

# Connecting Geographies from the Global South

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### **Authors**

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### **Paper Title**

Westernization Patterns of Indigenous Achuar Communities in the Amazon Rainforest of Ecuador

### **Abstract**

This research proposal aims to investigate main transformations in architectural and spatial dynamics of the Achuar Indigenous group in Southeastern Amazonia, Ecuador due to westernization processes. Despite some limited historical documentation, there is a critical lack of updated information regarding their settlement patterns and dwelling strategies since the late 1970s. Rapid changes in their traditional ways of life, compounded by urbanization trends and external interventions, necessitate a comprehensive study to understand and preserve their unique cultural and environmental heritage.

### ***The research questions are structured into three key areas***

**Characterization of Indigenous Territories:** This stage focuses on a regional overview of the Indigenous Achuar Nationality in the Amazon Rainforest, their role in mitigating climate change, and historical external threats. The objective is to lay the foundation for understanding the broader context in which the Achuar reside.

**Architectural Design Standards and Indigenous Rights:** Investigating the role of the state and Indigenous groups in shaping Achuar territories over the past 50 years, particularly in the wake of the oil boom, will help identify tensions and concerns. It seeks to answer how architectural design standards can respect Indigenous rights to self-determination and territorial sovereignty while considering the desires of these communities.

**Transformation of Dwelling Patterns:** This phase wonders if small transformations of traditional dwelling patterns in Achuar communities can result in drastic transformation of their settlement patterns and landscape management. It explores how these changes impact regional planning and social dynamics within the community. The study emphasizes the connection between people, place, and memory through direct observation and conversational methods with community members.

### **Methodology**

The methodology employed in this research prioritizes Indigenous ways of knowing and their sense of place. It utilizes existing geographical studies, ecological analyses, and cultural investigations to comprehensively characterize the Achuar territories. Qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered through fieldwork studies and analyzed using geographic tools like ArcGIS.

### **Findings**

The findings are expected to reveal the pivotal role of the Achuar Indigenous people in preserving forests and the architectural diversity within their territories. Through site plans, blueprints, and 3D models, changes in housing and settlement patterns that pose risks to Amazon ecosystems and local cultures will be highlighted. The research also aims to identify potential improvements in urban planning strategies and design standards proposed by the Ecuadorian government for Indigenous groups, including the Achuar.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research contributes significantly to the field of architecture by promoting a new Indigenous planning theory rooted in local Indigenous land management strategies and knowledge. It aligns territorial organization and land distribution with the worldviews of Indigenous groups inhabiting the Amazon Basin. The project seeks to empower Achuar populations by incorporating their cultural and cosmological perspectives into public buildings and designs. By bridging contemporary planning theory with Achuar traditions, it aims to create sustainable, culturally sensitive solutions that preserve both the environment and Indigenous heritage.