefore they shape the world we seek to describe.²⁵

Decoloniality and Epistemodiversity

Maria Iñigo Clavo²⁶ in her text “Modernity Vs Epistemodiversity” explains in what ways modernity can be questioned by Latin American postcolonial theory. According to her, postcolonial theory addresses that the selective accounts to explain the history of all humanity have had a primarily Eurocentric vision. Since the 1990s, postcolonial theorists located the birth of Western modernity in 1492 with the “discovery of America”,²⁷ an event that marked the beginning of the history of international capitalism, globalization, and the intellectual production of the modern project.²⁸ The massive extermination caused by the colonization of America and the subsequent establishment of the modernity plan, implied not only a demographic catastrophe, but also the destruction of societies and cultures. According to Quijano²⁹, cultural repression and mass genocide turned the original high cultures of the Americas into peasant subcultures, illiterate and condemned to orality. This deprived them of their own patterns of formalized, objectified, intellectual, plastic or visual expression. The survivors of the conquest had no other forms of formalized and recognized intellectual, plastic or visual expression, than those accepted by the cultural patterns of the European rulers. Latin America is, according to Quijano, “without a doubt the most extreme case of cultural and intellectual colonization by Europe”.³⁰ Iñigo-Clavo (2016) explains that since the installation

²⁵ Ibid., 308-311.

²⁶ María Iñigo Clavo holds a PhD in Fine Arts and is an assistant professor at Open University of Catalonia. Her research work focuses on understanding power colonial relationships, the construction of otherness, disciplinary desencounters, untranslatability, emotions and representation of (national) history in Museum and Gallery Studies in Europe and Latin America with special attention in Brazil.

²⁷ According to Anibal Quijano, in Latin America, cultural repression and the colonization of thought were accompanied by a massive extermination of the indigenous people. The extermination occurred mainly due to its use as expendable labor, in addition to the violence of the conquest itself and the diseases brought by the Europeans. According to this author about 65 million inhabitants were exterminated in a period of less than 50 years between the Aztec-Maya-Caribbean and Tawantinsuyana (or Inca) areas. Anibal Quijano “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality”, *Cultural Studies*, Vol.21: 2, (April 2007): 168-178, accessed April 27, 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601164353>

²⁸ Postcolonial theorists from Europe and other parts of the world have shown how the installation of the ideals of emancipation, equality, freedom, and European scientific development have only been possible thanks to a systematic colonial practice of exploitation, inequality, slavery, torture and suffering of the global south. María Iñigo Clavo, “Modernity vs. Epistemodiversity” *E-flux Journal* No.73 (May 2016): 7.

²⁹ Anibal Quijano “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality”, *Cultural Studies*, Vol.21: 2, (April 2007): 168-178, accessed April 27, 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601164353>

³⁰ In Asia and the Middle East, the high cultures could never be destroyed with such intensity and depth, although they did remain in a subordinate position. Nor did the Europeans in Africa achieve the complete destruction of the patterns of expression and visual formalization. What the Europeans did was deprive Africans of legitimacy and recognition in the global cultural order dominated by European rulers. Anibal Quijano, 170.

of what the European thought called modernity, there was a dividing effect between what Europe designated as civilized, modern and the uncivilized and primitive-savage. In line with her, Latin America, has remained "out of history" for not having developed political institutions and philosophical thought sufficient to be part of what is called "Universal History."³¹

Jürgen Habermas, Bruno Latour, and de Sousa Santos have criticized one of the main characteristics of colonial modernity: the separation between the natural and human sciences. From an anthropological perspective, Latour proclaims that "we have never been modern",³² since, although the ultimate condition of modernity was the constant mixing of genres, the intellectual basis of modernity was nonetheless constituted in the separation of humans and non-humans. In the same line, Santos says that the dominant rationality that governs modern science is the establishing of two forms of knowledge called humanities or humanistic studies and the sciences of scientific rationality based on natural sciences.³³ Santos insists that this dichotomous distinction between natural and social sciences ceased to make sense, since recent advances in physics and biology question that assumed distinction between the organic and the inorganic, between living beings and inert matter, and even between humans and non-humans. According to Santos, scientific rationality or scientific knowledge can be seen as a totalitarian model to the extent that it denies the rational nature of any form of knowledge that is not based on its epistemological principles and methodological rules³⁴.

As a counterreaction to the dominant intellectual paradigm, decolonial authors³⁵ propose to extend the current cognitive framework and include other forms of knowledge, cultures and practices that have traditionally been excluded from what is known as "the

³¹ According to Iñigo, it is undeniable that Western modernity has shaped our understanding of the world and has generated our current knowledge frameworks, leaving other systems of knowledge aside. Iñigo Clavo, 02.

³² In his work *We've Never Been Modern* (1991), Latour argues that notion of modern is artificial. Modernity supports the claims of science as a superior form of knowledge and of human Culture as superior to passive Nature (or unanimated objects). Latour says that the division between culture and nature does not exist since the struggles we have, such as global warming and human illnesses, cannot be seen as only natural events, but as hybrids that are both natural and social.

³³ The theoretical nature of scientific knowledge starts from the epistemological assumptions and the causal methodological rules that aspire to the formulation of laws, with a view to foreseeing the future behavior of phenomena. Santos Boaventura de Sousa, *Una Epistemología del Sur* (Buenos Aires: Siglo veintiuno, 2009), 25.

³⁴ Santos criticizes the intellectual work produced in the global North and, more specifically, in Western Eurocentric critical theory. He says that a sense of exhaustion haunts the critical tradition. This is reflected in the "irrelevance, inadequacy, impotence, stagnation, paralysis of the European academy". He states that we live in a very disturbing world in which there is much to criticize and in which there is an increasing number of people living in critical conditions. He states that the European academy shows difficulty in building convincing theories, that are capable of being widely shared, critical and powerful, and that give rise to transformative, deep and effective practices at a global level. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Creating a Distance in Relation to Western-centric Political Imagination and Critical Theory" in *Epistemologies of the South. Justice Against Epistemicide* (New York: Routledge, 2016): 21-26.

³⁵ Walter Mignolo, "Epistemic disobedience, independent thought and decolonial freedom" *Theory, culture & Society* Vol. 26, no.7-8, (February 2010): 159-181.

universal knowledge and history”. Decoloniality, in spanish: decolonialidad, is an intellectual tradition that seeks to separate or “delink” itself from Eurocentric hierarchies of knowledge to embrace other forms of existence and understanding of the world. It criticizes the alleged universality of Western knowledge and the superiority of European culture and art.³⁶ Decoloniality arose as part of a South American movement that examines the role of European colonization of the Americas in establishing Eurocentric modernity/coloniality. The Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano developed and adapted to contemporary decolonial thought the concept of “coloniality of knowledge”, arguing that the legacy of colonialism survives in the production of knowledge under the exclusive western validation standards.³⁷

Santos proposes an epistemology of the South³⁸ that looks for the validity, visibility, and credibility of other cognitive practices of classes, peoples, and social groups that have been historically victimized, exploited, and oppressed by global colonialism and capitalism. The cultural, political, medical, technological, etc. cognitive frameworks of these groups have been historically excluded in the universal production of knowledge for not being acceptable in the eyes of the dominant scientific method. According to Santos, there will be no social justice without global cognitive justice. He proposes that an epistemology developed from the South may offer analytical tools that make it possible to recover suppressed or marginalized knowledge. This would allow bringing forth the conditions for the construction of new knowledge that has the capacity to confront colonialism, global capitalism and ecological and social crisis.

For the Colombian scholar Arturo Escobar, development has been one of the most portentous social experiments of the last seventy years, a “great design” that have gone wrong. Escobar wonders if the design discipline and practice can be reoriented from its dependence on the market towards creative experimentation with forms, concepts, territories and materials, especially when it is appropriated by subaltern communities³⁹ that struggle to redefine their life projects while considering mutually harmony with the Earth. Escobar argues that there is a paucity of critical analysis of the relationship between design practice and capitalism, gender, race, development, and modernity. He also insists in the limited capacity of Western social

³⁶ Zofia Cielatkowska, “Decolonising Art Criticism”, *Kunstkríttik*, (January 2020): 1-4

³⁷ Aníbal Quijano, “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality”, *Cultural Studies*, Vol.21, 2-3 (April 2007): 172

³⁸ The South is used in Santos as a metaphor for human suffering systematically caused by global colonialism and capitalism. It is a South that, according to Santos, also exists in the global North, the so-called Third World inside the hegemonic countries. Santos Boaventura de Sousa, *Una Epistemología del Sur* (Buenos Aires: Siglo veintiuno, 2009),12.

³⁹ In postcolonial theory, the term subaltern describes the lower social classes and the Other social groups displaced to the margins of a society; in an imperial colony, a subaltern is an indigenous man or woman without human agency, as defined by his and her social status.

theories to pose the questions and answers to face the unprecedented collapse of not only modern forms of human organization but also of most other forms of human and non-human life on the planet today.⁴⁰

According to Iñigo-Clavo, a first step to promote Epistemodiversity (epistemological diversity) refers to finding methods that help us break the dichotomy of the humanities and natural sciences. This, in turn, will allow us to rethink the way we organize boundaries between different disciplines. In order to advance in this objective, it is essential to include ways of knowing that were ignored by the project of modernity.⁴¹ In Amerindian cosmologies, for example, the separation of nature and society does not exist. Indigenous epistemologies provide us with a platform to question the disciplinary boundaries imposed by the dominant scientific method. In his studies of Amerindian perspectivism, Viveiros de Castro explores the social aspect of relationships between human and non-human beings. According to his theoretical perspective, many Amerindian⁴² cosmologies endow objects with souls because what constitutes the object itself is the relationships that one object has in relation to other objects. If we accept the animistic notion that everything is both person and part of nature, we can end the divide between the natural and social sciences. De Sousa Santos claims that subject/object and human/nature distinctions perpetuate colonialism, as these divisions separate those who have rights from those who do not. This includes indigenous peoples living in a “natural state,” but also rivers, mountains and forms of memory that, until very recently couldn’t be found in human-centered rights discourses.⁴³

METHODOLOGY

This thesis includes qualitative research and a mixed methods research perspective. Since this work will have an object-based study approach, the starting point are the objects. I aim to analyse the Iku craft collection in the archive of the NMWC from a material and immaterial angle. This thesis is divided into three chapters and a conclusion section. Each chapter responds to a different method.

⁴⁰ Arturo Escobar. “Design for the real world” in *Designs for the pluriverse. Radical independence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), 25-49.

⁴¹ The Federal University of South Bahia has incorporated local and traditional indigenous knowledge into educational practices. Iñigo-Clavo, “Modernity vs. Epistemodiversity”, 07.

⁴² From the point of view of Amazonian perspectivism, and contrary to our sciences, to know is not to objectify, but quite the opposite: it consists in embodying, that is, in subjectivizing, because it implies assuming the point of view of what it is necessary to know. Consequently, the object of study becomes an enunciating subject, which implies giving it the status of interlocutor and therefore giving it agency. Ibid., 07.

⁴³ Ibid., 06-07.

Re-threading the Iku collection history in the archive

In the first chapter, I perform a bibliographic review to re-thread the history and background of the Iku collection in the NMWC archive. The historical review helps to understand historical facts of the Iku collection as well as offers an updated contextualization under a decolonial lens. This section tries to outline the journey of the Iku objects from their place of origin in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta to the archive of the Museum of World Cultures in Gothenburg. The materials for this chapter come from diverse sources; literature review, visual analysis, and historical accounts of Bolinder. Even though there is no previous knowledge written on the transference of the Iku collection to the museum in Sweden, there is previous works in Spanish regarding Bolinder's trips to Colombia and it is from there that I will try to braid together the story.

Empirical sources such as Bolinder's bibliographic collection on the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and the material culture of the Iku-Arhuaco people were consulted throughout this thesis. Considering that some of these sources were produced more than a hundred years ago by a white man biased by the racist and colonial logic of his time, a critical approach has been warranted and applied. Special attention is devoted to his PhD work: "Ijca-Indianernas Kultur" (1918), "Från en tvåårig forskningsresa till Sierra Tairona och Sierra Motilon, Sydamerika" (1916), "Indianernas Hemliga Värld" (1953) and "Snöfjällets Indianer" (1926). Other sources such as photographs, notes, technical sheets, and brochures from the Bolinder collection in the archive were also consulted.

Objects in action – An object-based study of the Iku material culture

The second chapter of this thesis is aimed to perform an object-based study of the Iku material culture in the NMWC archive. The objects of the collection are also analysed in the light of ethical stewardship and decolonial principles. This section aims to answer the second research question: in what ways can the artifacts themselves serve as a bridge and as a methodological tool to build and rebuild diverse narratives of Iku collections of objects in the NMWC? Accordingly, I analyse the collection applying the methodological process of Prown: *Mind in matter* (1982). As he points out, various academic disciplines, particularly art history and archaeology, routinely work with artifacts as primary data for the study of material culture. In line with this author, Material Culture is the study through artifacts of the beliefs-values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions of a certain community or society at a specified time. Prown proposed three stages in an object-based study. The analysis proceeds from description, where

the internal evidence of the object is extracted; to deduction, interpreting the interaction between the object and the perceiver; to speculation, framing hypotheses and questions that lead from the object to external evidence for verification and resolution.

A relevant notion that Prown contributes with in his work refers to the attached value associated with material objects. According to him, the most obvious cultural belief associated with material objects has to do with value. He claims that the reason one should bother to investigate material objects in the search for culture is that a society's belief systems may be related to inherent and attached values. How transient or variable those values that have been assigned to objects by the people who originally created or used them may be relevant to analyse.⁴⁴ Furthermore, he suggests that value is quite persistent and can be conferred by us today, or by people at any time (past, present or future). This reflection is key when analysing the Iku museum's collection in terms of its value, according to what and for whom it is valuable.

Additionally, in her work, Alexandra Palmer suggests involving oral history to help determine and confirm information in a museum collection. While she asserts that the analysis of objects is often the best skill of many traditional costume historians, the analysis of material culture must be located within a larger academic framework and not stand-alone.⁴⁵ In my object-based study, I consider that it is important to involve the narratives of people belonging to the Iku culture, who, although they are not the manual creators of the objects, are the cultural inheritors of the sociocultural tradition of the object. Palmer also suggests the implementation of a multidisciplinary methodology and diverse methods in the analysis of material culture. Therefore, this study aims to combine a variety of methodologies that include documental review, oral narratives, archival research, visual analysis, as well as the observation and analysis of material culture.

Discussing the collection in southern latitudes: Value, Memory, Agency and Representation

In the third chapter of this thesis, I mix literature review with ethnography studies focusing on face-to-face semi-structured interviews.⁴⁶ This chapter also aims to answer the second research

⁴⁴ Jules Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method", 3.

⁴⁵ Alexandra Palmer. "New Directions: Fashion History Studies and Research in North America and England". *Fashion Theory* 1, no. 3 (April 21, 1997): 309

⁴⁶ Torkild Thanem & David Knights, in their work *Embodied Research* (2019) proposes a research practice that involves embodied abilities. This work included ethnographic tools such as semi-structured interviews, conversations, direct observations, tactile experiences, descriptions, and record-keeping. These authors highlight the relevance of embodied experience when interviews and conversations occur as face-to-face encounters between researchers and participants since in these experiences, perceptions and cultures are shared.

question: how can people of today in Colombia re-connect with the Iku material culture from the National Museum of World Cultures archive in Gothenburg, Sweden?

All the interviewees were selected by purposive sampling.⁴⁷ The persons chosen to be interviewed were included according to their personal and professional profile. Each one represents a voice that I considered should be involved when producing a heterogeneous discussion about the uses, value and handling of collections with indigenous content in present day. The list of interviewees [Table. 1], includes one artisan from the Iku indigenous community, one representative of the archive in Gothenburg, one professor at the National University of Colombia, one representative of the ICANH - the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History, and one professional in archive and textile conservation. Since my object of study - the Iku indigenous material culture - is a topic that may produce controversy, for me it was important to generate actions aimed to ensure a respectful and impartial dialogue.

Name	Occupancy	Nationality Ethnicity	Suitability
Rodrigo Fuentes Arias Traditional name: Seykukwi	Craftsman and textile artist. Medicine student at the National University of Colombia. General representative of the University Indigenous Council.	Colombian- Arhuaco	Iku indigenous textile artisan and expert in arhuaco bags techniques. Member of the “aula viva de saberes ancestrales” group of the National University of Colombia.
Adriana Muñoz	Curator at The National Museums of World Culture, Gothenburg, Sweden. Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Archaeology.	Swedish- Argentinean	Curator in charge of the collection of the Americas of which the Arhuaco collection is part.
Margarita Reyes Suárez	Anthropologist and museologist. University of Valladolid.	Colombian – Mestiza	Professional in charge of the ICANH (Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History) heritage research projects and curator of the ethnographic collections at the National Museum in Bogotá-Colombia.
César Galán	Industrial Designer from the National University of Colombia, with a Master's Degree in Communication. Professor at the National University of Colombia.	Colombian – Mestizo	Professor and researcher on issues of memory, design culture, communication and material culture at the National University of Colombia.
Consuelo Colmenares	Conservator and former employee of the National archive of Colombia.	Colombian – Mestiza	Experience in textile restoration. Participated in the restoration of Guane indigenous pre-Columbian textiles for the museum of memory in Bogota Colombia.

TABLE 1: Interviewees

⁴⁷ Purposive sampling refers to non-random sampling techniques in which units are selected “on purpose”. It provides beneficial results for heterogeneous populations especially in regards to art-related studies. E. Khalefa & S. Selian, “Non-random samples as a data collection tool in qualitative art-related studies” *International Journal of Creative and Arts Studies* Vol.8 1 (June 2021): 35–49.

In order to count with a larger spectrum of thoughts regarding the material, I committed to conducting interviews with actors of different nature. Some of them were informed in the current debates on repatriation of indigenous objects and decolonization of museums and some of them were not much aware of this debate. The list includes three women and two men. Since the museum's collection is barely known in Colombia, I had to conduct a previous meeting with some of the interviewees to be able to introduce myself and share the photographic and film material - what I called "My mobile museum archive." Around 200 selected pictures of the objects and close-up details, that I personally took during the field visits, were shared during the interviews with the aim of familiarizing the interviewees with the objects. This allowed me to do a more in-depth interview about their personal and professional thoughts in regards to the collection.

The meetings took place in Bogotá- Colombia in January and February of 2023. Since it is a subject that may produce sensitivities, it was important to create a close and heartfelt conversation about the material. Especially so with the members of the Iku community with whom I was able to talk. All the interviews were recorded by mutual agreement. In all cases, an informed consent (in Spanish, see appendix 2.) was offered where information was given on the research topic, the scopes, and their rights as interviewees. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, transcribed, and translated into English by myself. A meeting with the Iku indigenous women leader, pacifist, and environmentalist, Ati Quigua, was held the 21 of January in the Bogotá city council where she is also a council member. During the meeting we talked about the material in the museum, the fact of the distance between the materiality and the place of origin and we discussed possible future collaborations for imagining solutions in regards to the accessibility to this material. Since a formal interview was not performed with Ati Quigua, she is not included in the table of interviewees. However, her reflections on the topic are also included in the discussion. In the initial stages of data examination, I used a thematic analysis to categorize material according to general themes and sub-themes. The interview with Adriana Muñoz, is also part of the discussion in regards to value, representation and agency in collection management in the case of the National Museum of world cultures in Gothenburg-Sweden.

Reflection on methods and research

I would like to end this section by highlighting some considerations regarding my methodology and the fact that I am a non-indigenous woman. Geographically speaking, I am far away from the Iku ancestral territory and I was not raised as an indigenous person. I have not been asked

to write about the Iku or to study their craft. This leads me to wonder where I write from, why and for whom? Although I have education in political studies and I am trained in research on craft and material culture, I am aware that my culture and my own vision will inevitably influence this work. I am a western, mixed-race woman or mestiza⁴⁸ and I assume that the only position I can write from is this one. I consider myself intertwined between the culture that was externally assigned and taught to me, the western one, and the one that is part of my cultural heritage but was never taught in the classrooms where I was educated - the indigenous one. In this work, the ideology and the western education that I have certainly shines through. However, I believe that the sincere commitment to the redemption of indigenous knowledge and the continuing recognition of otherness is necessary for the epistemological vindication and cognitive justice that Iñigo-Clavo and Santos propose.

Studying, discussing, and contemplating indigenous matters will always be a complex terrain. In this work, I want to state that my obvious intrusion in these issues comes from a place of deep respect and admiration for the first nations and the struggles that they carry out every day. Both in their ancestral territories, preserving their culture and epistemologies, but also in classrooms, parliament desks, and offices. My position as a middle-class Colombian woman, mestiza and as an artisan has surely influenced this investigation. I cannot escape the circumstances of my subjectivity and I cannot do more than make them clear to the reader.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The previous literature search for this thesis focused on three areas of research: Gustaf Bolinder and his work for the Museum of Ethnography in Sweden, the Iku material culture in museum archives, and the ethnographic collections as a matter of debate in the legal and cultural field.

Gustav Bolinder and the Museum of Ethnography in Sweden

In relation to previous studies on Gustav Bolinder and the museum of ethnography in Sweden, no entries were found on the Diva platform in Sweden. On the contrary, in the ebscohost.com platform of the National University of Colombia, some academic papers are dedicated to the Swedish ethnographer in Spanish. The papers describe the travels of the Swede throughout Colombia mainly focused on Bolinder's work of two indigenous communities, the Chimilas and the Motilones. No previous studies were found focused on the work that Bolinder

⁴⁸ (In Latin America) a woman of mixed race, especially one having indigenous and Spanish (or European) descent.

performed with the Iku people specifically. However, two articles caught my attention and are very relevant to this research: “Las inmediaciones del fin del mundo. Los encuentros de Gustaf Bolinder y los chimilas en 1915 y 1920” (“The vicinity of the end of the world. The encounters of Gustaf Bolinder and the Chimilas in 1915 and 1920”), by Juan Camilo Nino⁴⁹ and “Colorantes presentes en mochilas Ika de la colección etnográfica del Världskulturmuseet (Antiguo Museo Etnografico) en Gotemburgo, Suecia, realizada por Gustav Bolinder” (Dyes present in Ika bags from the ethnographic collection of the Världskulturmuseet (Old Ethnographic Museum) in Gothenburg, Sweden, made by Gustav Bolinder) by Beatriz Devia and Marianne Cardale de Schrimppff. Juan Camilo Nino, in his work, focuses on Bolinder's study on the Chimila indigenous people. The Chimila, are an indigenous group located in northern Colombia, geographically very close to the Iku. In his article, Nino describes Bolinder's journey motivations and his main trips throughout northern Colombia at the beginning of the 20th century. His article sheds light on how Bolinder acquired the Chimila and other indigenous objects that ended up in the NMWC archive in Gothenburg. It also helps to understand the connection that Bolinder maintained with the Amerindian peoples, especially with the peoples of northern Colombia in the early 20th century.

As for the specific collection of Iku craft clothing in the archive, it remains little explored. The work of Devia and Cardale de Schrimppff⁵⁰, have stated a brief overview of Bolinder's Iku material and performed an analysis of the dyes used in the bags of the museum's collection. The authors analysed the dyes present in the bags from this collection and identified the use of four different plant species in the textiles; brazilwood (*Haematoxylum brasiletto*), *Picramnia gracilis*, *Berberis meollacensis* and *Fridericia chica* (*Arrabidaea chica*).

In previous research regarding the Bolinder collections in the museum, I include my own work “Craft and Nonviolent Resistance - Manifestations of Nonviolent Resistance in the Mochila Iku Women's Craft.”⁵¹ In this article, and taking as an example some of the bags in the museum, I argue that the knitting practice carried out by the women of the community can be understood as a mechanism of peaceful resistance. The Iku artisanal activity, even though it

⁴⁹ Juan C. Nino Vargas, “En las inmediaciones del fin del mundo: los encuentros de Gustaf Bolinder y los chimilas en 1915 y 1920”, in *Antipoda: Revista de Antropología y Arqueología*, Vo.11 (December 2010): 43-66, accessed April 11, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.7440/antipoda11.2010.05>.

⁵⁰ Beatriz Devia, and Marianne Cardale de Schrimppff, “Colorantes presentes en mochilas Ika de la colección etnográfica del Världskulturmuseet (Antiguo Museo Etnografico) en Gotemburgo, Suecia, realizada por Gustav Bolinder”. *Centre for Textile Research*, (June, 2020): 279-293, accessed September 29, 2022. DOI: 10.32873/unl.dc.zea.1217

⁵¹ Stefanía Castelblanco-Pérez, “Craft and Nonviolent Resistance - Manifestation of Nonviolent Resistance in the Mochila Iku Women's Craft” in *Decolonizing Futures: Collaborations for New Indigenous Horizons*, ed. Hiroshi Maruyama et al. (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2022), 373-392.

was banned during the repressive catholic mission from 1914 to 1982, carries embedded resistance of social, political, cultural, esthetical and ecological nature.

Iku material culture

Regarding the Arhuaco traditional textile tradition, several scholarly works have been written. A particular aspect of these studies is that they have all been carried out studying contemporary Iku material. This thesis seeks to complement the previous work since it studies Iku material in the archive of the NMWC that is at least a century old. The work of Armando Aroca Araújo,⁵² professor and leader of the Horizons Research Group in Mathematics Education at the Universidad del Atlántico in Colombia, is an important study in regards to the Iku material culture and textile tradition. In his studies on the symbolism of the Iku bags he has identified sixteen knitted traditional motives. His work helps to identify and compare geometric motifs in the Iku textiles in the NMWC archive. His work also highlights the relevance of the textile tradition and indigenous symbolism for teaching geometry and mathematics within the community from an ethnic perspective.

Other works such as “El traje y el telar Iku”, and “Colección hilando memoria indígena” (“The attire and the Iku loom” and “Spinning indigenous memory collection”) by the Iku anthropologist Faustino Torres Ramos-Nerúngumu and by the Iku lawyer Alirio Torres-Sewkukuy, were of great help to understand the symbolic, spiritual and cultural value of the textile tradition within the Iku community⁵³. The studies were carried out by the Fundación Universitaria de América for the Dress Museum in Bogotá.

Ethnographic collections as a matter of debate in the cultural and legal field

Important works have been done from the legal field in regards the regulation of indigenous material culture and the debate on repatriation and uses of heritage. According to Ochoa-Jiménez⁵⁴ the importance of collections of archaeological and ethnographic objects seems to be very dynamic in both, the so-called countries of origin, such as Greece and Egypt, and in countries of destination, such as Germany, that have massively received objects of this type over several centuries. However, she points out that when it comes to production of knowledge

⁵² Armando Aroca, Una propuesta metodológica en etnomatemática. *Revista UDCA de Actualidad & Divulgación Científica* 11(1), (Cartagena: Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas y Ambientales, 2008): 67-76.

⁵³ Alirio Torres Torres -Sewkukuy-. *El traje y el telar Iku. Colección Hilando Memoria Indígena*, (Bogotá: Fundación Universidad de América, 2009), 1-7.

⁵⁴ María Jiménez Ochoa, *Colecciones y repatriación de objetos arqueológicos y etnográficos: Una mirada Multidisciplinar* (Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia, 2019), 37-61.

from the countries of origin, the academy is still behind. In this work, I seek to contribute to this aspect since I aim to join the current debate on ethnographic collections in European museums with an interest in the country of origin, that is, Colombia. Ochoa-Jiménez explains that in order to understand the different processes that are being carried out, either for the return or maintenance of these objects, it is necessary to understand what has produced the formation of collections. Ochoa-Jiménez suggests that the processes of formation and treatment of collections of archaeological and ethnographic objects must be seen from different perspectives considering certain historical, social, political, regulatory, or economic factors in the national and international context. Ochoa-Jiménez explains that international standards in this matter are composed of a series of international regulations. The author provides a list of very relevant international regulations in this regard: The Convention on the Measures that Must Be Adopted to Prohibit and Prevent the Illegal Import, Export, and Transfer of Property of Cultural Assets, adopted by Unesco in 1970 (Unesco Convention 1970). Another important instrument is the Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Goods, prepared by the Institute for the Unification of Private Law (Unidroit) in 1995. These regulations are also present in norms on Human Rights, such as the Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and more recently, in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

According to the author, although there are different paths for countries to resolve these issues, in countries like Germany, studies and discussions regarding the restitution of collections of objects acquired during or after the colonial era have only begun to develop recently. An important fact in the German case is the strong tensions in relation to the Humboldt-Forum project in Berlin and in the circumstances surrounding the collection of indigenous masks from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, in custody of the Ethnographic Museum of that city. Ochoa-Jiménez mentions that is very important to understand culture as a common good when carefully analysing the legal framework of ethnographic objects in an international level. She emphasizes that although in these processes a project of a scientific and cultural nature is observed, what is underlying is a political project. The objects, being a good of common interest, have a direct relationship with identity and the connection of the cultural, which in turn has a connection with the concept of peace and with human rights in the countries of origin.

Chapter 1. Re-threading the Iku collection history in the Världskulturmuseet archive

To re-thread the history of the Iku artisanal collection in the archive, I believe it is important to carefully consider the circumstances by which the Iku collection arrives at the archives of the National Museum of World Cultures in Gothenburg from its place of origin, La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia. In this chapter, I will describe how the collection came to the museum and the contexts that motivated the transference of the Iku objects at the beginning of the 20th century. Being Gustaf Bolinder a key character, I delve into his biography and the motivations that led him to undertake this trip to Colombia, specifically to the Sierra Nevada region in company of his wife Ester Bolinder.

Following Riello, the Iku collection can address historical circumstances but at the same time help to create new stories and transform previous narratives. Accordingly, in this chapter I discuss how the colonial scientific mindset of the time marked the beginning of this journey, but also how other colonial and decolonial practices can manifest themselves today. In this chapter, I also aim to highlight the role of other persons in the Iku collection history such as the role of Bolinder's wife, Ester. The materials for this chapter originate from different sources; Latin American literature, visual illustrations and Bolinder's material that encompasses his expedition to La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Although no previous work has been written specifically in regards the Iku collection voyage to the museum, there are previous works regarding Bolinder's trips to Colombia. It is from there that I will try to braid together the story.

From La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta to the archives of the NMWC

“En egendomligt grupperad samling hyddor, täcka med silvergrått gräs och översmetade med vit jord, små lustiga torg, mjuka grönskande gräsmattor, alltsammans omgivet av en hög kullerstensmur med två väldiga portar, det är Pauruba, ijcas by. Mitt i en jämn floddal, tvåtusen meter över havet, har man terrasserat den mot floden sluttande marken och därpå uppfört byn. Strax man ser den lilla byn, vit och grå, övergjuten av solskenets rikliga flöde, blir man glad”. Taken from “Snöfjällets Indianer” Bolinder, 1926.

“A curiously gathered cluster of huts, covered with silver-gray grass, and smeared with white earth, little cheerful squares, soft verdant lawns, all surrounded by a high cobbled wall with two huge gates, that is Pauruba, the village of Ijca. In the middle of a smooth river valley, two thousand meters above sea level, the land sloping towards the river has been terraced and the village built on it. As soon as you see the small village, white and gray, showered by the abundant flow of sunshine, you are happy.”

Bolinder, 1926

Gustaf Bolinder's life dated from 1888 to 1957 and was largely dedicated to the study of Amerindian and African societies.⁵⁵ At the beginning of 1914, together with his wife Ester Bolinder, he arrived by boat to the city of Santa Marta, very close to the first foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Bolinder was one of the first anthropologists to arrive to Colombia with a purely ethnological mission, without any pronounced political or commercial interests.⁵⁶ Bolinder does not escape the time he represents. At that time, it was not unusual for the writers of his nature, to write in derogatory and racist terms about people who were considered inferior in comparison to the refined and distinguished European society. In his books it is easy to perceive an attitude of superiority when describing coastal and inland cities and villages, as well as their inhabitants in Colombian territory.

In his written accounts, Bolinder uses a very derogative language towards Afro-Colombian people and towards non-Iku indigenous people. However, when it came to the Iku people and their territory, it seems he referred himself to them in different terms. The passage that introduces this text is how Bolinder describes the capital Iku at the first paragraph of the chapter "I Pauruba By" (In the Pauruba village), in his book "Snöfjällets indianer" published in 1926. This is one of the books where he uses a more literary style when describing the indigenous Iku culture compared to previous works characterized by a more scientific language. In 1914, the Gothenburg Museum in his native Sweden, had entrusted Bolinder with the task of nurturing the archaeological and ethnographic collection with material from North and South of America (Nino 2010, 47). As many authors coincide, it was a time in which the growing prestige of the anthropological discipline was well-known in the foundation of specialized rooms in museums. According to Nino, after the couple carried out expeditions

⁵⁵ According to Nino, Bolinder would gradually abandon his interest in the study of Amerindian peoples to become interested in cultural studies of African societies, Juan C. Niño Vargas, “En las inmediaciones del fin del mundo: los encuentros de Gustaf Bolinder y los chimilas en 1915 y 1920”, 43-66, accessed April 11, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.7440/antipoda11.2010.05>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

around the populated centers of the coast, they undertook an exploration trip to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. The Swedes felt deeply attracted to the indigenous Iku people of the southwestern flank of the mountain range, also known as the Arhuacos - an indigenous community that until today inhabits the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta region in northern Colombia.

According to Reyes-Gavilán,⁵⁷ throughout the 19th century, cabinets of curiosities and royal museums gave way to ethnological museums. During this time, the profession of the museum worker trained as an expert in the area was also established. The person who would turn the tide for ethnographic museums would be Adolf Bastian (1826-1905), founder of the Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin. He travelled for more than twenty-five years performing ethnographic research in different parts of the world. Bastian's project urged the museum to acquire objects from different places and the strategies to achieve this objective comprised exchange, purchase, gifts, etc.

In the searches carried out in 2019 by Reyes-Gavilán⁵⁸ as part of her doctoral thesis, she found out that six masks that belonged to the indigenous peoples from la Sierra Nevada were taken to different museums; the Ethnological Museum of the Vatican, the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, the Museum of World Cultures in Gothenburg, and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. In her work, she states that a good part of the acquisition processes of the masks, are part of the splendour of the museums of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The knowledge produced through the expeditions shaped a scientific method while at the same time expanded the museum collections. Germany had a great interest in exploration and Colombia was seen as a region of scientific interest in the sights of researchers from the museums of northern Europe. Preuss's expedition in 1915, for example, concentrated on investigating the temples and ritual elements, jewels and gold of the northern slope of the Sierra Nevada region. In this regard, it is said that in the process of collecting the masks, Preuss took advantage of a conflict between the local authorities to obtain them. Presumably, in order to gain information about the temples where the ritual and sacred objects remained hidden.⁵⁹ According to Nino, a certain research method was frequently used by the European ethnographers of the time. It consisted of visiting and quickly describing an indigenous group

⁵⁷ Reyes-Gavilán explains that the Vatican masks were acquired by researchers associated with museums in the first decades of the 17th century during evangelization campaigns. For Reyes (2019) a transfer of knowledge took place in these exchange processes, since the encounters made it possible for certain worldviews to be legitimized or to come into conflict according to the way in which the relationship between communities and individuals was built. In *Colecciones y repatriación de bienes arqueológicos y etnográficos*, Universidad de Antioquia:126

⁵⁸ Ibid.,118.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

in order to carry out comparative tests with the information and objects collected. This type of research was supported by the classification procedures of the natural sciences, by the growing importance of ethnographic museum collections and, above all, by the emergence of a method known as diffusionism.⁶⁰ Accordingly, the study of the spatial diffusion of social traits was useful for the reconstruction of temporal sequences, the delimitation of cultural areas and the identification of affiliation ties between different first nations populations.⁶¹ This trend was very well received in that era in Sweden and gave rise to a current of thought known as the "Swedish School", whose main representatives were Erland Nordenskiöld and Gerhard Lindblom.⁶²

According to Reyes-Gavilán,⁶³ Bolinder's close relation with Erland Nordenskiöld, who directed the ethnography section of the Gothenburg Museum and had carried out research in Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay at the beginning of the century, led Bolinder to be sent in 1914 to South America, specifically to Colombia, to collect objects while at the same time performing his doctoral research in the Sierra Nevada and the Guajira region in northern Colombia [fig.1]. In La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Bolinder bartered to acquire the different objects. With the Chimilas indigenous people, a community geographically close to the Iku, he traded in mirrors, knives, necklaces, and scarves for all kinds of indigenous objects. This allowed him to obtain a large collection consisting of clothing, banks of wood, basketry utensils, domestic utensils, etc.

On Bolinder's first trip an abundant collection of objects was achieved and was sent directly to the museum.⁶⁴ Shortly after the first expedition his daughter was born and right after September 1914, they undertook a new trip to the Iku village Páuruba, known today as Nabusimake - the Iku capital - where they stayed for about five months.⁶⁵ At the end of 1915, they came back to Sweden and it was not until 1935 that he came back for a visit with similar interests but in another region in Colombia.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Nino, "En las inmediaciones del fin del mundo: los encuentros de Gustaf Bolinder y los chimilas en 1915 y 1920", 51.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 52.

⁶³ Aura Reyes Gavilán, "Objetos etnográficos, viajeros y prácticas de coleccionismo. Máscaras en museos europeos y norteamericanos", in *Colecciones y repatriación de objetos arqueológicos y etnográficos: Una mirada Multidisciplinar*, ed. María Ochoa J. (Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia, 2019), 123.

⁶⁴ Nino, "En las inmediaciones del fin del mundo: los encuentros de Gustaf Bolinder y los chimilas en 1915 y 1920", 43-66.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Gustaf Bolinder was hired by the Colombian government in 1935 to carry out ethnographic research in the Eastern Plains. The mission included the preparation of a manual for government workers, the development of a series of lectures on ethnography and archaeology, and building a collection of ethnographic objects for the National Ministry of Education., Aura Reyes Gavilán, "La instrumentalización del saber antropológico en la

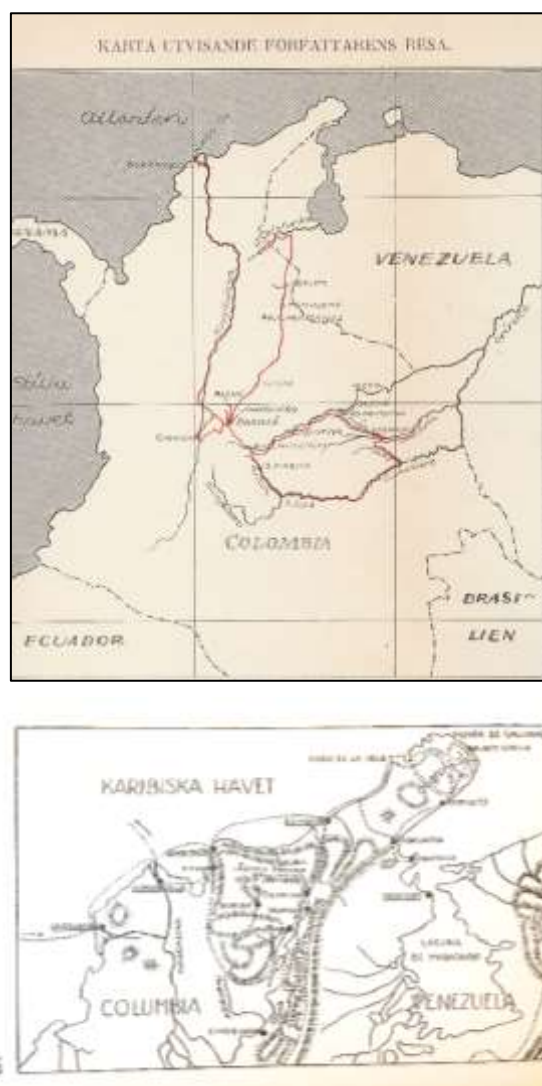


FIGURE 1: “Map showing the author's journey” taken from Bolinder 1936 and 1938 respectively

Bolinder's research of the Iku focused mainly on material and religious culture. From this journey, Gustaf Bolinder wrote his doctoral work *Ijca-Indianernas Kultur* (1918), in which he examined in detail the Iku material culture, social organization, and religious life from an academic scientific perspective. Other later works such as *Indianernas Hemliga Värld*, *Snöfjällets Indianer*, *från en tvååring forsknings resa till Sierra Tairona och Sierra Motilon*, *Sydamerika*, contain more subjective descriptions of his encounters with the Iku culture. Bolinder's works include photos and descriptions of places, objects, and conversations during his expeditions. He constantly mentions the persons with whom he established relationships

década de 1930 en el marco de la colonización de los llanos orientales: Los trabajos de Gustaf Bolinder para el Ministerio de Educación Nacional en Colombia”. *Razón Crítica*, no.14, (January, 2023): 1-34, accessed April 11, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.21789/25007807.1897>

and the role of his wife while performing his field work. It is common to find a combination between his personal reflections with the findings of his doctoral-scientific work in his books.

It is not until 1996, that the Swedish state decided to create a new museum in the city of Gothenburg, the (Världskulturmuseet) or The National Museum of World Cultures (NMWC), using the city's Museum of Ethnography as a base. The old ethnographic museum ceased to exist and its collections became part of the current NMWC. Today the museum has an attached facility, although located in another area of the city where archival material that is not part of the exhibition is kept. The number of registered objects that currently nurture the American ethnographic collections in the archive, according to Adriana Muñoz,⁶⁷ is 21,879. The most robust collection is the South American⁶⁸ with 17,481. Accordingly, the Colombian Ethnographic Collection consists of 2649 objects. Adriana Muñoz explains that Erland Nordenskiöld,⁶⁹ is considered today as one of the most important Americanists in Sweden. The significant size of the American collection seems to be proof of this.

An interesting finding in Bolinder's work review, refers to the fact that many of the objects shown and described in the photographic galleries along Bolinder's books, taken in the Sierra Nevada, can be found today in the NMWC physical and virtual collection archive. The searches showed that the items with Iku indigenous content are approximately 600,⁷⁰ including ritual and everyday objects, organic samples, photographic material, technical sheets, and drawings.

Coloniality and decoloniality in the National Museum of World Cultures

According to Muñoz, most of the objects that entered the museum in Gothenburg before 1913 came from places like China, the Middle East, Africa, and North and South America.⁷¹ These collections were marked by the European colonialist expansion. Reyes-Gavilán⁷² points out something very important. The objects found in museums and archives consist of different narratives that rarely come together. Nor does the exhibition space describe the paths that led

⁶⁷ Adriana Muñoz currently works as the curator in charge of the collection of the Americas at the NMWC.

⁶⁸ Of that number, 17,481 belong to South America, 3,265 to Central America, and 1,133 to North America. Adriana Muñoz, *La formación de las colecciones arqueológicas sudamericanas en Göteborg: el período de Erland Nordenskiöld*, *Dialnet - Artículos de revista*, (2002), 238.

⁶⁹ Nordenskiöld funded the Ibero-American Institute at the University of Gothenburg. Adriana Muñoz, "La formación de las colecciones arqueológicas sudamericanas en Göteborg: el período de Erland Nordenskiöld", 238.

⁷⁰ Calculated from the virtual collections of photos, objects, and documentary files with Iku content exclusively. In the search the Ijka term instead of Iku is applied.

⁷¹ She also explains that the first South American archaeological collection to enter is from Colombia and comes from a donation made by Nicolás Pereira Gamba in 1871. Adriana Muñoz, "La formación de las colecciones arqueológicas sudamericanas en Göteborg: el período de Erland Nordenskiöld", 241.

⁷² Reyes-Gavilán, "Objetos etnográficos, viajeros y prácticas de coleccionismo", 101.

them to these museums. She highlights that recent discussions have made the colonial historicity of the collections even more evident and that the very role of the object in the museum discourse has been modified in accordance with museum trends.

The years of leadership of Erland Nordenskiöld (1913-1932) in Gothenburg's Museum of ethnography implied a great impact. During this period, a great expansion of the Americanism in Sweden was seen. On the other hand, in Colombia, the process of improving and expanding the ethnological disciplinary institutionalization as part of a long-term historical process meant important changes for the country. The entry of scientists and specialists from Europe help to reveal the ways of living of the indigenous peoples as well as their challenges. However, this was a double-edged sword, on one hand it made communities and their knowledges visible, but on the other hand it made them more exposed to faster acculturation and loss of their traditional customs. Muñoz explains that the acquisition of collections during the Erland Nordenskiöld period was moved mainly by the aim of preserving the objects for future generations, to offer study material for researchers and to be a resource for quality education and entertainment for the general public.⁷³ It has been said that in Colombia the rumor "save before everything disappears" was rapidly spreading in the discipline and its practitioners. Today the Världskulturmuseet is considered the museum that has the largest and most complete South American ethnographic collections in Europe and probably in the world⁷⁴ [fig.2, 3, 4].

With the current call for museums of this nature and their practitioners to adopt decolonial principles, the NMWC is currently considering methodological approaches aimed to democratize the databases. An example of this, caused by a dramatic fire at the National Museum of Brazil in 2018 that destroyed almost 20 million objects from its collections, the Swedish National Museums of World Culture and the University of Gothenburg started a pilot project with the ethnographic collections of Brazil called: 'Digital Repatriation of Cultural Heritage in the Global South', which is funded by the Swedish Research Council. The project includes the migration of the data from the current platform to one that allows better accessibility when documenting and curating the material as well as better possibilities for co-production of knowledge around the cultural objects.⁷⁵ The project aims to demonstrate a

⁷³ Muñoz, "La formación de las colecciones arqueológicas sudamericanas en Göteborg: el período de Erland Nordenskiöld", 243.

⁷⁴ Adriana Muñoz et al., "Decolonising ethnographic databases: a pilot project of data migration from the Swedish National Museum of World Culture's Carlotta to the open-source software Tainacan." *Europeana*, (August 2022): 1-25, accessed April 11, 2023, <https://pro.europeana.eu/page/europeana-research-collaborations-the-national-museum-of-world-culture-sweden>

⁷⁵ Ibid.,12

significant gain in the empowerment of not only the museum's technical team, but also the indigenous peoples and communities interested in the possibility of making conceptual and cultural decisions about the documentation of their collections. According to Adriana Muñoz, “museums as colonial instruments have never been comfortable with the idea of changing the discourses by giving voice to the people whose objects their own institutions have been collecting for centuries”.⁷⁶

According to Adriana, in decolonization processes, the most important thing is to unlearn, not only with the brain, but with the whole body. She highlights that we are part of a system where colonial practices are rarely discussed. Referring not only to political decisions but also to those daily, simple practices, internalized in our bodies that we repeat unaware of why we do them the way we do. One way of thinking about decolonization, for her, could be to learn to be empathetic and try to contribute to make change from our places of privilege in everyday practices.⁷⁷ The archive is immersed in a logic that replicates colonial practices founded since the acquisition of the objects that make up its collections, but it is also immersed in a historical context in which a call is made for the decolonization of these spaces. The challenge is to decolonize not only the databases and to clarify the circumstances in which these collections transited geographically, but also to decolonize individual practices in the handling and care of these objects. The concept of ethical stewardship could be a key tool as it considers working in partnership with indigenous peoples to ensure better practice, management and access to indigenous archival material.

⁷⁶ Adriana Muñoz. “Introduction to Section Three: Some Years of a Painful Process of Learning to Unlearn.” *Sage Journals* Volume 18 (Issue 1, March 2022):70, accessed April 11, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1177/15501906211072911>

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 69–71.



FIGURE 2: Traditional Bags Collection. Shelves Archive. G. Bolinder expedition 1914-1916



FIGURE 3: Plant specimens and fiber samples, Iku Collection at Världskulturmuseet. Shelves Archive



FIGURE 4: Container, Iku Collection Världskulturmuseet. Shelves Archive. G. Bolinder expedition 1914-1916.
Images by Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

Ester Bolinder. The feminine touch of the time

“Hur ofta under vår tvååriga färd har jag inte haft anledning att beundra min hustrus råddighet och uthållighet, hennes praktiska färdigheter och förmåga att vinna folk. Ingen gång ha dessa hennes egenskaper satts på svårare prov än de månader vi levde ensamma i Paurubadalen”. Bolinder, 1926.

“How often during our two-year journey have I not had reason to admire my wife's resourcefulness and perseverance, her practical skills and ability to win people over. Never have these qualities of hers been put to a more severe test than during the months we lived alone in the Pauruba Valley.” Bolinder, 1926.

Ester Bolinder, née Nordquist, born in 1894 in Sundsvall and raised in Gävle, Sweden. She met her husband, Gustaf Bolinder, during her teenage years and married on December 27, 1913. Shortly after their wedding, in 1914, Gustaf and Ester traveled to Colombia.⁷⁸ The two-year research trip to Colombia, which also became their honeymoon trip, is described in her first book *Med lilla Sif hos indianerna* (1921). The book was dedicated to her first daughter Sif who was born during this trip in Santa Marta city.⁷⁹ Esther is mentioned repeatedly in Bolinder's prolific literary work, especially during their trip to La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. In the stories and anecdotes that Bolinder describes in his books, the importance and influence that Ester seems to have had in the field work and, presumably also in his academic work, is evident. Ester repeatedly appears in Bolinder's gallery of images wearing her gallant dresses and parasols with dramatic background settings of jungles and rugged mountains. Ester is also frequently portrayed by Bolinder interacting with the local indigenous people, or described as a diligent arranger of difficult situations that both faced. In one of his anecdotes, Gustaf describes a situation in which Ester had to make handicrafts to be able to exchange them for food supplies;

”Det var när våra bytesvaror tagit slut och min hustru måste sy näsdukar åt indianerna av mina skjortor, dem hon klippte av jäms med midjan nerifrån räknat. Hellre brödlös än rådlös! Bröd var för övrigt en lyx, varom vi icke vågade drömma!”
Bolinder, 1926.

⁷⁸ “Who is it: Swedish biographical handbook 1943”, (Alex författarlexikon), accessed April 06, 2023, <https://www.alex.se/lexicon/article/bolinder-ester>

⁷⁹ Bolinder, Ester. *Med lilla Sif hos indianerna*. (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1921), 16.

“It was when our barter ran out and my wife had to sew handkerchiefs for the Indians from my shirts, the ones she cut off even from the waist down. Better breadless than helpless! Bread was also a luxury, which we did not even dare to dream of!” Bolinder, 1926.

Ester was only 20 years old when she undertook such an adventure with her husband to a place so remote and different from what she had ever experienced before. It seems that Ester's presence on Bolinder's journey went far beyond mere company and is perceivable in Bolinder's photographs. Judging from these images and the book that she wrote, [fig.5], it would seem that she was instrumental in establishing relationships of trust with the indigenous people, especially with women, since she is repeatedly seen in their company. It is said that at that time the role of wives was key to the professional development of prominent men.⁸⁰ They not only took care of their husbands but they also took an active part in the writing process. Judging by Ester's constant presence in Gustaf's narratives and by her own literary work produced after the trip to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Ester was instrumental in the formation of the museum's Iku collection. Her presence surely marked this historical event and rarely have the works and efforts of the wives, been recognized. The bibliographic review carried out for this work can ensure that one way or another, the female hand has been a part of the history of the Iku collection, and I am not only referring myself to the hands of the female conservators.

⁸⁰ It is said that at that time the role of wives was key to the professional development of prominent men. Julia Dahlberg, “Annika Berg, Christina Florin, Per Wisselgren (red.), *Par i vetenskap och politik. Intellektuella äktenskap i moderniteten.*” (1. uppl. Umeå: Borea 2011): 29–30.



FIGURE 5: Ester Bolinder and Iku indigenous persons. Bolinder, G. *Det tropiska snöfjällets indianer*, 1916

Chapter 2. Iku material culture in action – An object-based study

“The more objects are removed from the context of life-activity in which they are produce and used – the more they appear as static objects of disinterested contemplation (as in museums and galleries) the more, too, the process disappears or is hidden behind the product, the finished object.”

Ingold, 2009

In this chapter I aim to reflect on the process of observation and material analysis that I carried out on the Iku objects in the archive of the National Museum of World Cultures in Gothenburg. For my study, connecting empathically with those who made the objects (Iku-Arhuacos), those who admired and collected them (Bolinder and his wife) and with those who have cared for them (the curators and conservators) is essential to be able to carry out a conscious and balanced analysis, that is less prejudged.⁸¹

As mentioned in the methodology section, I will resort to the objectual and material culture analysis proposed by Prown. This methodology is going to be complemented with some notions given by Palmer and Riello in relation to the task of studying objects. The first field visit to the archive was carried out in January 2022 and the second in April 2023. These visits allowed for the taking of measurements, observing closely and interacting with the collection as well as performing photographic and video records of the material. Although I observed around fifty objects, only three of them were chosen to be deeply analysed and included in this thesis. Table.2 shows the chosen objects, corresponding to a textile mantle, a traditional bag (mochila arhuaca in Spanish), and a ceremonial hat. These objects were selected due to their different uses, functionality, craft technique, or material and because they allowed the development of the methodology in dialog with decolonial principles and ethical handling.

Since the intention was not only to observe the objects but also to put them in dialogue with interviewees in Colombia, plenty of photographic and video material were recorded. Later, during the analysis of the object, oral sources were consulted to count with a more accurate interpretation of the object. This study included the contributions of the Iku artisan Seykukwi⁸² with whom the recorded material was subsequently shared and discussed.

⁸¹ Jules Prown, “Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method”, 5.

⁸² Meeting with Seykukwi, February 9, 2023




Picture	Object	Identification reference	Description
	Mantle	1916.03.0487 No.17493	Category: Personal item Subcategory: accessories Description: "Mákke" mantle used by men. https://collections.smvk.se/ca/rlotta-vkm/web/object/37217
	Traditional Bag	1916.03.0420 No. 17431	Category: Storage Description: Wool bag, patterned. https://collections.smvk.se/ca/rlotta-vkm/web/object/36954
	Beanie-hat	1916.03.0787 No.17772	Category: Personal item Subcategory: Headdress https://collections.smvk.se/ca/rlotta-vkm/web/object/2389803

TABLE 2: The selected objects for the analysis. Images by Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

Human and non-human interactions

I came across the collection of objects in the framework of another project, but at that time I could not really explore in depth what it meant in material terms.⁸³ For this thesis, I aimed to establish a closer relationship with the Iku collection and create a bridge of communication with it. Following the theories of Riello, I wanted to learn from the collection, from its history but also from what this materiality could mean and teach in this present (2023). As an example of that practice, I started to reflect on the relations that the objects currently have with humans

⁸³ I was studying the ecological, cultural, and social manifestations of resistance in the Iku craft practice.

and non-humans. The Iku objects are far from what was once their natural environment, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, and they are now in a totally different setting and networked with different things. Their current "natural" environment are the archive facilities that currently keeps them, the networked humans are the conservators who takes care of them, the students that might study them and it seems that their guardians and protectors are the machines and cabinets that keep them safe. Iku objects have depended on different actors, human and non-humans, in order to continue to exist.

Without a doubt, the Iku objects were also producing sensory and embodied reactions in me, such as touching, measuring, seeing even sighing, but also inciting me to move what I was experiencing to other places, Colombia. In my mind the Iku indigenous artisans where always present, "they have to see this" was I repeating in my head. The fact that objects are considered as conscious "beings" with soul for the Amerindian nations and for authors such as Latour,⁸⁴ made me think how the indigenous worldview and culture is so significant when interacting with objects. Other non-humans, such as the measuring instruments, the cellphone, and ultraviolet lamps, were key in my observations. The constant use of the devices in my study made me reflect on the objects agency that Latour mentions in his actor network theory. For Latour, for example, a microscope or a computer program such as a spreadsheet can be an actor with agency because they do things and allow us to do things that we otherwise would not have been able to do. Objects produce actions that have an impact on our perceptions. In my study, the use of these objects allowed me to reach places, that I would not be able to reach otherwise.

In my first field work one of the conservators explained how important it is to have control of the environmental conditions of relative humidity, light⁸⁵ and temperature to ensure optimal conservation. When it comes to the lighting, a subtle and controlled light must be emanated and firmly established to ensure the optimal conditions for the objects to be conserved. In order to deeply observe the textile objects, for example, for identifying, stains, the material and type of fibers, I had to make use of an ultraviolet lamp. This device allowed me to really reach the fibers and other hard-to-catch information. Thanks to the lamp, in some observations, I had the luck of finding entangled hair of presumably the person that could have been the weaver or spinner of the textile and fibers. The violet color indicated the hair traces [fig. 6]. According to Prown, the help of appropriate technical devices, such as tape measures,

⁸⁴ Latour's work and his relation with Amerindian knowledge is mentioned by María Iñigo Clavo, 05.

⁸⁵ According to the conservators, light can produce irreversible damage to textiles, everything that is exposed to light will have a cumulative effect over time and will then cause deterioration. If the high accumulation of radiation light, both solar and other radiation, reaches these textile objects, the object will be destroyed.

ultraviolet lamps, electronic microscopes, etc., are enhancers of the ability to perceive and take appropriate measurements of the objects.⁸⁶

The devices I used, were not only deployed by me to be observation instruments, but also became active actors capable of changing my observation if any mechanic failure occurred or in case of finding a new use for them, for example, in the non-expected situation of finding human hair traces entangled in the fibers. The cellphone, (without flash) became not only the device that kept and saved my visual memory but also an extension of my sight. I used it on several occasions as a magnifying glass, for example, to determine the type of stitch-technique used in some textiles. Being aware of the favors that objects, the non-human, provide, made the experience of interacting with materiality more profound and mindful. The appreciation and care towards material things, or non-humans, from the simplest to the most complex, became stronger during this work.

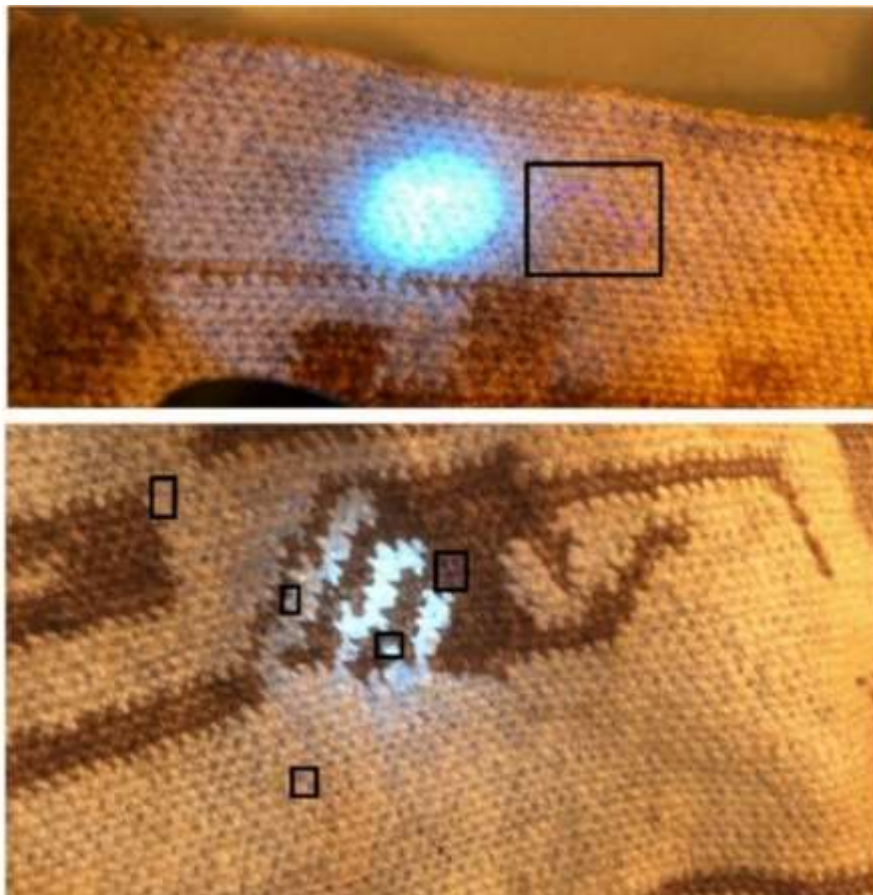


FIGURE 6: Video's screenshots made at the time of the observation with the help of the ultraviolet lamp.
Image by Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

⁸⁶ Jules Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method", 8.

Engaging with the Iku material culture

To engage with the Iku material culture, I used Prown's methodological approach, *Mind in matter* (1982), which consists of: describing, deducing, and speculating about the observed objects. The analysis starts from the description, where the purpose is to record the internal evidence of the object itself; to deduction, which refers to the interpretation and interaction between the object and the perceiver; to speculation, framing hypotheses and questions that lead from the object to external evidence for verification and resolution.⁸⁷ Prown's method was complemented with some important notions given by Palmer⁸⁸ and Riello⁸⁹ in regards to other relevant methodologies when studying objects such as oral accounts, visual analysis and archival research. Bibliographical review and oral sources were included in order to retrace the materiality based not only to its historical facts but also on contemporary narratives. Therefore, the oral account of the Iku Artisan Seykukwi⁹⁰ with whom I shared and discussed the collection, is included in this part of the study.

As Prown points out, various academic disciplines, particularly art history and archaeology, routinely work with artifacts as evidence. Prown proposes the methodology based on artifacts as primary data for the study of material culture, which can be used "actively as evidence rather than passively as illustrations".⁹¹ In the first part of the analysis - the description- I analyzed the object according to what Prown calls *substantial analysis*. The descriptions of my selected object included the physical dimensions, material identification, and reflections regarding the way the piece is assembled or manufactured. In the substantial analysis of the objects, questions such as what are they? what materials are involved? what is the iconography and motifs expressed in the object? and how the materials are put together in the manufacture? are queried.⁹² Following Prown's method, I will perform the descriptive analysis of the first chosen object, a traditional Iku mantle.

The mantle [fig. 7] is part of the Iku traditional male attire. This garment caught my attention due to its impeccable state of preservation. This mantle measures 102 centimeters wide and 205 long. The mantle is the part of the dress that covers the trunk from the shoulders to the knees. It shows a predominantly off-white-beige color with intricate black stripes running vertically. It is made of sheep's wool. According to museum records, it was collected by

⁸⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁸⁸ Alexandra Palmer, "New Directions: Fashion History Studies and Research in North America and England", 297-312.

⁸⁹ Giorgio Riello, "Things that shape history", 24-46.

⁹⁰ Meeting with Seykukwi, February 9, 2023.

⁹¹ Jules Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method", 1.

⁹² Ibid., 14.

Bolinder on his first research trip to Colombia between 1914-1915, which would indicate that it is a textile dating back at least 108 years. The label attached in one of its edges informs that it was introduced to the museum in 1916.



FIGURE 7: Images taken during the measurement and material analysis process of the traditional mantle. Image by Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez.

Following Prown, material culture is the study through artifacts of the beliefs-values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions of a given community or society at a given time. Accordingly, the process of making of this traditional mantle has a symbolic meaning for the Iku community. In the making process, the Iku's worldview is replicated and both husband and wife intervene in an alternate and complementary way. In the first step, the man gets the necessary elements to start the process, that is, traditionally cotton. The mantle that I studied in the archive, has the particularity of being made with sheep's wool. According to the Iku artisan Seykukwi, this material is not commonly used today, since cotton is the common one. The fact that it was made with wool suggest that perhaps the tradition has changed or that it belonged to a high hierarchy individual or to a mamo, who is the spiritual leader of the community. In the second

step, the woman frays the fiber, makes the rolls, and proceeds to spin with the spindle.⁹³ In the next step, the man weaves the blanket on the loom or *akunkuna*.⁹⁴ Finally, the woman elaborates the embroideries as the traditional mantles are typically embroidered at their lower ends.⁹⁵ From a historical perspective and according to Bolinder's documental sources,⁹⁶ the cut of the mantle is an elongated piece of cloth with a hole in the middle for the head without sews on the sides. The men's attire, reached just below the knees and the decoration of the fabric was limited to one border in the middle or two borders from the shoulders down. Around the waist, the mantle was held together by a wide belt-sash with fringes. He also described that the attire of an Iku man lasted between 5 to 6 years, since they were woven with a very thick and resistant fabric. Judging by Bolinder's records and comparing it with updated bibliography, the old and the new attire conserves its constitutive elements until today, the suit is composed by the mantle, pants, a beanie-hat,⁹⁷ a cloth sash, and several bags across the chest [fig. 8].



FIGURE 8: Traditional male attire composed by mantle, pants, sash, beanie-hat and bags. Illustration by Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez. Image courtesy of the Museo del Traje Bogotá-Colombia

⁹³ Artifact used for spinning. It consists of a wheel in the center of which a straight rod is inserted transversally on which the thread is wound in the spinning process.

⁹⁴ Word that translates loom in the Wintukwa, Arhuaco language.

⁹⁵ Alirio Torres Torres -Sewkukwy-. *El traje y el telar Iku. Colección Hilando Memoria Indígena*, (Bogotá: Fundación Universidad de América, 2009), 1-7.

⁹⁶ Gustaf Bolinder, *Ijca-Indianernas kultur. Bidrag till kännedomen om en chibcha-stam*, (Gothenburg: Alingsås tryckeri aktiebolag, 1918): 61.

⁹⁷ The men's daily attire according to Bolinder (1918, 61) also included a beanie-hat made of agave (plant fiber). It had a natural greyish-white color of the agave fiber, sometimes with some violet threads interwoven. The man wore it as an adult and rarely took it off. According to Seykukwi (Interview, 2023), currently the beanie-hat is made with cotton instead of agave fiber.

To complement the manufacturing description, and although the cultural aspects behind it are not included in Prown's methodology, I would like to highlight an important aspect in the making tradition of the Iku mantle. The creative skills of the artisan who creates the textile and the symbolism have a deep cultural meaning that is implicit in the craft of Iku weaving, knitting, and spinning. In the process of learning to spin, weave and knit traditional mantles, dresses, traditional bags (mochilas), hats, among others, a previous sacred initiation journey for the artisan is required.⁹⁸ According to Torres-Sewkukwy,⁹⁹ in this process, a vital relationship with this practice is established since the symbolic meaning is internalized, and assumed as the interweaving of the human and the sacred.

The place of weaving and knitting in the cultural Iku sphere has a complex and conceptual depth since according to their worldview, the act of establishing a union between people is manifested in the materiality itself. For the Iku culture, relationships between people are not far from the meaning of the weaving and spinning.¹⁰⁰ In both cases there is a constant fusion of energetic forces of different meanings that have the function of creating worlds through threads, that are at the same time connections of powerful energy between people.¹⁰¹ This makes a lot of sense when applying Latour's ANT¹⁰² states since we are all 'connected' or 'networked', all actors (human and non-human) producing all kinds of actions and intercessions.

On the other hand, the spiritual, cultural and symbolic notions of the Iku textile tradition are embedded into the materiality. This is very connected with what Claire Pajaczkowska call textile-thinking,¹⁰³ the place where the mind and body are not separated and this interaction is expressed in the materiality, whilst at the same time producing knowledge. The Iku mantle's manufacture process is the perfect example to illustrate a virtuous connection between the inner dimension or worldviews, between humans and non-humans, and materiality. According to

⁹⁸ Alirio Torres Torres -Sewkukwy-. El traje y el telar Iku. Colección Hilando Memoria Indígena, (Bogotá: Fundación Universidad de América, 2009), 1-7.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ In the sacred Iku sense, the matrimonial act entails the unification of energies and spirits of the couple, the word Jwa re' sun means reciprocally exchanging what we are, feel and carry in our essential and intimate being. Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Entwistle, "Bruno Latour, Actor-Network-Theory and Fashion", 308-322.

¹⁰³ The meaning of "Making," as the manual act of holding and manipulating and as a method of articulation between mind and materials and as a source of knowledge, is skillfully collected by Pajaczkowska in "Making Known" (2016). According to this author, in the post-industrial era, craft and material cultures that were once marginalized for lacking symbolic meaning and abstract thinking are increasingly being reconsidered as sources of knowledge. For her, materials and techniques are conceptual tools for thought. Claire Pajaczkowska, in *Making Known: The Textiles Tollbox - Psychoanalysis of Nine Types of Textile Thinking*, ed J. Jefferies, D. Wood Conroy y H. Clark. The Handbook of Textile Culture (Bloomsbury Academic 2016), 79-94.

Tim Ingold "Artifacts and monuments are the cast-offs of history, but materials, (..) are "on going historicity." Materials are not *in* time; they are the stuff of time itself".¹⁰⁴ The materials found in the objects and which are still used by the Iku artisans in their contemporary craft continue telling the history of a community struggles for defending their harmonic relationship with the earth. The materials represent past, present and future material culture logics.

Deduction is the second stage of the analysis proposed by Prown and it goes from the object itself to the relationship between the object and the perceiver. Here the analysis implies an "empathic linkage of the material or represented world of the object with the world of existence and experience of the perceiver".¹⁰⁵ At this stage, I will introduce the second object of study, the traditional Iku bag. The "Mochila Arhuaca" is how these traditional bags made by the Iku women are commonly known in Colombia. In local Iku language it is called "tutu". The word "mochila" in Spanish is used to describe this type of bag. [fig. 9].



FIGURE 9: Mochila Arhuaca, traditional Iku bag with unknown design in the archive.

According to Prown, the encounter between an object with its history and an individual with her history shapes the deductions. *Sensory engagement* is the first step in deduction and it refers

¹⁰⁴ Tim Ingold, "Toward an Ecology of Materials." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (2012): 427–42.

¹⁰⁵ Jules Prown, "Mind the matter. An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method", 8.

to the sensory experience with the object, what we see, hear, smell, taste, and feel is carefully recorded warranting objectivity.¹⁰⁶ The *emotional response* is the next action proposed by the deductive stage of Prown. If the object is not physically accessible, then the engagement with the objects must be necessarily done with imagination and empathy. The material interaction, produces immediate and diverse interpretations and deductions. The Iku bag has special connotations since it is an object that I saw and used during my upbringing. Here it is acknowledged that when it comes to familiar objects with which we have had previous approaches, the intentions of objectivity are blurred.

Although the Iku bag, is an indigenous object, it can be said that is also the most symbolic object that represents the “Colombianity”. This elongated shape of the bag is reproduced by several indigenous communities in Colombia, not only by the Iku. The variations lie in the technical processes involved and the graphic and symbolic representations. This type of bag has been a source of inspiration for many Colombian designers and artists, including the well-known fashion designer Silvia Tcherassi.¹⁰⁷ I, as a mestiza and western-educated woman, grew up seeing the Iku bag in its most diverse¹⁰⁸ facets. This bag can be colored, somber, unicolor, large, or small, anyone may appropriate it, and it has been appropriated in a positive way. In a Colombian context, the Iku bag is synonym of indigenous pride, it represents the ideal of a country to which its indigenous heritage was denied to install a modern system where there was no place for the “primitive”.

The bag is a “women’s matter”, since it is made exclusively by indigenous Iku women.¹⁰⁹ The Iku bag is for me an object that produces fascination and even fetishistic feelings (I personally have a vast collection of them at home). The fact that I am a designer and artisan specialized in bags would in part explain it. The same fascination was surely produced in Bolinder’s expedition, where around 30 of them were collected between 1914 and 1915, which are now part of the archive collection. The bag is the object with which I connect the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁷ Silvia Tcherassi, is one of the most important Colombian fashion designers. Silvia, together with other designers such as Moschino and Carolina Herrera have intervened the traditional bag of the Wayuu community in La Guajira, Colombia for which they have been criticized as cultural appropriators. For some persons from indigenous communities, the transformations of the traditional mochilas or bags by renowned designers change the symbolic meaning of the product, turning it into an haute couture product far from its roots. For others, the fact that great designers intervene in their crafts helps to promote the crafts of the region and its culture.

¹⁰⁸ The bags have different traditional uses depending on their size. For example, the regular size (tutugawu) is a personal and common item for the entire community. The small one (ziju) is for carrying coca leaves or Ayu. The big one (ukunun tutu) is used for long travels.

¹⁰⁹ The mochila knitting is a traditional Iku craft exclusive to women, taught to girls from an early age by mothers, and elder women in the community. Stefania Castelblanco-Pérez, Manifestations of nonviolent resistance in the mochila Iku Women’s craft. In *Decolonizing futures*, ed. Hiroshi Maruyama (Uppsala University 2022), 373-392.

most in the archive, because it is a feminine object, because it keeps the ancestral knowledge of the Iku woman and because it has served as a vehicle of social and ecological resistance for them.¹¹⁰ In aesthetic terms, it is rich in color¹¹¹ and design - up to 16 traditional geometric motifs embedded in its materiality have been identified, all alluding to balance and contact with nature.¹¹²

The Iku bag is traditionally made with locally grown cotton and the sheep's wool subsequently introduced by the Spanish is now considered one of its constitutive materials. This chosen bag in the archive struck me since it has geometric representations that I had not seen before in the contemporary bag. The pattern has not been described so far by the experts in the matter and the use of color also seems to differ from what is being written about these traditional bags. The subtle differences in terms of color and shape can be perceived when comparing the bags in the archive with the more updated bags [fig. 10], it can be deduced that the latest have been evolving and adapting in style to the new times.



FIGURE 10: Contemporary Iku bags in “La despensa de la Tierra,” Indigenous craft store in Bogotá

¹¹⁰ Stefania Castelblanco-Pérez, “Craft as resistance: A case study of three Indigenous craft traditions”. *Craft Research Journal*, 13 (2), (June 2022): 387, accessed April 27, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1386/crrr_00085_1

¹¹¹ According to Bolinder, the local coloring plants used by the Iku to dye, were the ones that gave the best and most durable colors to the wool, cotton, and agave fibers. According to Bolinder, black and white wool was commonly used alternately. The base color was white and the decorations were usually black with some red motifs inserted. In other cases, the colors yellow, brown, and violet are also alternated. (Bolinder, 1918, 151)

¹¹² Armando Aroca, Una propuesta metodológica en etnomatemática. *Revista UDCA de Actualidad & Divulgación Científica* 11(1), (Cartagena: Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas y Ambientales, 2008): 67-76.

Prown explains that the encounter between an object with its history and an individual with her history shapes the deductions. According to Palmer “a material culture analysis can be drawn from the personal biographies embedded in the clothes and supplemented with the oral histories of those who designed, made, modeled, sold, bought and wore them”.¹¹³ In this part of the study, and following principles of ethical stewardship, such as two-way communication and working in partnership with indigenous peoples when it comes to descriptions and identification of indigenous material in archives and museums, I consider appropriate to include the reflections shared by the Iku artisan Seykukwi, with whom I shared the archive material. I consider that Seykukwi’s reflections are key to achieve more accurate deductions. I met Seykukwi on February 9 and 23 in Bogotá, to talk about the objects and the collection in the museum archive. For my meeting, I brought the printed photographic material, my computer with my notes, videos, and technical data sheets [fig. 11]. Seykukwi is the leader of the indigenous students at the National University of Colombia, he currently studies medicine and is also a skilled textile artisan. When we first met, I asked him if he desired to be mentioned in my texts and possible publications that may result from this investigation, which he accepted.



FIGURE 11: Photo-memory of the meeting with Seykukwi, at the National University of Colombia, on February 9, 2023. My computer and Seykukwi’s *Poporo*, a personal item always carried by Iku men.

¹¹³ Alexandra Palmer, “New Directions: Fashion History Studies and Research in North America and England”, 302.

Seykukwi's specialty is the making of bags, a craft practice that has been traditionally performed by women and that he has inherited with skill and virtuosity from his mother and grandmother. He and I share a particular interest apart from the bags, we both study Iku material culture and are looking for material traces of this heritage in our country. He shares that it is difficult to find information in this regard, since there are no easily accessible institutions or museums, specialized to study these matters. Although there are academic works carried out to describe and narrate the Iku material culture, there are no physical repositories where to properly study this materiality. The country's history of widespread violence and inequality,¹¹⁴ have not allowed to dedicate enough efforts to the study and rescue of the traditional crafts and indigenous material culture. The potential institutions where the Iku materiality could be made accessible, could perhaps be the ethnographic archive of the National Museum and the Museum of Attire, both in Bogotá.¹¹⁵ However, these museums do not currently have exhibitions on the Iku material culture and seem not to be interested in studying materiality in terms of the evolution of technique, changes in style and old and new trends.

The predominance of Western culture and its colonial mentality of seeing indigenous objects as objects of the past, from a mere anthropological and historical lens, has not allowed for spaces where the study of their uses and values from a contemporary, updated and more diverse perspective could be stimulated. I would venture to say that it is not until a few years ago, at a general level in Colombia, that indigenous heritage finally began to gain more importance in the design industry and academia.

For Seykukwi, the photos of the collection were exciting and suggestive, he immediately connected empathetically with them. "For me it is exciting to see these objects, the state of conservation and even all the symbolic representations that they have".¹¹⁶ Unquestionably, a magnetic connection seemed to exist between Seykukwi and all the objects. While we were looking at them, and me re-telling my observations, he was sharing his reflections on the matter. We talked about techniques, materials,¹¹⁷ and uses. Many questions

¹¹⁴ Over the last 50 years, Colombia, has been marked by ongoing socio-political challenges such as inequality, drug trafficking, corruption and armed conflict. These issues have led to widespread violence, displacement, and human rights abuses. Despite the efforts to address these problems, they continue to fuel unrest and protest in the country.

¹¹⁵ I had the opportunity to go to both museums and to have access to the repositories after prior appointment. The city's ethnographic archive of the National Museum, is open for investigation; however, it is difficult to access for persons who do not live in Bogotá or who are in the periphery of the country. My impression is that if one is a student or researcher, access might be a little bit easier. In the costume museum there is a sample of the traditional Iku costume but only a modern version, they do not have old versions of the dress.

¹¹⁶ Meeting with Seykukwi, February 9, 2023.

¹¹⁷ According to Seykukwi, in the photos of the archive bags it can be easily seen many different materials, for example, fique, sheep's wool, cotton. Also, the natural tensions (knitting techniques).

originated from him during the session. For example, there are 16 traditional motifs in mochilas that have been previously identified as those that are replicated from generation to generation and that allude to key elements of the Iku worldview and its relationship with nature, its political organization, and its religion. However, among the NMWC archive bags there are many that do not respond to those traditional designs. Several bags design appear to be unique designs from those artisans who wanted to capture a personal vision. In regards to this, Seykukwi said: "The symbols that are represented in many of them (the archive bags) are still preserved with their meanings, but there are also some representations that are not common, and I would think are rather the personal design of the artisan that has been working on them."¹¹⁸ and continues, "that leads me to think that culture has had the opportunity to be constantly innovating and creating new designs, representations of what is seen and what is wanted to be shown."¹¹⁹

In the case of the bag chosen to exemplify this step, Seykukwi did not recognize "traditional" elements in it and deducted that it is possibly a personal representation of the artisan who made it at least 108 years ago. The fact that this motif, together with others found in other bags, has not been identified, represents a very interesting topic for future fashion studies scholars and indigenous academics interested in traditional dress research. Seykukwi also highlights that the use of the colors, red, violet, black and light background, were more common in the past in his community. Seykuwi's deduction process was different from mine, his reflections were originated from different mind-places and knowledge. His encounter between the object, or the photos of the object, and his personal history as an indigenous Iku member configured his surely more accurate and robust deductions. At this point, I also highlight that following Prown's suggestion to maintain rigorous deductive objectivity is difficult, dealing with objects that, in this case, for Seykukwi are not strangers to his cultural background.

Having moved from the object itself in the description stage to the interaction between object and perceiver in deduction, Prown points out that analysis now turns to speculation - here theories and hypotheses are proposed. The speculation stage begins with a review of the information established in the descriptive and deductive stages to later formulate hypotheses. Prown's methodology suggests that in this final stage, speculation about the possible uses, techniques and other questions may arise. When observing the objects, I realized that although

¹¹⁸ Meeting with Seykukwi, February 9, 2023.

¹¹⁹ Meeting with Seykukwi, February 9, 2023.

I was familiar with the Iku craft tradition, my knowledge was still very limited to give certain answers to uses, iconography and techniques for some of the objects and especially the one that I will present next. In the moment, I confirmed my initial sentiment that for this materiality to be properly identified and analyzed, the help of the indigenous artisans was very needed. At this point I started to develop a special sheet where I registered the objects while adding notes and possible questions for the artisans and experts in Colombia. In my mind, I had firmly rooted the idea that in contrasting the objects information given in Bolinder's descriptions, plus my direct observations, supported by interviews with an indigenous member, the object- study process would be more accurate.

For this final stage – speculation - I will introduce a third object that I, after a mindful consideration, included in this work. This stage of the object-based study had to be supported not only by previous studies in Iku material culture, but also by the oral accounts of Iku Indigenous members and academic experts. Only this, could hopefully give more precise and suitable answers. The third chosen object is a ceremonial hat, the next figure [fig. 12] illustrates the images taken during the observation of this complex object in the museum archive facilities in January 2022. The same images were subsequently shared with other persons in Colombia.



FIGURE 12: Images taken during the observation of the Iku ceremonial hat. By Stefania Castelblanco Pérez

This object is perhaps the one that caused the most impact on me and on the persons with whom I shared its images. Before speculating on possible uses and hypotheses for this object as Prown proposes for the speculative step, it is necessary to offer some important ethical considerations. This hat, according to Bolinder's descriptions, is:

“Mössa av bomull med fjäderprydnader för den hemliga, religiösa dansen. Skall egentligen göras av fjädrar av alla fåglar som finns på jorden. "Kákko" samman namn som solen i relativ bemärkelse”¹²⁰ Bolinder, 1916

Which in English would translate to;

"Cotton hat with feather decorations for the secret religious dance. It should be made of feathers of all the birds that exist on earth. "Kákko" the same name of the sun in a relative sense".

Based on Bolinder's description, it seems that we are talking about a ceremonial object used for specific secret Iku religious rituals. The fact that it is ceremonial brings into question several aspects. First, that it is an object whose diffusion and study must be done under special conditions. The descriptive text taken from Bolinder's records should be taken with caution since the source, Bolinder, is an individual who is a stranger to the community and therefore is crossed by his bias and the culture to which he belonged. Although the scientific tradition to which Bolinder adhered (see chapter 1), was ruled by strict scientific parameters characteristic of the ethnography of the time, the information recorded could also respond to unequal power dynamics between the western researcher and the local indigenous and the indigenous cultural exoticism of the time. In this thesis, I want to state that the preliminary speculations about the use, the techniques, and other hypotheses about this object, have been the result of dialogues and conversations with persons who have had contact with the Iku community for several years, or are members of the community such as Seykukwi, who shared his knowledge on the subject.

Secondly, I would like to state that the dialogues included in this work are not general positions, neither of the Iku community nor of the academic interviewees, but speculations, opinions, and knowledge offered by the persons with whom I conversed. It is thus important to

¹²⁰ Världskulturmuseet, "Collections". Accessed March 29, 2023, <https://collections.smvk.se/carlotta-vkm/web/object/38760>

mentions that they do not pretend to represent the groups to which they belong. At this point, it is also important to mention that there is currently a debate in regards to the use of cultural heritage materials in publications, exhibitions, and research.¹²¹ In the United States, for example, the Native American Grave Repatriation and Protection Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 required museums and federal agencies to inventory their holdings for ancestral remains and grave goods, provide these inventories to descendant indigenous communities and consult with those communities about material culture management and repatriation. NAGPRA, prioritizes decolonial principles in all aspects of museum operations. Other mechanism such as the stipulated in Part 2 of Article 11 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) adopted by the General Assembly on September 13, 2007, specifically recommends that states and institutions protect cultural values, intellectual, religious, and spiritual property of indigenous communities. The Article 12 of the same convention deals specifically with the rights of indigenous peoples to request the repatriation of their ancestors and ceremonial objects.

The Iku ritual hat, was collected by Bolinder between 1914-1915 in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and was introduced to the museum in 1916. Bolinder was very interested in the religious practices of the Iku. During my field visits to the archive, I could register not only ceremonial objects such as this hat, but also dried medicine plants, little bags used for keeping medicine, ritual stones, and other elements of religious nature. Bolinder studied Iku religious practices in depth, especially what he called the secret dances. In the chapter, “De dystra dansfesterna”,¹²² Bolinder, recounts the different types of rituals that involved dances and mass gatherings of the community. According to him, Iku men and women were very devoted to the preparations for these rituals and took care of every detail including the outfits worn during the rites. For the ceremonies, the attire-garments were seen as protection vehicles according to the Iku traditional authorities.¹²³ According to Bolinder, the hat, played a big role in the ritualistic gatherings since it was a central complement of the man's attire during the “secret dances”.¹²⁴

For Seykukwi, it was emotive to see the hat. He confirmed that this object represents some elements of the traditional dances performed by the mamos and the elders, and make part

¹²¹ Ryan Wheeler, Jaime Arsenault, Maria Taylor. “Beyond NAGPRA/Not NAGPRA”. *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals*, 18 Issue 1 (March 02, 2022): 9.

¹²² According to Bolinder, men, women, and even people who did not belong to the community, such as whites were invited to some of those gatherings (Bolinder, 1953): 103.

¹²³ Bolinder (1953), 117.

¹²⁴ Bolinder's book “Ijka-Indianernas kultur,” (1918, 212, 284) offers detailed descriptions on uses, symbology and the material characteristics of this object. The original Bolinder's hat description in swedish refers to ”Denna är av bast eller för mamas av bomull och prydd med fjädrar -av alla fåglar som finnas-. Den kallas (liksom solenguden caque).

of the tradition that they aim to keep alive. He explained that the hat, is a cultural element that indigenous members like him, who do not belong to religious authorities, normally do not have access to because it is exclusive to the authorities and to those specific rituals. He also shared that it is said that these traditions may become extinct and in process of disappearing. He said that, many times, these objects have been documented by photographs or by images in some museums and not so much in the daily life of the community. When asking Seykukwi about possible frictions or conflicts between the institutions that keep these objects of indigenous origin with the indigenous communities, he said that certainly, this may cause some conflicts especially when it comes to the custody of objects that are for ritual use and that belong to the religious authorities (discussion in chapter 3).

To end this section, I want to highlight that this object analysis exercise could not have been done without the help of Seykukwi, who really brought the object's history to life and put it in dialogue with the present and with the original culture to which it is still attached. I also want to highlight that Bolinder's books: *Ijca-indianernas kultur* and *Indianernas Hemliga Värld*, were of great help to understand the use and context of the objects from a historical perspective. I could realize that Bolinder's studies have contrasted information even with other prominent Colombian academics of the time. I found that the descriptions that he includes seem to be fed largely by people from the Iku community who shared details of his culture with him. In order to continue prioritizing decolonial principles, I did not want to include more photos than necessary taken in the archive by myself, or from the consulted sources of Bolinder's archival material, (photos, books, technical sheets). Thus, I put the respective reference as a footnote for further consultation. It was also very needed to involve other methods and other sources of data collection, as Palmer suggest, such as oral accounts that move beyond the materiality, especially by persons pertaining to the Iku indigenous community such as Seykukwi.

Learning, Unlearning and Re-learning

For this study, connecting empathically with those who are the owners and the creators of the objects (Iku-Arhuacos), those who admired and collected them (Bolinder and his wife) and with those who have cared for them (the museum and the curators of the objects), was essential to be able to carry out a conscious and balanced analysis, freer from prejudice as Prown suggests. At this stage, I am presumably aware of my own place in this research, and I acknowledge that I aim to apply decolonial principles. However, this makes me reflect on the fact that describing and observing these indigenous objects and “conceptualizing” them with

western theories to try to understand them could be seen as a colonial action in itself. It almost seems that I am displacing the power that the Iku indigenous women and men impregnate in their textiles to another sphere - the academic and the aesthetic. Is it something they would want? I wonder to what extent I myself reproduce a colonizing power with this academic work.

The fact that this study required me to observe the objects from different angles and perspectives such as material, historical, contemporary and decolonial, required for me to be attentive to learn new forms of interpretation and to unlearn previous learned approaches. I acknowledged that in the study of materials, as full of history, cultural, political and social content such as the Iku, it is necessary to repeatedly question the place, the language and the predominant vision that tends to privilege the western, written, and modern knowledge. The intersection of data coming from oral knowledge; visual analysis, Bolinder's literature and other written sources, and objects as primary source material helped to build new material narratives as well as to identify new and old narratives and features of the objects studied. Palmer highlights that the artifacts do not speak for themselves; therefore, structured methodologies are needed for their interpretation and construction of meaning. In this case, I can acknowledge that Prown's methodology served as a useful guidance to analyse the objects in an organized and profound way that had to be complemented with oral knowledge.

The experience of having access to the material objects firsthand definitely meant a rich and stimulating research experience. The objects had the skill of awaking all the senses and put them to work towards a single goal: the study of one object and its meaning beyond its materiality. The archive of the Museum of World Culture is a space that produced great comfort in me. The curator, and the persons in charge of the collections were significant to make the process easier for someone with no previous experience in physical archival study. The availability of the necessary tools to observe and touch with the possibility to ask someone about handling and care was very beneficial. I personally consider the facilities of the archive, although sometimes lonely and overwhelming, as a magnificent container of material culture knowledge from all corners of the world, especially when it comes to historical indigenous material culture.

Chapter 3. Discussing the Iku collection in southern latitudes: Value, Memory, Representation and Agency

In this chapter, I analyze how key actors in Colombia, with the help of physical photographs and other material provided during the face-to-face semi-structured interviews, connected with the Iku objects from the National Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg. During the interviews, information was collected on how they interpret the collection according to their professional and personal interests. The goal was not only to capture their immediate perceptions but also to gain knowledge in regards to value, ethical handling, representation, repatriation and potentialities of the collection. This chapter, also brings together theory, Bolinder's material, Iku material culture analysis and the interviews to identify in what ways the applied methodology helped to discuss profound aspects embedded in the materiality. First, I briefly describe the experience of the semi-structured interview and its process of systematization and enunciation of findings. In the second section, I focus on explaining the findings in detail grouped into four main categories of discussion and analysis: value, memory, representation and agency. A final discussion is offered at the end of the chapter.

The six persons consulted for this thesis were interviewed by using the same set of questions. Although the interviews were designed to answer open-ended questions, they resulted more in two-ways conversations where the interviewees also asked about aspects related to the acquisition of the objects, Bolinder expedition and the current physical condition of the collection in their present geographical location. During the interviews, it became clear that all the interviewees shared a significant interest in material culture and evidenced curiosity in the ethical handling of this indigenous heritage. In the initial stages of data analysis, I used Word to create thematic templates to analyze and categorize the material. Subsequently, I processed the interviews by finding general themes and subthemes, and finally I used the software Voyanttools¹²⁵ to process the interviews simultaneously and to find key quotes in regards the categories of analysis.

¹²⁵ Voyant Tools is an open-source web application for performing text analysis. It enables academic reading and facilitate the interpretation of texts or corpus for scholars in digital humanities. It is used to analyze texts online or uploaded by users.

The fact that the physical photos of the collection served as a “mobile museum archive” of the Iku objects for the interviewees in Colombia suggests that the methodology of the semi-structured interviews was complemented with the object-based study methodology performed and developed in the previous chapter. The use of physical photography helped to encourage communication stimulated by visual aids. Although the physical objects were not present, the photographic and filmed material were able to produce spontaneous reactions and stimulation of the senses in the interviewees. In the data analysis, four themes resonated the most: value, memory, representation and agency. The subthemes were summarized in contemporary and historical value, temporality, meaning, ethical stewardship, accessibility and democratization of data. [fig. 13]: The interview with Adriana Muñoz, curator of the Americas collection in the NMWC, is also part of the discussion in regards to the four categories identified; value, memory, representation and agency.

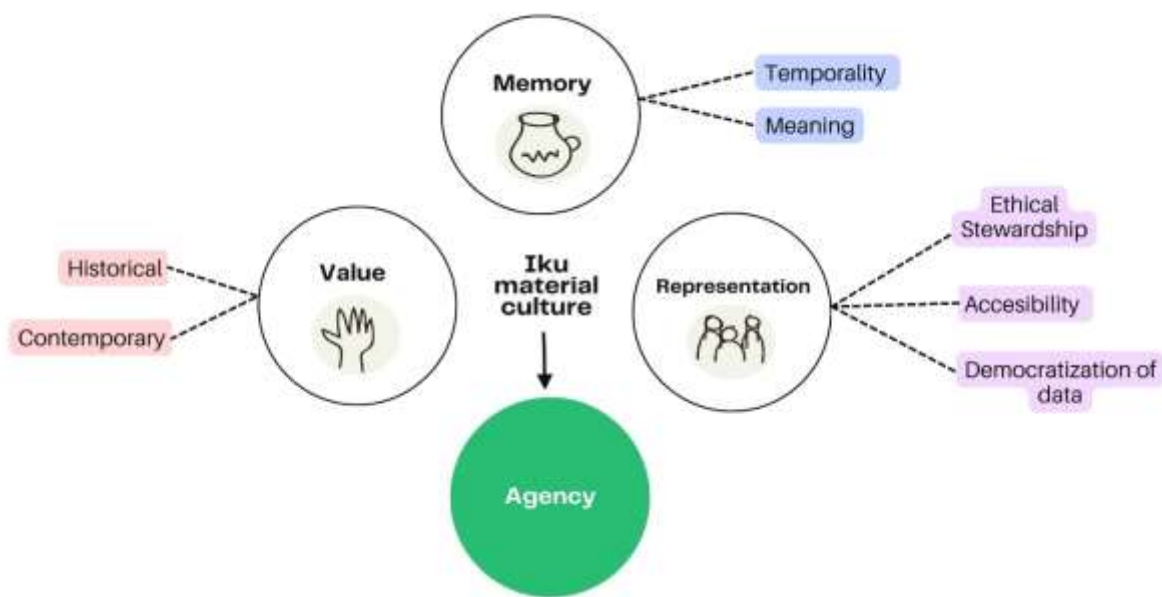


FIGURE 13: Main themes of analysis identified in the interviews. By Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

Value

As previously mentioned, a relevant notion that Prown contributes in his work is the attached value associated with material objects.¹²⁶ Furthermore, he suggests that value is quite persistent and can be conferred by us today, or by people at any time in between, this reflection is key when analysing the data collected. The responses of the interviews evidenced that the persons

¹²⁶Jules Prown, “Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method”, 3.

could identify a variety of values in the Iku collection in the NMWC. Depending on their professional trajectory, they perceive *value* in a different way, historical-patrimonial and contemporary were the main types of values addressed by the interviewees.

According to Consuelo Colmenares,¹²⁷ expert in textile conservation and professional archivist, this collection has all kinds of values, but the ones that awoke more attention refer to the historical, aesthetical and patrimonial values. She found that the material qualities of the Iku objects in the collection, safe-guarded significant knowledge of past textile traditions and other valuable knowledge of antique Colombian material culture. The symbology that is represented in the textile graphic motifs, according to her, is of great value since there are inscribed past representations of the country's cultural heritage barely studied in Colombia. In this regard she says;

“The materiality observed in the photography, shows that the collection is in a very good condition, which means that they offer great possibilities for being studied and for complementing the understanding we have of the Iku/Arhuaco culture in Colombia”.

She highlighted that difficulties remain in Colombia when it comes to allocate resources to perform research and publications regarding the history of textile material culture. For her, the Iku collection at the museum offers a great opportunity to study indigenous culture from both a material and historical point of view. For Seykukwi Fuentes,¹²⁸ the Iku textile artisan and leader of the Indigenous Student's Council at the National University of Colombia in Bogotá, the collection has an important historical value as well. He refers to the collection as a “photography over time”, especially because some of the objects in the collection are for daily use. In this regard he states;

“The bags, are not meant to be preserved but to be used until they deteriorate, so they continue the cycle of life until new natural-made objects replace them. It is difficult to find this old material because it is precisely made to disappear”.

¹²⁷ Interview with Consuelo, February 14, 2023

¹²⁸ Interview with Seykukwi, February 9, 2023

According to Prown, in certain cases, prehistoric or preliterate societies, or in this case pre-colonial and pre-Columbian societies, for example, the objects constitute the only surviving evidence, so it is very relevant to use them as best as possible to determine culture, values and historical facts. Following Prown, the Iku collection is perfectly suited for establishing artistic and culture details of the arhuaco people back in time. For Seykukwi, looking at the preserved objects is a retrospective look at the techniques that artisans used at least 100 years ago, therefore, they preserve important traditions for the community. Regarding the ritual hat, it means conserving parts of traditions that may become extinct due to western acculturation.

In addition to the historical aspect, the collection, according to Seykukwi, has significant craft and textile knowledge value. Since the materiality of the textiles can be observed, touched and even worn, they are suitable for being studied and replicated. According to him, the symbology of the textiles has meanings that are still preserved within the community but also, there seem to be some graphic representations that are hard to find nowadays. That, for him, would also mean a look to past representations of the artisans of the time and possibility for new contemporary learning. For Seykukwi, the historic value is connected with “the collective” since some of the objects, especially the ritual ones until today represent the “equilibrium” of the territory since they are created for guaranteeing harmonious life for the community. According to the professor in Industrial design at the National University of Colombia, César Galán,¹²⁹ this collection has multiple values, he considers that it can contribute to anthropological, sociological and historical study. He agrees with other interviewees that the good state of conservation of the collection would allow the academy in Colombia to recover Iku indigenous knowledge not previously valued.

Memory

According to Palmer¹³⁰ in an analysis of material culture, personal biographies embedded in clothing can be extracted and complemented by the oral histories of those who designed, made, fashioned, sold, bought, and used them. This infers that there are memories embedded in clothing that by an in-depth study can be addressed. The engagement of the interviewees with materiality produced deep emotional reactions connected with memory. For Seykukwi these objects are proof of parts of Iku history therefore, in his words, a “living memory” of how these communities engaged and related to the world through their material culture. In that sense, the

¹²⁹ Interview with César Galán, February 23, 2023

¹³⁰ Alexandra Palmer, “New Directions: Fashion History Studies and Research in North America and England”, 303.

collection may be considered as a tangible memory for an indigenous community that, as the other almost 106 ethnic groups in Colombia, has faced extremely difficult socio-political circumstances as a result of a history of intense armed conflict and western acculturation.

For César Galán, the collection serves as memory on how the Iku people have navigated across time. For him, memory is very related with the notion of transcendence, permanence, and temporality. He added that “the collection is a memory which we undoubtedly have no trace of in Colombia, and we should embrace it to learn significant lessons”. According to him, we build memory through objects, and to be able to trace Iku objects in the collections, clearly produces values connected with emotion, affection and meaning. He explained that the possession of appreciated objects and the connection with them via memory allows us to probably not to throw them away and give a different and a more profound value to utilitarian and non- utilitarian artifacts. He explains that nowadays, in the industrial design industry, we manufacture more and more objects that do not make sense because we are not endowing them with meaning, in that sense, he states;

“Objects are losing value from the beginning or from the mere moment of their conception or production. When a thing is not valued, it is simply insignificant and is discarded as easily as it was produced and later acquired. The knowledge embedded in the collection is an invitation for design practitioners and for everyone in general to through the materiality appreciate a culture that teaches from the past, millennia ago, in other (and maybe better) logics of life and connection with others and with the earth”.

He highlights that these indigenous objects teach us that there are complex objects with symbolic meanings and powerful materials that allows to appreciate the objects and not to discard them easily since they contain much more than materiality. He also states that since the indigenous communities are a non-hegemonic group or community, vital memory is kept in the objects, for him, it is impressive that these objects have remained and perpetuated their materiality until today. According to Consuelo Colmenares, the archives are the guardians of historical memory, because they are keepers of everything that has been valued over time, so they are primary documental sources that may help to generate new knowledge. For her, the collection also means an element of global memory. According to her, the relationship between the museum in the north, Sweden, with Colombia is largely determined by the ability of these countries to create spaces to encourage a correct appropriation of this cultural heritage, not only

by the community to which it belongs, and but also by other educational entities. For her, this should evoke a common interest between the North and the South since it is a material that can be considered today as part of the historical memory of both countries.

Representation and ethical stewardship

As mentioned earlier, according to Wheeler et al.,¹³¹ institutions have been gradually responding to calls from indigenous nations, scholars and other institutions to developing and implementing ethical agreements with the descendant communities represented in the collections, when it comes to care, access and management. These agreements recommend to update web pages, educate staff to ensure better ethical administration and decolonization work at all levels of the museological institutions in collaboration with indigenous communities.¹³² As mentioned in chapter 1, there is currently a list of legal tools at the international level for states to comply with the rights of indigenous peoples. These legal tools aim to protect the rights of indigenous peoples in terms of human rights and in terms of respect and protection of their material and immaterial legacies. In this work, all the interviewees agreed that the representation, participation and mutual collaboration with the Iku community is key in ethical handling and care of the indigenous collections.

According to Seykukwi, since the collection offers a great opportunity to learn from the objects and to recuperate indigenous knowledge, traditions and valuable memory for the Iku community, Iku indigenous representatives should be included. He addresses that when it comes to handling of collection with indigenous content, this should be done according to ethical principles and considering a collaborative approach. He states that this can be done in partnership with the museum and other institutions and individuals interested in these matters. In this regard Seykukwi says;

“These objects should have had a natural process of deterioration, but since they were conserved and taken to another place, I believe that all the actors that are now involved could be part of their conservation, diffusion and handling”.

When it comes to repatriation procedures, Seykukwi addresses that depending on the nature of the objects themselves, it is possible to consider repatriation if necessary. In this case, a deep

¹³¹ Wheeler et al., “Beyond NAGPRA/Not NAGPRA”, 8-17.

¹³² Ibid.,15.

study of the objects in terms of materiality is required, he explains that when it comes to the ceremonial objects, the traditional spiritual authorities are those who should be consulted and involved in identification and description processes. He explains that;

“There is an important matter in regards to the spiritual aspect of these objects, since they have not been in the territory for a long time, they have not been used according to their initial purpose and this could mean that they may have acquired another charge in spiritual terms. The traditional authorities are the ones who can accurately identify the objects and connect them with their lineage and from there determine what to do, if they stay, or if they should return and how”.

This infers that important decisions regarding the handling and care depend on the analysis made by the authorities of the community, therefore their participation is necessary. Ati Quigua,¹³³ Iku leader and activist and Seykukwi agree that in case that the objects are considered for a possible repatriation process, once in Colombia, the distance factor must be carefully studied when deciding on a new location for the objects. Seykukwi clarifies that when it comes to repatriation, specialized institutions that can properly handle those objects, should be created in Colombia. These institutions should work for bringing them closer to the original communities. These new institutions, specific either by regions or by cultural sectors, should be in charge of the conservation, not only of the objects but also of the cultural identity, and the memory of the territories from which they were stolen. For some of the interviewed, the fact that the objects arrive to Colombia does not necessarily mean that they can be closer to the community. The fact that they are in the museum in Gothenburg or in a museum in Bogotá, the capital, does not alleviate the problem of ethical access and open accessibility for the community.

According Ochoa-Jiménez¹³⁴ the processes of formation of collections of archaeological or ethnographic objects entail great complexity, for this reason, they should be carefully studied when picturing repatriation processes. She states that when it comes to possible repatriations of collections with indigenous material, generalizations should be avoided. According to Adriana Muñoz¹³⁵ Americas curator at the NMWC, there is no general rule for all repatriation requests, each case is taken individually since the histories of each group

¹³³ Meeting with Ati Quigua, January 21, 2023

¹³⁴ Ochoa-Jiménez, “Apuntes para una tipología de casos de sustitución”, 40-45.

¹³⁵ Interview with Adriana Muñoz, Abril 13, 2023

and of each collection entails different handling. Adriana explains that recent repatriation cases like the Yaqui¹³⁶ from Mexico, and in general all the cases received from Latin America, begin as a result of a conflict or a situation of mistrust in the past. She states that;

“The collections are requested because they are considered to have been usurped, stolen, looted, there is a conflict and a feeling of mistrust from the beginning. In this regard, the European museums have a big responsibility”.

When a collection repatriation request initiates, she explains, a review of the collection is needed as well as how the objects were acquired. In this process, it must be clarified if the acquisition was illegal or not, either way, the collections most of the times are demanded to be returned. For the return to be accepted, she explains, a meeting of ministers is called and they subsequently decide and propose to the Swedish State to dispense with this heritage material. Is important to clarify that once in Sweden, the objects are considered heritage of the Swedish state and in order to return them, all the ministers should agree, generally following what the museum recommends.

Adriana explains that in some cases, political tensions or differences between Sweden and the claiming country mean that a repatriation is not accomplished. She explains that for example, in 2007, Bolivia, headed by the left-wing president Evo Morales, demanded the return of a Bolivian collection. At that time the Sweden’s right-wing government in charge refused the claim, even though the museum recommended the return of the objects. It was not until 2022 and after a second advice from the museum to return the material, that the government started to consider repatriation, this time accepting the petition to give the objects back to the claimant country, “We know that there are relations at the international level that manage, among other things, culture” addresses Adriana.

The curator in charge of the Americas collection at the NMWC also agrees that the contact with the communities is key to making these collections more useful and meaningful, however, she explains that so far, no requests from Colombia have arrived, neither from the communities nor from the Colombian state. According to her, if a petition from Colombia is received, the first thing that must be done is to review the collection, to contact specialists who

¹³⁶ The Yaqui Case, “Repatriation from different perspectives”. Online exhibition that shows the process that was carried out between the Jaqui community in Mexico and the NMWC in Gothenburg in 2022. Accessed May, 10, 2023. <https://www.varldskulturmuseerna.se/samlingarna/aterlamnande-av-foremal-ur-samlingarna/EL-CASO-YAQUI/>

help in the process to determine where the material should be returned - to the National Museum in Bogotá or to the communities directly. She adds that for the museum, it is important to determine if the repatriation request comes from a consensus voice from the community or if there are divergent voices within the community and she highlights that an exhaustive investigation is necessary. She clarifies that cultural exchanges also depend on the political environment, but also on the commercial relations between the countries. According to César Galán, the decision to participate or not in the management of the collections and the participation of the community is a question that must be answered by the community itself. He clarifies that;

“Ultimately the community is who can make the decisions about whether it is convenient, if it is feasible, if it is fair or necessary, or if there is simply disinterest or lack of concern for this materiality”.

According to César, the indigenous peoples continue to be, despite all the international legal protection development, the communities that have less cultural, geographical and geopolitical relevance. Therefore, the representation in this type of issues and many others by the indigenous peoples should be necessary. He states that the number of people that compose them has been substantially minimized, and that they remain the victims to this day of what is known in many places as “Western acculturation”. He adds that;

“Unfortunately, almost everything that we, the contemporary human beings, have invented at an institutional level with a collective character has deep cracks. Institutions such as the United Nations, and other multicultural international organizations that have assumed this conversation between multiple cultures, countries, nations, ways of seeing life, have lost those original values, and today they do not recognize that their efforts were insufficient to ensure equality for the indigenous and other vulnerable societies”.

For him, the fact that the objects still exist, and are part of the collections, should also make us wonder what are the real interests behind the institutions, people, states, etc. who maintain them. According to Consuelo, the representation of the Iku community is important when it comes to identification and material restauration since they are the only ones who could recognize their ancestry and contribute to a more exhaustive investigation and study of those

textiles, tools and other items. She adds that it is also important that the greatest number of instances, sectors and voices from both countries should be included in the discussion of these collections since each one can give a valid approach from their own perspective.

According to Margarita Reyes,¹³⁷ curator in charge of the ICANH's¹³⁸ heritage research projects, the representatives of the indigenous communities have a fundamental role in handling and care. She highlights that when it comes to ethical handling, not only the voice coming from the most prominent voices in the community, the traditional authorities, but also the voices of young indigenous women, and men who are concerned about their material culture heritage should be included in the discussions. She explains that the implementation of cross-sectional methodologies in managing the collections can help in this regard. She says;

“This means that the collections are not an objective in itself, but they are part of a bigger political, cultural and social debate and can be approached from different perspectives and angles, such as fashion, craft knowledge, human rights perspectives, conservation studies, political participation, etc”.

Material culture, agency and epistemodiversity

According to Adriana, the fact that the NMWC brings together the material culture of indigenous communities from around the world and from Sweden, with the Sami collections, could imply important potential contributions especially for the indigenous communities. She explains that in the NMWC there is nothing that represents the upper classes and the elites since these are the ones that belong to the predominant museums of history around the world, according to her, “elite societies are the ones that are considered as part of universal history under a western mentality”. The indigenous people, from a Western perspective, have been considered only as part of ethnography and the museums of Latin American countries followed this structure. This fact supposes that ethnography museums can be considered today as the only places that keep and conserve indigenous materiality and accordingly the places which also protect valuable knowledge for the revitalization and vindication of indigenous cultures. Adriana emphasizes that historically, indigenous communities were not considered "kulturfolk", but "naturfolk", so it is very typical in the United States, for example, that almost all natural history museums are the ones that have indigenous materials.

¹³⁷ Interview with Margarita Reyes, February 25, 2023

¹³⁸ Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History (ICANH)

The positive thing is that significant knowledge embedded in the material is safeguarded together with its enormous potential for the new generations. To engage and learn from a knowledge that was not considered as valuable for the history of humanity in the past, according to a Western-modern logic, is very relevant today given the social and climatical crisis we face. With virtual and computer development, as well as artificial intelligence, there is a tendency to think that materiality is being replaced, fortunately, today those who think that material cultures are not been sufficiently appreciated for their full value still exist. Nowadays in the cultural and artistic field studies, there is still a current debate regarding the hierarchical position that crafts and traditional material culture have in terms of production of knowledge.¹³⁹

The division of the arts in the modern project also created the separation between fine arts and decorative and applied arts or in other terms the “non-fine” arts. This division, put the fine arts at the top of the hierarchy assigning them more status, and automatically reducing other forms of art as not equally prestigious and without the same conceptual depth.¹⁴⁰ This is the system that continue prevailing in the West and the one that is replicated in non-Western countries. Although numerous artistic and cultural movements criticize this hierarchical system, it is still in force and even the arts education continues to be organized according to these hierarchies. The schools of fine arts and departments of applied or decorative arts until today do not have the same status, not the indigenous craft knowledge is even considered to be included in the formal academia. Even with a diverse craft tradition, in Colombia there are no academic institutions that teach crafts as a practical and theoretical body of knowledge as there are in Sweden and other parts of Europe and the United States.¹⁴¹

According to Seykukwi, there is a slight positive aspect for both the community and the world in the fact that the objects were removed 100 years ago from their place of origin, referring himself to the educational potential. He explains that the collection can help to understand human history, in the sense that it is testimony on how indigenous communities understood and interacted with their environment. The fact that the collection includes not only samples of textile and ceremonial objects but also preserved medicines, plants and minerals can mean a learning opportunity for the craft practice but also for other fields and disciplines

¹³⁹ Pajaczkowska, “Making Known: The Textiles Tollbox-Psychoanalysis of Nine Types of Textile Thinking”, 80.

¹⁴⁰ Rafael Cardoso, “Craft versus design”, in *The Craft Reader*, ed. G. Adamson. (Oxford: Berg, 2010): 321-332).

¹⁴¹ According to Adamson, while craft occupies a significant place in our language and imagination, it has a minor role in our daily lives. Craftsmanship is central to our culture, but today it is more evident as an absence. Relatively few of us do crafts or know the technical basics of how they work. For him, “the United States has become disconnected from the story of its own making, and it is no coincidence that as crafts have become increasingly marginalized in the economy, all levels of social cohesion have also deteriorated”. Glenn Adamson, *Craft: An American History*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2021), 2.

interested in traditional knowledge. In this sense, the Iku collection is endowed with the ability to produce potential actions in the country of origin and in other parts of the world. As Inigo-Clavo (2016) states, the selective accounts of Europeans and elite societies in general are those that have been in charge of explaining the history of all humanity, in that sense the existence of well-kept indigenous knowledge contributes from a decolonial lens, to recuperate, embrace and learn from valuable indigenous knowledge. It can also help to blur the dividing effect between what we know as civilized and uncivilized and valuable or not in the eyes of western academic standards.

According to César;

“It is no secret that people learn better when they see”, for him, the collection has multiple potentialities (agency) and possibilities in a contemporary context, however, as an industrial design educator himself, he addresses that it is a big challenge to make students engage with material culture first hand. How we prepare our students from an educational point of view so that, in effect, there is a minimum of appreciation of the diverse material culture and cultural heritage that has been embodied in the museum collections.”

Ochoa-Jiménez emphasizes that a political project is always underlying in cultural management. The ethnographic objects, being a good of common interest, have a direct relationship with identity and the connection of the cultural. In this sense, the agency that ethnographic collections have is significant since they can impact and influence high level decisions and actions in different countries and for different cultures. In this regard and according to César, the "distance factor" and the importance of facilitating universal accessibility, "from north to south or vice versa" to heritage material is essential. For him, the tensions go beyond the objects themselves and can even transcend cultural identities and geographic locations. Ati Quigua, agrees and mentions that the collections have deep political and cultural implications that should be discussed accordingly with issues of multiculturalism and democracy.

According to Margarita, the COVID pandemic forced us to interact with each other in different ways and to look for other mechanisms of communication. She states that it is possible to approach repatriation debates in another ways, and even so, meaningful results may be acquired. However, for her, it is important to avoid the negative manipulation and aestheticization of the artisan knowledge. She says that the manipulation of material culture,

based on economic valuation of the kind that institutions such as “Artesanías de Colombia”¹⁴² do in the country, should not be normalized. For her, this institution has contributed to imposing a superior logic of the industrial designer on traditional artisans, in many cases taking advantage of indigenous women to market their knowledge. In Margarita’s opinion, work should be encouraged within the academia and from the public sector that encourage the in-depth study of material cultures from a vision not only reduced to market thinking, where according to her, “everything is sold and exchanged, at the expenses of the disintegration of unique cultural indigenous contexts.”

The indigenous ethnographic collections that come from the global south and are currently found in the global north are testimony to a flow of ideas, cultures and interests of all kinds that have interacted and shaped global contexts. Beyond responding to dualistic and disciplinary logics, the collections are part of the history of geographically distant countries that have been connected by the South American indigenous material culture. This work calls for a way of looking at objects from an epistemological perspective, where it is not only possible to learn from them, but also because of the contribution they possibly make to the decolonization of knowledge. Latour insists that the separation of humans and non-humans never allowed people to participate in the composition of a collective, articulated and pleasant-harmonic existence with everything.¹⁴³ Latour suggests that indigenous epistemologies, or in his words “other systems of knowledge”, provide us with a platform to question the disciplinary limits imposed by modern sciences, limits that still dominate our thinking.¹⁴⁴

For Latour, inanimate objects may not have a soul but they have politics and, in this sense, we “can make them speak”.¹⁴⁵ This thesis suggests that putting into dialogue epistemologies that have not been dominant, such as the indigenous ones, and methodologies that have not been recognized as sufficiently scientific by western thought, such as craft-based and material culture-based methodologies, it is possible to create effective bridges of communication and articulation between the North and the South, beyond idiomatic barriers and the crafts medium as language. There is increasing interest in material culture as a category of analysis and as a teaching tool, however, it is said that there is still a tendency to mistrust

¹⁴² Artesanías de Colombia is a Colombian institution/company. According to its webpage “It is a mixed governmental and private company whose objective is the promotion and development of economic, social, educational and cultural activities of the artisan sector in Colombia”. Accessed May 09, 2023 <https://artesaniasdecolombia.com.co>

¹⁴³ Bruno Latour, “How to bring the collective together” in *Politics of nature. How to bring the sciences into democracy*. (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004): 77-90.

¹⁴⁴ Iñigo-Clavo, 07.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 89.

objects and their ability to speak.¹⁴⁶ Iñigo-Clavo invites us to find means that help us to break the duality of the human and natural sciences (subject/object) and to reevaluate and rethink the modern ways in which knowledge is organized and look for ways of knowing that were ignored by the so-called modernity project.¹⁴⁷ According to her, incorporating other knowledges, for example, art- based and local and traditional knowledge into academia and to scientific knowledge is a crucial step towards epistemological diversity or “Epistemodiversity”. At this point, it is worth mentioning that in November 2022, UNESCO declared the ancestral system of knowledge of the four indigenous peoples, Arhuaco, Kankuamo, Kogui and Wiwa of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, as intangible cultural heritage of humanity.¹⁴⁸

For decolonial scholars, a broader recognition of traditional knowledge, which is often underestimated, is necessary to dismantle contemporary persistence of epistemological dominance. Latin American postcolonial approaches motivate us to never stop questioning the need to define ourselves in terms of "modernity", to never stop questioning what kind of knowledge we are getting involved with in our academic life and in daily practices. They invite us to reevaluate the current (Western) and patriarchal logic that has undeniably shaped our current understanding of the world and that has generated the current knowledge frameworks, leaving aside other valuable systems of knowledge.

Object-agency methodology

This work did not intend to "fetishise" objects by adopting an objectual approach, but rather to reveal the material and immaterial characteristics of the object and its agentive capacity, to get close to a meaningful object-agency methodology [Fig. 14]. This methodology suggests engagement with the materiality as a first step. This would allow a deeper stimulation of the greatest number of senses possible, for example, visual, tactile, spatial, seeking a physical and conceptual identification of the materiality at the greatest extent possible, applying ethical principles of handling and care. Secondly, with the help of “non-humans”, photographic and film records are proposed to be used, in order to disseminate the material to a wider audience, again always being aware of ethical and decolonial principles when it comes to sensitive

¹⁴⁶ Several authors have discussed the role of material culture in the history of war and forced displacement and how expropriated objects, objects carried in flights; looted items on battlefields; can be reappropriated and remembered. Leora Auslander and Tara Zahra, *Objects of War: The Material Culture of Conflict and Displacement*, ed., (New York: Cornell University Press, 2018), 248-76.

¹⁴⁷ Iñigo-Clavo, 07.

¹⁴⁸ UNESCO, “Intangible cultural Heritage”. Accessed may, 20, 2023. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/ancestral-system-of-knowledge-of-the-four-indigenous-peoples-arhuaco-kankuamo-kogui-and-wiwa-of-the-sierra-nevada-de-santa-marta-01886?RL=01886>

material. Finally, bringing the objects to an open and inclusive discussion as possible with people, institutions and groups of interest. In the case of materials and objects considered as tangible or intangible heritage of specific countries and/or indigenous and minorities culture, it is important to ensure principles of ethical dissemination, participation and representation of the community to which the heritage material belongs.

The empathic connection both with the objects and their materials as well as with the contexts and stories behind the materiality is important to take into account when considering this methodology. The object, understood as an entity with agency capable of generating theoretical discussions nourished by decolonial and indigenous ways of thinking, could be seen as an approach that challenges the frameworks of Western thought. Implicitly, studies of indigenous objects and knowledge rooted in materiality serve as a vehicle that helps blur methodological, geographical (communicative) and epistemological boundaries.

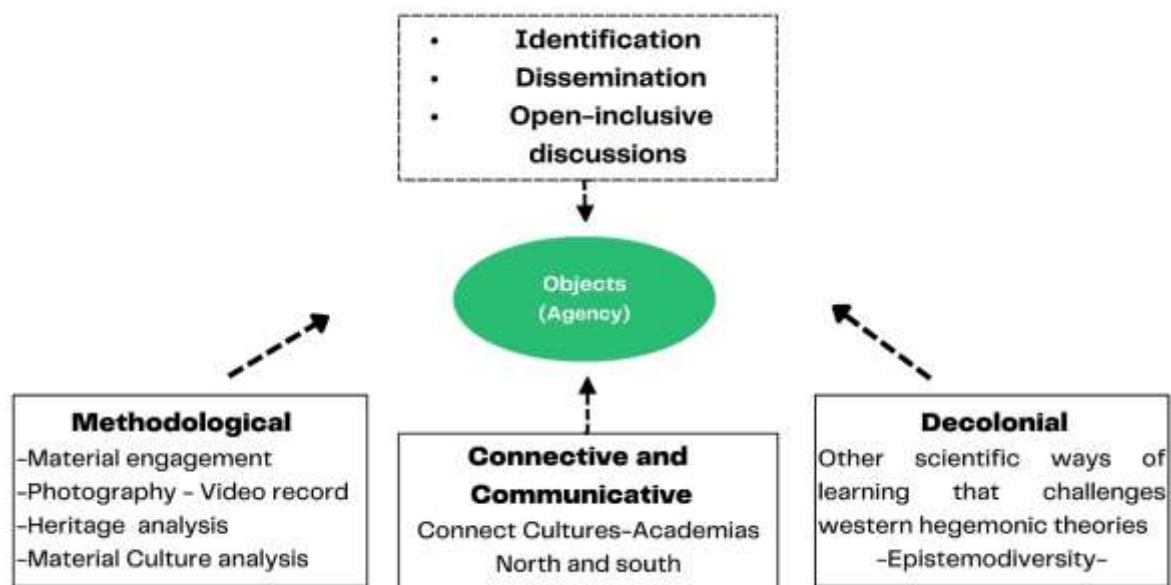


FIGURE 14: Object-Agency methodology. By Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

This works may help to elucidate that intellectually, when materiality is experienced in shape of crafts, ornaments or clothing, it produces actions and connections of all kinds. For Riello, objects go beyond the idea that they are simply inserted into historically determined contexts but can be placed in dialogue with diverse narratives, which make them relate in different ways to history. The Iku objects in this thesis served as a communication bridge to generate complex conversations and as an “excuse” to activate new and varied discussions in two different

countries, from a historical and contemporary perspective, and considering decolonial principles of analysis. This thesis aims to highlight that objects and material culture have an agency in Latournean terms - they are capable of producing a variety of actions, relationships and complex interactions between persons, objects, institutions and academia.

Discussion

The engagement with the Iku material culture in the NMWC served in this thesis as a methodological tool and as bridge to discuss material, immaterial, historical and contemporary narratives of the Iku collection in the NMWC. The materiality itself produced stimulation of the senses and minds of all the persons who interacted with them both directly or through the photographic and filmed material. The interactions with the materiality, either with the objects directly or with the physical photography, allowed for profound reflections in regards to complex topics such as decoloniality, ethical stewardship, repatriation, representation and the relevancy of indigenous material culture and knowledge as an epistemological contribution. The persons in Colombia re-connected with the Iku material culture from the NMWC in Gothenburg in many ways. On the one hand they were amazed and intrigued by the existence of this materiality in such a distant context, and on the other hand they were able to acknowledge the significant material and immaterial values that the collection has nowadays in Colombia in a context of significant interest of revitalization of traditional knowledge and recuperation of Colombian- indigenous textile history. One aspect that the thesis encourages is the need to embrace an epistemodiversity and decolonial approach in current academic production of knowledge processes.

In order to accurately explore the agency capabilities of the collections, the interviewees stated that an open accessibility to the Iku collection, and in general to other material in museums is a topic that needs to be addressed and discussed in the academia and by museological institutions. This work leaves the discussion open regarding how, from the north and the south, more and better ways to democratize the indigenous and non-indigenous heritage in the world can be envisioned. How to ensure that people with less capital resources can be stimulated, motivated and supported to access the educational potential of museums. The people interviewed in this work consider that the solution of taking all the museum's material to the places of origin, or the solution of leaving everything in the museums can be considered "absolutist". A mix of solutions and strategies are envisioned to help "democratize" the material. This work encourages students, academics, and institutions to help disseminate

ethnographic collections and not spare when it comes to creative solutions. Some solutions proposed by some interviewees refers to the creation of “cultural ambassadors” figures, which can be people, institutions and collectives that can become bridges that transfer, transport, circulate and debate all the potential that these types of collections have. “Materiality” and “virtual” tools are considered in the dissemination of ethnographic material for educational purposes.

This research suggests that the success of accessing, studying and using ethnographic collections with indigenous material ultimately depends on the ability to tune the north and south and to imagine possible solutions, not radical but alternative solutions from both hemispheres. The Iku indigenous interviewees such as Seykukwi Fuentes and Ati Quigua, highlight that it is important that the institutions that own these collections seek to approach the communities where the objects originally belonged to consult how this material should be treated. This study found that the archival material in the NMWC has not been fully identified nor has the educational potential of this material been addressed. Bolinder’s material in the archive also continues exhibiting disrespectful language and descriptions in the catalog labels. Adriana Muñoz explains that in Sweden, the museum faces important challenges regarding the ethical handling of indigenous material, since there is not enough familiarity with ethical stewardship or shared stewardship concepts, and there is a great separation between the academy and the museum domain.

This work also identifies a continuing disconnection between the academy of the global north and south. For some scholars in Colombia, the academy in the global north continues focusing on strengthening research at the local scientific level and there is still a gap in the involvement of researchers educated in countries with lower per capita income who in the South produce relevant knowledge research projects. Researchers from the global south are, to a large extent, commonly seen as mere data providers and cultural and linguistic bridges for researchers from the north. This thesis encourages to build symmetry between the academic production of the global north and the global south. For Latin American scholars, it is urgent to find a common or shared ground to understand and provide solutions on a global scale, without imposing a single narrative. A complex world like the current one seems to no longer accepts classic dogmatic scientific discourses, nor disciplinary, scientific or religious inflexibility.

When it comes to research methodologies, we still live the modern legacy where the indigenous material culture is seen as suspicious and exotic, it is not seen as a neutral and intellectual source of knowledge. However, as hopefully shown in this works, material culture

as a notion does not refer to just one thing, or to one expression, it refers to a whole universe of different aesthetic, practical, political and cultural meanings. Material culture in the shape of craft objects have agency and can be seen as an alternative way of thinking and as a contribution to Epistemodiversity. The discussion ends in how to continue encouraging new students to engage with material culture, and with knowledge pertaining to historically excluded populations and make them more relevant, valued and included in current productions of knowledge. Viktor Papanek (1971), pioneer and defender of what in the discipline of design is called *socially and ecologically responsible design*, insists that designers must act as responsible planners for all the products and tools they create and therefore take responsibility for potential environmental mistakes. He says that the main problem with design schools seems to be that they teach too much design and not enough about the ecological, social, economic and political environment in which it takes place. In this sense, handcrafted objects have a lot to teach the discipline of design as they are objects that tend to be created under other logics that are more in harmony with the environment and with collective values.

Objects can be profound, symbolic, religious, they can be simple, complex, cheap or expensive, mass-produced or handcrafted, they can be anything and therefore say a lot about the human experience. The methodology designed in this work hopefully can be replicated as a communicative tool, where objects act not just as materiality, but as dispositive full of information regarding how we create things, how identity is disseminated, and how they can produce complex discussions among others regarding uses of heritage, decolonization and acknowledgement of valuable indigenous knowledge.

Conclusion

The thesis concludes that the Iku indigenous objects served as primary sources of knowledge and as methodological tools to join current debates on indigenous heritage, repatriation, ethical stewardship and decoloniality. The selection of the three objects allowed to follow the methodological framework tools offered by Prown, Riello and Palmer in a systematic and logical way. Since the indigenous objects are materials with special characteristics and particular histories, it required conscious and meaningful abilities of analysis from different perspectives. Prown's methodology plus a use of a mix methods approach allowed to unveil material and immaterial knowledge embedded in the materiality to build new one.

In reference to the first question: In what way can the objects themselves serve as bridges and methodological tools to discuss material, immaterial, historical and contemporary narratives of the Iku collection at NMWC? This work concludes that material objects can serve as effective methodological tools that, by stimulating the senses and the mind, allow for deep reflections on complex issues such as decoloniality, ethical co-responsibility, repatriation, representation and the relevance of material culture and indigenous knowledge as an epistemological contribution. This study emphasizes the current relevance of material culture analysis approaches to reveal material, immaterial, historical and contemporary narratives not only of heritage collections but of all types of constructed materiality. The conscious and ethical use of research instruments such as photography and video allowed the materiality to be transported to the virtual field where other people in distant geographies could also connect with the objects of the collection.

I can conclude that the study of the objects was an efficient way to reconstruct the historical narratives of the Iku objects in the collection, but also to build new ones and even open up other possibilities for further study. This work also allows to conclude that objects are not only bridges of communication and interaction between cultures in the past, but that they still have an enormous agency capacity to communicate and produce relationships between people, institutions and between countries. The agency exercised by these objects is a clear example of those capacities for action that Latour grants to networked humans and non-humans in his Actor Network Theory. In synch with Riello, this work acknowledges that it is possible to treat objects much in the same way that manuscripts, diaries and other sources of information and data, with the difference that it is not necessarily mediated by written language.

Regarding the second research question; how can today's people in Colombia reconnect with the Iku material culture of the NMWC in Gothenburg, Sweden? this thesis concludes that people in Colombia reconnected with the Iku material culture of the NMWC in Gothenburg in many ways. On the one hand, the interviewees expressed amazement, emotion and intrigue for the existence of this materiality in such a distant context and, on the other hand, they were able to recognize the significant material and immaterial values that the collection has today in Colombia in a context of great interest to revitalization of traditional knowledge and recovery of memory and Colombian-indigenous textile history. The work concludes that the active and collaborative inclusion of representatives of the Iku community in the management, care and dissemination of ethnographic material at the NMWC in Gothenburg is key when asserting ethical stewardship and decolonial principles such as mutual obligation, shared responsibility, and two-way communication.

This work motivates the inclusion of the concepts of ethical stewardship and the application of decolonial principles in the management of indigenous archives in institutions both in the country of origin and in the country of destination. This work identified useful tools in the legal field in terms of protection of indigenous material culture heritage but there is still work ahead in terms of management of indigenous heritage materials and ethical stewardship in Sweden. A correct classification of archived objects in museums of ethnography allows to have a better access and understanding of this valuable material. The notion of distance and the importance of facilitating universal accessibility, "from north to south or vice versa" to this heritage material is evidenced as a future challenge. A proper archival management could be key in helping to assert indigenous emancipation in the South and thereby contribute to a better understanding of past, present, and future indigenous collective experiences. This, of course is impossible to achieve without the proper resources, which depend on political decisions.

This study proposed a methodology based on the analysis of ethnographic objects, in this case the Iku, to build communication bridges between the academy, the museum and the Iku people. As an incipient result of this research work that used the studied objects to connect academia, institutions and Iku artisans, two virtual group discussion meetings have already been held between Colombia and Sweden with the participation of the museum representatives in Gothenburg and the team of museologists from the National Museum in Colombia. The meetings are expected to continue with the participation of the Iku artisans with the objective of designing strategies to put the Iku material into action in Colombia for the community and the academy.

In regards the general question: Could applying object-based studies of the Iku indigenous collection deepen the understanding of those objects considering material, immaterial, historical, and contemporary perspectives in the wider context of ethical stewardship, indigenous heritage and decolonization of Knowledge and Western museums of ethnography? This work concludes that the methodological approaches and the conceptual and theoretical basis for the analysis were significant and adequate to carry out an objective study from a diverse, critical and reflective perspective. The study of patrimonial material culture through an object methodology stipulates a capacity of agency in the objects themselves. The study of the Iku collection shows that objects and material culture have a significant agency and the ability to enable communication bridges to later produce actions and reflections in a complex, diverse and plural way.

The fact of not belonging to the cultural framework of the Iku objects meant important challenges when it came to ethical handling, identification of uses, techniques and precise descriptions of the materiality. The study process meant unlearning and relearning ways of interpreting and studying indigenous objects from a decolonial perspective. This work also strengthened the idea that in combining the study of objects and material culture with documentary review and oral accounts, a more accurate perception of cultural, political and aesthetical studies is ensured. Although Prown stresses the importance of trying to maintain rigorous discretion while striving for objectivity, I must say that my interaction with the Iku objects, challenged the way objectivity is understood. The fact of being empathetically engaged with the material of study did not mean that a neutral, critical and complex analysis was not achieved. Hopefully this work will further elucidate how indigenous material culture, crafts, and other material expressions have deep intellectual and conceptual meanings that should be more recognized in academic thought. They not only challenge the standards and hierarchies of the arts and fields established in modern thought but also contribute to the diversity of scientific thinking. The study of material culture can contribute to the construction of Epistemodiversity (epistemological diversity) where many and not only one system of knowledge, in the words of Latour, are welcomed. In a context still marked by the separation between society and nature, it is necessary, from a decolonial perspective, to create communication bridges between diverse systems of knowledge, where a pluralistic dialogue can be encouraged without privileging a single and dominant narrative.

From the field of fashion studies, this study invites to learn from indigenous material culture since currently, there is a need to produce objects that embed profound significance and meaning but at the same time can deteriorate easily in harmony with earth. Handmade objects,

such as the Iku ones, continue to be useful and aesthetically pleasing over time and exert powerful agency in socio-political terms. In general, as a society and from a material point of view, we should tend to consume fewer resources and make garments funded in qualities such as appreciation, functionality, durability (good quality) and degradation.

This work hopes to have contributed to existing knowledge in the field of fashion studies by studying clothing belonging to societies that have been commonly overlooked in this field of study - the first nations textile expressions. Without aiming to objectify clothing, it is considered important to include the in-depth study of these materialities to generate discussions that make visible the past, present and future histories of indigenous peoples. An attempt was made to highlight the significant contributions that indigenous systems of knowledge have for the construction of a more accurate, fair and inclusive universal knowledge. Materiality has not only served as a second skin to protect us from the environment but has also allowed us to exist, express and defend our way of seeing and understanding the world. This work vehemently defends the value and relevance that materiality has in human and non-human experience and encourages to profoundly reconnect with it. Creating textile knowledge would imply considering the immaterial and the material, the human, the non-human, the functional and the decorative. It could also highlight values such as diversity, quality, appreciation and the ability of materiality to connect us with ourselves, with others and with our social and urban-ecological environments.

This work also seeks to motivate scholars in the field of fashion, design, and craft studies to explore other geographies with non-dominant cultures or "overlooked territories" that would allow to expand the understanding we have on clothing, crafts, fashion, and style and their socio-political/ecological significance. From a methodological point of view, it is encouraged to replicate the method of analysis of material culture generated in this work in diverse contexts and cases of study, far or near, where clothing and crafts seek to be deeply examined from a material and immaterial perspective.



FIGURE 15: Iku women knitting mochilas. Illustration courtesy of Bengt Arne Runnerström

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Appendix 1.

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: Interviewees

TABLE 2: The selected objects for the analysis. Images by Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: “Map showing the author's journey” taken from Bolinder 1936 and 1938 respectively

FIGURE 2: Traditional Bags Collection. Shelves Archive. G. Bolinder expedition 1914-1916

FIGURE 3: Plant specimens and fiber samples, Iku Collection at Världskulturmuseet. Shelves Archive

FIGURE 4: Container, Iku Collection Världskulturmuseet. Shelves Archive. G. Bolinder expedition 1914-1916
Images by Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

FIGURE 5: Ester Bolinder and Iku indigenous persons. Bolinder, G. *Det tropiska snöfjällets indianer*, 1916

FIGURE 6: Video's screenshots made at the time of the observation with the help of the ultraviolet lamp
Image by Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

FIGURE 7: Images taken during the measurement and material analysis process of the traditional mantle
Image by Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

FIGURE 8: Traditional male attire composed by mantle, pants, sash, beanie-hat and bags. Illustration by
Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez. Image courtesy of the Museo del Traje Bogotá-Colombia

FIGURE 9: Mochila Arhuaca, traditional Iku bag in the archive. Image by Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

FIGURE 10: Contemporary Iku bags in “La despensa de la Tierra,” Indigenous craft store in Bogotá

FIGURE 11: Photo-memory of the meeting with Seykukwi, at the National University of Colombia, on
February 9, 2023. My computer and Seykukwi's *Poporo*, a personal item always carried by Iku men

FIGURE 12: Images taken during the observation of the Iku ceremonial hat. By Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

FIGURE 13: Main themes of analysis identified in the interviews. By Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

FIGURE 14: Object-Agency methodology. By Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez

FIGURE 15: Iku women knitting mochilas. Illustration courtesy of Bengt Arne Runnerström

Appendix 2. Informed consent form in Spanish



CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA ENTREVISTAR A:

La estudiante de Estudios de la moda/indumentaria hace entrega del presente consentimiento informado a _____ previa aceptación de ser entrevistada/o para fines del trabajo de investigación denominado preliminarmente “Consideraciones materiales e inmateriales en el análisis del material de archivo. Un estudio de caso de la colección de ropa artesanal Iku/Arhuaca en los archivos del Museo Nacional de Cultura Mundial en Gotemburgo (Världskulturmuseet) que la estudiante está adelantando en la Universidad de Estocolmo- Suecia. En caso de solicitar traductor o intérprete por parte de la persona entrevistada, se garantizará la comunicación con el entrevistado de manera precisa y eficaz, de tal manera que cumpla con sus expectativas. Una vez cumplidos los requisitos se hace lectura del consentimiento informado a la persona en mención para avalarlo con su respectiva firma.

Yo _____ en calidad de _____

luego de haber sido enterado(a) de la investigación que está desarrollando la estudiante Stefania Castelblanco Pérez de la Universidad de Estocolmo, cuya temática está relacionado con ¿Cuál es la historia de la colección de ropa- objetos artesanales Arhuacos en el Museo Nacional de Culturas del mundo de Gotemburgo y cuáles son las implicaciones materiales e inmateriales de esto en un contexto de descolonización de los museos de etnografía occidentales?; de haber sido informado(a) sobre las razones por las cuales fui elegido(a); y tras haber sido resueltas mis inquietudes al respecto del cuestionario de la entrevista y comprendidas en su totalidad entiendo que mi participación:

1. Será grabada en voz o en video si es mi preferencia, y los datos registrados serán de uso y fin exclusivo para efectos de la investigación, en el campo de la pedagogía.
2. Lo expresado no tendrá repercusiones negativas a mi buen nombre, ni al del intérprete o traductor de acuerdo al artículo 15 de la Constitución Política de Colombia que reza: “Todas las personas tienen derecho a su intimidad personal y familiar y a su buen nombre...”
3. No me generará ningún gasto, ni recibiré remuneración alguna.
4. Será utilizada únicamente y exclusivamente para propósitos de la investigación de la estudiante mencionada.
5. Será protegida y se dará buen uso a la información según la normatividad vigente.

6. Será transcrita y conoceré la transcripción previa a ser publicada en el trabajo de grado.

Para lo anterior, y amparándome en la normatividad legal vigente sobre consentimientos informados, de forma consciente y voluntaria, _____ Sí doy el consentimiento / _____ NO doy el consentimiento para su uso o reproducción de lo grabado. Así mismo autorizo a la estudiante Stefania Castelblanco Pérez para que pueda usarse en la elaboración de otros materiales cuyos fines sean pedagógicos, educativos o didácticos, ya sea para su presentación en eventos académicos posteriores a la sustentación, bajo la condición de ser avisado(a) oportunamente. Considero que no tiene caducidad este consentimiento o autorización; ni tampoco hay restricción para ser usado en otros lugares de nuestra geografía, siempre y cuando se respeten las condiciones.

En cuanto al servicio de traducción o interpretación manifiesto que confío plenamente en el trabajo de la investigadora y en el principio de buena fe amparado por la Constitución colombiana (Art. 83. “Las actuaciones de los particulares y de las autoridades públicas deberán ceñirse a los postulados de la buena fe, la cual se presumirá en todas las gestiones que aquellos adelanten ante éstas”

En constancia firman y aceptan las partes la realización de la entrevista.

Lugar y Fecha: _____

Nombre de la entrevistada (o): _____

Documento de Identidad: _____

Nombre de la entrevistadora: Stefanía Castelblanco Pérez.

Documento de Identidad: 52.968.144

Teléfono de contacto de la entrevistada (o): _____

Teléfono de contacto de la entrevistadora: _____

Firma de la entrevistada (o): _____

Firma de la entrevistadora: _____

Para preguntas adicionales a la estudiante Stefanía Castelblanco por favor hacerlas por escrito a través del correo electrónico: scastelblanco@unal.edu.com o castelb@gmail.com