

Weaving Ancestral Knowledge: Wayúu Cultural Representations Of Learning And Cognitive Exceptionality

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Abstract

This article employs an intercultural and decolonial framework to examine the cultural representations of the Wayúu people concerning learning and cognitive exceptionality. A qualitative documentary review of sources published between 2015 and 2025 in academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Scielo, and Redalyc was conducted to identify the main theoretical contributions on ancestral knowledge, indigenous education, and the contemporary paradigm of neurodiversity. The findings indicate that Wayuu knowledge is conceptualized as a intricate tapestry of community, spiritual, and symbolic relationships, signifying that learning is inextricably intertwined with participation in collective life. Conversely, it was observed that within the Wayúu worldview, cognitive differences are not perceived as deficiencies but rather as gifts or spiritual manifestations. This perspective aligns with the concept of neurodiversity as a valid expression of human variability. The study's findings indicate that the integration of these visions contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of learning from cultural and cognitive plurality. This, in turn, fosters the development of an intercultural education that is more inclusive, critical, and humanizing. Pedagogical and political orientations are proposed that recognize ancestral knowledge as valid sources of knowledge and promote the acceptance of diversity as a fundamental educational principle.

Keywords: Ancestral Knowledge; Intercultural education; Neurodiversity; Cognitive Exceptionality; Wayúu people; Cultural diversity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial, indigenous communities have cultivated distinctive and intricate methodologies for comprehending the world, acquiring knowledge, and embracing diversity. In these worldviews, knowledge is not confined to the mere memorization of data; rather, it is intricately intertwined with living relationships that encompass shared memory, environment, ceremonial practices, and social bonds. In the Wayúu culture, daily activities such as weaving, orally transmitted stories, and ritual ceremonies function as means to transmit culture. In these activities, technical skills are acquired, as well as values, perspectives, and ways of living. The concept of "weaving knowledge" is not merely an embellishment; it is imperative for comprehending the formation of community life from a cognitive perspective and the interpretation of diversity within that symbolic framework.

The recognition of these indigenous epistemologies has gained relevance in current discussions on intercultural education, decolonization of knowledge, and epistemological diversity. Ethno-educational policies in Latin America aim to revitalize cultural identities, strengthen ancestral languages, and adapt school curricula to include local knowledge (López & Küper, 2008; UNESCO, 2015). In Colombia, these actions are consistent with a broader framework that aims to substantiate the right of indigenous peoples to possess their own educational system. Critical studies have cautioned that "knowledge is not merely 'cultural additions' in the curriculum, but living entities that necessitate profound recognition at the epistemological level" (Diálogo de conocimiento, 2015, p. X).

However, this acknowledgement by institutions is often limited to superficial expressions, such as symbols, colors, or festivities, without leading to a transformation of the underlying structures of knowledge and pedagogy. Educational policies are often developed using modern logics of measurement, standardization, and academic performance, without considering the cultural ways of learning of indigenous communities. Within the framework of the Colombian indigenous education system (SEIP), the promotion of program autonomy is evident. However, the crux of the challenge lies in the integration of local traditions and ways of thinking without the replication of external paradigms (Diálogo de conocimiento, 2015, p. Y).

In this intricate context, the issue that has emerged is the question of how indigenous communities, particularly the Wayúu, conceptualize cognitive variation or exceptionality. In the predominant Western intellectual climate, the concept of neurodiversity posits that the heterogeneity of the human brain should be regarded as a natural variation rather than a pathological condition (Conceptualizations of neurodiversity, 20XX, p. Z). However, extant research on this topic is predominantly from the northern hemisphere and relies on universal categories that may not align with local interpretations of diversity. As indicated by one of these studies, "the reductionist view of neurodiversity as sin or deficiency limits the ability of education systems to adapt to students with varied profiles" (Conceptualizations of Neurodiversity, p. W).

Furthermore, within the domain of inclusive instructional design, certain authors propose an approach that perceives cognitive diversity not as a hindrance but rather as a potential asset. For instance, in the text *Inclusive Instructional Design for Neurodiverse Learners*, it is stated: As indicated in the fifth page of the text, inclusive instructional design is capable of facilitating the release of the potential of these learners and of promoting a fairer educational environment, provided that the particular differences of these learners are identified and accommodated. This shift in perspective is part of an educational evolution that promotes flexible pedagogical structures, universal design, and personalized attention. However, research from different cultural communities remains limited.

From a critical perspective, it is essential to explore not only the normative structures concerning neurodiversity, but also their epistemological limitations when confronted with ancestral knowledge. The tension between a predominant biomedical perspective of cognitive exception and indigenous cultural conceptions has the potential to reveal theoretical gaps and unrecognized colonial educational practices. In this vein, it is pertinent to inquire: how is cognitive diversity named, valued, or integrated in the Wayúu context? Which cultural metaphors, symbols, or narratives might reflect what Western academia understands as "talent," "disability," or "cognitive divergence"?

In Colombia, educational reforms that incorporate interculturality continue to encounter resistance, inadequate teacher training, and a paucity of integration with local knowledge. Consequently, numerous indigenous communities find themselves compelled to reinterpret policies from the perspective of their own symbolic frameworks. Within the Wayúu community, educational practices such as traditional schools, cultural educators, and ritualistic ceremonies have the potential to present an alternative form of knowledge that could lead to a reevaluation of exceptionality. However, there is a paucity of literature specifically addressing the Wayúu community and cognitive difference, rendering this exploration a pioneering contribution.

To facilitate this reflection, the present article employs a qualitative documentary review approach, which classifies the sources into three thematic axes: The following three points will be discussed in this paper: (1) Wayúu representations around the learning and transmission of ancestral knowledge; (2) current critical perspectives on neurodiversity and cognitive exceptionality; and (3) the possible interactions, tensions, and what could be considered epistemological bridges between both ways of thinking. The objective of this study is to develop a comparative critical reading that highlights trajectories of educational transformation that are sensitive to interculturality.

This study draws from a range of sources, including recent academic literature as well as ethnographic, anthropological, and educational discoveries. The objective is to identify trajectories of convergence that facilitate the visualization of novel pedagogical approaches. The objective is not to impose external perspectives, but rather to identify symbolic contours, metaphors, and local narratives that contribute to independent educational reflection. In this sense, the metaphor of weaving—common in Wayúu culture—will function as a common thread that intertwines cultural experiences with contemporary ways of conceiving cognitive difference.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the domains of intercultural education, cognitive diversity, and ethnoeducation. The objective of this study is twofold: first, to explore Wayuu cultural representations of exceptionality, and second, to contribute to the discourse on inclusion from non-Western perspectives and to inform educational policies that are grounded in cultural sensitivity. The ultimate objective is for education systems to self-identify as more diverse, flexible, and respectful of the multiple ways of being and knowing.

In the ensuing sections, the theoretical context is established, wherein the notions of traditional knowledge, neurodiversity, and intercultural teaching are examined. Subsequently, the documentary methodology that guided the selection and analysis of the materials is presented. The thematic findings that emerged are then presented, grouped according to the axes of analysis. Ultimately, a critical reflection is offered, accompanied by suggestions for educational practices that promote dialogue between traditional knowledge and cognitive diversity.

2. Justification

The significance of ancestral knowledge as a fundamental element of cultural identities and teaching practices is particularly pronounced in multi-ethnic settings. In these contexts, ancestral knowledge serves as a means of resistance against dominant educational models that have historically obscured their own approaches to knowledge. In Colombia, ethno-education endeavors to restore the significance of indigenous communities as knowledge creators, challenging the perception of these communities as merely passive recipients of intervention. For instance, an analysis of intercultural education in Colombia asserts that "considering ethnoeducation as part of intercultural education necessitates a novel type of teacher who fosters egalitarian

relationships and addresses the needs of communities and their territory" (Article "Education and interculturality: proposal from the peoples ...", 2022, p. X). This approach underscores the necessity of ancestral knowledge as an integral component of educational processes, rather than a mere embellishment.

The integration of indigenous worldviews into pedagogical approaches necessitates the transcendence of the curricular fragmentation that arbitrarily differentiates "local culture" from "universal knowledge." Education must align with the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of communities to function as an integral component of the learning process. In this context, research on ancestral knowledge and ethnoeducation underscores the necessity of examining "ancestral knowledge from the perspective of the process of colonization and decolonization in the Americas" (Asprilla Caicedo, 2024, p. Y) to substantiate its contemporary continuity and its validation in public policy. This vision compels us to perceive culture as the fundamental element of the curriculum, rather than as a mere supplement.

However, the mere recovery of ancestral knowledge is insufficient in the absence of consideration for the cognitive diversity inherent within these cultural communities. In the contemporary interdisciplinary agenda, the concept of neurodiversity posits that neurological differences, including but not limited to dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, and autism spectrum disorder, should not be perceived as deficiencies but rather as natural variations in cognitive processing. A seminal article posits that "neurodiversity is an umbrella term that encompasses dyspraxia, dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyscalculia, autism spectrum, and Tourette's syndrome" (Cole, 2020, p. Z) (see Neurodiversity in higher education). This approach challenges the notion of a uniform cognitive standard, thereby creating opportunities to recognize and value diversity.

However, research on neurodiversity and education has been predominantly focused on Northern hemisphere contexts, thereby restricting the potential for interaction with indigenous knowledge. In the context of Latin America, it is imperative to recognize the validity of local worldviews, acknowledging their role as legitimate sources of knowledge. A recent study in the region observes that "neurodiversity is rarely included in diversity discussions" (Diversity in Education Study, 2023, p. X), thus indicating a dearth of inclusive education discourse at the regional level.

The relationship between intercultural education and neurodiversity constitutes a theoretical domain that has received scant research attention. A substantial proportion of intercultural research concentrates on domains such as language, identity, curriculum, and educational practices. However, there is a paucity of research that explores cognitive diversity as a symbolic and cultural issue. For instance, a study on intercultural education in Colombia posits that confronting the phenomenon of intercultural education in accordance with the pluri-ethnicity and multiculturalism of the regions entails significant challenges in the way of understanding teaching (Education in multicultural contexts, 2018, p. W). This oversight in the cognitive domain presents a significant opportunity for research to contribute to our understanding and address these gaps.

The present article endeavors to establish a link between these fields of thought, suggesting a perspective that values Wayuu cultural representations of cognitive difference and recognizes them as an integral part of the educational field. This epistemological inclusion is crucial so that communities are not trapped in externally imposed definitions but have the opportunity to express their own ethnosymbolic categories about learning, success, or cognitive diversity.

The socio-political significance of this perspective lies in the right of indigenous peoples to determine their own knowledge and education. In order for education systems to achieve true inclusivity, it is insufficient to merely acknowledge cultural diversity. Instead, educational institutions must facilitate the development of unique intellectual, educational, and divergent perspectives within each community. In this sense, the contributions of this research are twofold: first, it provides a voice to those epistemological perspectives that are often marginalized; and second, it offers a framework for understanding the relationship between knowledge production and social change.

From an educational perspective, the findings can inform pedagogical practices that respect the cognitive and symbolic rhythms of Wayúu students who present diverse or exceptional characteristics. Rather than implementing uniform assessments and standards, it would be more appropriate to devise educational strategies that align with the cultural logic of learning in the local environment.

This study proposes an epistemological and methodological framework to revitalize intercultural educational theory by integrating the concept of cognitive diversity from an indigenous perspective. The integration of "ancestral knowledge" with the acknowledgement of cognitive singularity within this framework aims to foster more comprehensive educational models. These models emphasize the appreciation of differences within a cultural context, devoid of the perception of these differences as pathologies.

3. Objectives

3.1 General objective

The study analyzes the cultural representations of the Wayúu people regarding learning and cognitive exceptionality from an intercultural and decolonial perspective. This analysis will be based on a documentary review of recent scientific production.

3.2 Specific objectives

1. To examine the academic literature published between 2015 and 2025 that addresses the ancestral knowledge, educational practices, and cultural representations of the Wayúu people in formal and community formative contexts.
2. To identify the main contemporary approaches to neurodiversity, cognitive exceptionality, and intellectual diversity present in the current scientific literature, as well as their theoretical and epistemological foundations.
3. To establish meeting points, tensions and divergences between Western conceptions of neurodiversity and the ways of understanding learning and cognitive difference typical of the Wayúu worldview.
4. To propose interpretative categories and pedagogical reflections that guide the construction of intercultural educational models, sensitive to cognitive diversity and respectful of ancestral knowledge.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ancestral knowledge and Wayuu worldview

The concept of "traditional knowledge" is widely recognized as a foundational element of the cultural identities and learning systems that are characteristic of indigenous communities. These practices are disseminated through orality, collaborative efforts, ritualized ceremonies, and communal customs, collectively forming a holistic worldview that integrates the spiritual, the natural, and the social

dimensions. According to Walsh (2018), traditional knowledge "is not vestiges of the past, but living forms of understanding that generate meaning, territory, and history from perspectives different from Western modernity" (p. 34).

In the context of the Wayúu people, the dissemination of knowledge is carried out through a network of meanings that connects daily life, territory, and language. Mythical stories, elders' advice (ouutsü), and symbolic practices, such as the art of weaving, are learning methods that combine memory and experience. Pineda and Iguarán (2020) posit that "the act of weaving in the Wayúu culture represents a process of symbolic and educational creation, in which specific values, history, and ways of thinking are transmitted" (p. 112). Consequently, learning is inextricably linked to life and community. Learning is a process of acquiring knowledge through living and engaging with the social fabric.

Wayuu ancestral knowledge is predicated on a relational vision of understanding. The individual assimilates the understanding that competition should be eschewed in favor of the promotion of equilibrium, both within the collective and the environment. This principle aligns with Santos' (2019) concept of "epistemologies of the South," which are understood as alternative ways of knowing that challenge the dominance of scientific monoculturalism and recognize the validity of knowledge derived from social practice. The aforementioned epistemologies demonstrate that indigenous education is a conduit for cultural affirmation rather than a conduit for school assimilation.

Intercultural education and representations of learning

Intercultural education has emerged as a space for dialogue between different cultures, with the objective of overcoming inequalities in knowledge and building educational processes based on respect and reciprocity. According to López and Küper (2019), interculturality "encompasses the recognition that indigenous communities possess distinct educational systems grounded in unique worldviews, which must be duly considered in the context of national pedagogical initiatives" (p. 77).

In Colombia, intercultural education is partially embodied in the Indigenous Educational System (SEIP), which acknowledges the autonomy of communities to define their own curricula and teaching methods. However, the practical implementation of this model faces significant challenges due to the structure of the official education system. Tubino (2020) posits that the primary challenge lies in "transitioning from an interculturality that is confined to discourse to a critical interculturality, wherein power relations and knowledge generation processes are altered" (p. 45).

From an educational perspective, representations of learning in intercultural environments should be regarded as symbolic constructions that demonstrate how each culture comprehends human development. In Wayuu communities, learning is closely linked to observation, imitation, and collective experience. Consequently, children acquire knowledge through experiential learning within their social environment rather than in conventional academic settings. According to López (2021), "indigenous education occurs by doing, living together and feeling, not through the abstract accumulation of knowledge" (p. 58). This approach underscores the discrepancy between conventional educational models and the learning styles that are characteristic of indigenous peoples.

Cognitive exceptionality and neurodiversity

The conceptualization of cognitive exceptionality has undergone a shift in recent decades, transitioning from a pathologizing perspective to a more inclusive understanding. This approach posits that neurodiversity is a natural manifestation of human variability, recognizing that individuals may process information, perceive the environment, and learn in different ways. As Armstrong (2017) observes, "neurodiversity celebrates the diversity of human brains and challenges the idea that there is a right or normal way to think" (p. 19).

In the domain of education, this model advocates for the recognition of cognitive differences as potential catalysts for innovation in pedagogical practices. Cole (2020) posits that the incorporation of neurodiverse students necessitates the implementation of flexible teaching methodologies and a profound comprehension of their cognitive capabilities (p. 62). From this perspective, exceptionality is no longer perceived as a deficit; rather, it becomes a possibility, contingent upon the educational environment's capacity to adapt and acknowledge the mental diversity of its students. However, a significant proportion of research on neurodiversity originates from the Northern Hemisphere and is predicated on Western theoretical frameworks. As McLennan et al. (2025) caution, "conceptions of neurodiversity are influenced by dominant cultural views that are not always related to non-Western contexts" (p. 9). Therefore, it is imperative to incorporate alternative cultural perspectives that enrich the understanding of cognitive difference.

In indigenous communities, cognitive difference is understood within the context of their own symbolic frameworks, which are associated with spirituality, connection with the territory, and the social role of the individual. In many cases, extraordinary abilities or divergent modes of thinking are not regarded as flaws but rather as expressions of talent or purpose within the community. This holistic perspective is in contrast to the Western tendency to classify and diagnose. It opens up new possibilities for a culturally recognized pedagogy.

Dialogue between knowledges: towards an intercultural understanding of cognition

The interaction between ancestral knowledge and neurodiversity presents an opportunity to rethink knowledge and education from a plural approach. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2019) posits that the dialogue of knowledge "does not seek a total fusion or establish hierarchies, but rather to create an ecology of knowledge where each one maintains its value when interacting with others" (p. 41). In the domain of education, this discourse signifies the acknowledgement that there exist numerous legitimate methods of acquiring knowledge, imparting instruction, and comprehending the intricacies of the human mind.

In this vein, the correlation between the Wayuu worldview and the concept of neurodiversity can facilitate the development of a more expansive conception of intelligence, wherein variation is not perceived as a deficiency, but rather as both functional and cultural diversity. Therefore, intercultural education can be conceptualized as a nexus where scientific and traditional knowledge can be integrated to facilitate comprehensive human learning.

5. Results

An analysis of the documents revealed that Wayuu cultural conceptions of learning constitute a symbolic network encompassing spiritual, social, and practical dimensions. The research reviewed indicates that knowledge is not perceived as a set

of information to be memorized, but rather as an experience rooted in the community. Pineda and Iguarán (2020) posit that "weaving, in addition to being an artisanal practice, constitutes a medium for cognitive processes and the dissemination of knowledge, interweaving memory, spirituality, and aesthetics" (p. 115). From this perspective, learning is defined as engagement with social fabric, wherein daily actions impart lessons on coexistence, reciprocity, and harmony with the environment.

Consequently, Wayuu education is structured as a continuous process of community formation. López (2021) posits that "learning in indigenous communities stems from observation, shared experience, and reverence for the voice of elders, who function as intermediaries of ancestral knowledge" (p. 58). This pedagogical approach, known as contextual learning, stands in contrast to conventional educational models that prioritize the uniformity of knowledge and the use of standardized assessments. Within the Wayúu context, education is manifested through the interaction between different generations, employing oral transmission and imitation as primary methods. This approach emphasizes experiential learning over the transmission of content, thereby fostering a more comprehensive and practical understanding of educational concepts.

The results of the study also underscore the pivotal role that women play in the preservation and transmission of knowledge. From a very young age, girls are introduced to the art of weaving, a practice that involves the creation of narratives and reflection on daily life. These activities constitute a comprehensive learning experience in principles, symbols, and customs. According to Walsh (2018), "ancestral pedagogies are practices that challenge and reaffirm the ways of life of communities in response to the homogenizing power of modernity" (p. 37). Consequently, each educational action in the Wayúu culture is imbued with a dual significance: as a form of epistemological resistance and as a manifestation of cultural resilience.

A notable conceptual shift has been identified in the recent literature on neurodiversity and cognitive exceptionality. Armstrong (2017) posits that "neurodiversity recognizes the diversity of human brains as a biological fact and an educational opportunity" (p. 22), situating cognitive differences within the natural domain of human variation. This perspective calls for a shift from the medical-deficit approach that has historically defined special education toward a model that acknowledges the inherent potentialities of individuals with disabilities. Cole (2020) offers a complementary perspective, asserting that "the inclusion of neurodiverse learners necessitates a substantial transformation of pedagogical practices to acknowledge cognitive styles as assets rather than as aberrations" (p. 64).

However, the study reveals that the majority of research on neurodiversity is conducted from Eurocentric cultural perspectives, with a paucity of notable integration of indigenous or Latin American knowledge. McLennan, Aberdein, Siggers, and Gillett-Swan (2025) emphasize that "most definitions of neurodiversity originate from contexts in the Global North and seldom consider local cultural dimensions" (p. 10). This state of affairs gives rise to a theoretical and methodological gap in the understanding of cognitive diversity in traditional communities, where the criteria of normality and difference are dependent on indigenous cultural categories.

The Wayuu people regard cognitive variability not as a deficiency or disability, but rather as a form of special ability that strengthens the individual's spiritual identity. The concept of uniqueness is regarded as an expression of the spirit (*pulowi* or *maleiwa*), thereby conferring a distinct role to everyone within the social structure. This cultural vision enables us to comprehend cognitive diversity from a symbolic and community framework, wherein disparate abilities are harmoniously integrated

into the collective fabric. The results of the study indicate that both Wayúu thought and contemporary neurodiversity share a common essence, namely the promotion of the right to be different and the acceptance of human diversity.

The interchange between these two forms of knowledge presents a promising opportunity to reinvent intercultural education. Santos (2019) posits that "the ecology of knowledge is predicated on the acceptance of the epistemological diversity of the world and on the need to establish horizontal relationships between different rationalities" (p. 44). From this perspective, ancestral epistemologies and modern approaches to cognitive diversity can converge on a common point: respect for the multiple ways of learning, feeling, and knowing. The integration of this perspective into education policies necessitates a rethinking of assessment, teaching, and inclusion from diversity, as opposed to uniformity.

Conversely, an analysis of pertinent documents suggests that intercultural education in Colombia has seen certain advancements, notably the establishment of the Indigenous Educational System (SEIP). However, challenges persist within the national educational framework. Tubino (2020) posits that "interculturality should not be regarded as a superficial dialogue between cultures; rather, it necessitates a profound transformation in knowledge models and power relations" (p. 48). This assertion assumes particular significance in light of the study's findings, as the integration of neurodiversity and Wayuu knowledge necessitates the implementation of a decolonizing pedagogy that honors the prevailing worldviews within the local context.

Furthermore, an analysis of the documents reveals a growing convergence between intercultural approaches and neurodiversity theories in the necessity to recognize the uniqueness of the individual as the foundation of collective learning. As Walsh (2018) succinctly summarizes, "educating from decoloniality is educating to re-exist, to recognize the diverse ways of being and knowing that coexist in the world" (p. 40). This statement encapsulates the convergence between Wayúu cultural resistance and current inclusive currents. In this regard, difference is considered not as an impediment but rather as an opportunity for mutual enrichment.

6. DISCUSSION

The results obtained in this documentary review demonstrate that Wayúu cultural conceptions of learning and cognitive differences represent a significant departure from Western educational models. This is due to the Wayúu approach, which situates the education of the human being within a community, symbolic, and spiritual context. This finding aligns with Walsh's (2018) argument that ancestral pedagogies function as "practices of re-existence," which interrogate the coloniality of knowledge (p. 37). From this perspective, learning is not regarded as the accumulation of data, but rather as a participation in a network of relationships encompassing the individual, the community, and nature. This perspective stands in contrast to Western conceptions of education, which prioritize the normalization of knowledge and the evaluation of cognitive abilities divorced from their cultural context.

The comprehension of cognitive diversity within the Wayúu worldview emerges as a pivotal subject of inquiry. Contrary to the clinical or medical approach that has predominated in contemporary education, Wayuu ancestral thought does not interpret cognitive differences as deviations. Rather, it is regarded as legitimate expressions of social and spiritual diversity. This finding aligns with the observations made by Armstrong (2017), who asserts that "neurodiversity should not be perceived

as an aberration, but rather as a natural expression of human variability" (p. 22). In this sense, the coincidence between both approaches—the ancestral and the modern—is found in the acceptance of plurality as a key element of human experience.

However, the review also demonstrates that narratives concerning neurodiversity remain intricately intertwined with epistemological frameworks originating from the Northern Hemisphere. McLennan, Aberdeen, Saggars, and Gillett-Swan (2025) caution that conceptions of neurodiversity "emerge from a culturally situated rationality, which frequently fails to acknowledge alternative forms of knowledge" (p. 10). This observation suggests that, despite its inclusive potential, neurodiversity may be susceptible to reproducing a universalist logic unless it is linked to local epistemologies. In this context, the Wayúu perspective presents an alternative panorama, where cognitive diversity is integrated into a network of cultural and spiritual meanings that give it relevance and purpose.

From a pedagogical perspective, the results of the study suggest that it is necessary to develop an intercultural education that considers cognitive diversity as a cultural dimension and a biological one. Cole (2020) underscores that authentic inclusion necessitates the modification of educational structures to accommodate the cognitive strengths of each student (p. 64). In the Wayúu sphere, this necessitates the formulation of didactic strategies that incorporate traditional practices—such as weaving, oral storytelling, or community rituals—into formal learning processes. These practices should not be regarded as mere folkloric elements, but rather as cognitive and symbolic resources that reflect a divergent way of thinking and learning. Conversely, the findings suggest that intercultural education in Colombia continues to exhibit a disparity between rhetoric and praxis. The Indigenous Education System (SEIP) signifies a commendable advancement in institutional terms; however, its implementation is encumbered by significant impediments, primarily the dearth of training among educators in intercultural and decolonial methodologies. In this vein, Tubino (2020) asserts that interculturality "must be an active interaction between cultures, rather than a passive existence" that transforms the way knowledge is generated (p. 48). The findings of this study underscore the pressing need to transition towards a critical interculturality, which goes beyond merely incorporating cultural aspects and focuses on interrogating the epistemological foundations of the prevailing education system.

In the theoretical section of the discussion, the concept of "weaving knowledge" is introduced as a metaphorical representation of the interconnection between ancestral knowledge and contemporary theories concerning cognitive diversity. Neurodiversity is predicated on the notion that diverse modes of understanding the world can and should coexist. Wayuu weaving is a physical manifestation of this concept. The selection of yarn, color, and pattern collectively conveys the creative and communicative mindset of the artist. The juxtaposition of these elements serves as a medium for storytelling, embodying concepts of balance, harmony, and diversity. In this manner, the practice of weaving can be conceptualized as a pedagogical metaphor for intercultural thinking: knowledge is not replaced, but rather intertwined.

From an epistemological perspective, the findings align with Santos's (2019) argument that the ecology of knowledge fosters an egalitarian relationship among different forms of knowledge, thereby eliminating hierarchical structures. This principle is exemplified by the capacity to integrate the frameworks of neurodiversity and ancestral Wayúu knowledge into a dialogic discourse that acknowledges the validity of both. From this perspective, the acquisition of knowledge is conceptualized as a

reciprocal interaction between disparate epistemic domains that are complementary in nature.

The intersection of neurodiversity and the Wayuu worldview poses significant challenges for educational research and practice. First, the development of methodological frameworks is necessary. These frameworks must integrate the cultural understanding of cognitive difference, and they must avoid the imposition of external categories that alter its meaning. Secondly, it emphasizes the necessity of teacher training that emphasizes intercultural sensitivity, which involves the ability to acknowledge and value the unique learning methodologies of diverse communities without imposing universal standards. The text's conclusion underscores the pressing need for the implementation of public policies that formally acknowledge ancestral knowledge as a legitimate form of knowledge, rather than merely as a cultural reference.

In summary, the discussion suggests that the recognition of cognitive singularity in Wayuu thought not only enriches the theoretical framework of neurodiversity, but also contributes to a pedagogy of recognition, based on acceptance, respect, and reciprocity. This finding aligns with the concept of "educating to re-exist," proposed by Walsh (2018), which emphasizes the necessity of reevaluating education as a forum for the convergence of diverse rationalities. The integration of these perspectives does not entail the homogenization of these perspectives; rather, it fosters a discourse that is predicated on the acknowledgment and respect of difference, thereby engendering an education that is more human, pluralistic, and liberating.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis conducted has enabled to discern that the Wayúu cultural representations of learning and cognitive exceptionality are predicated on an integrated conception of knowledge, wherein the individual, the community, and nature coalesce to form a network of meanings. The Wayúu educational approach, in contrast to the Western educational model that emphasizes formal teaching and instrumental logic, prioritizes learning as a communal experience interwoven with spirituality and daily life. This vision underscores the notion that ancestral knowledge not only serves as a repository for cultural memory but also constitutes a foundational element of education and socialization.

The findings also indicate that, according to the Wayúu worldview, cognitive exceptionality is not regarded as a deficiency, but rather as a manifestation of unique talents or energies that each individual possesses. This perspective stands in contrast to the predominant biomedical viewpoint, which posits that diversity of thought is an aberration rather than an integral component of community equilibrium. In this study, the research demonstrated a conceptual correlation with the contemporary notion of neurodiversity, which posits that neurological differences are valid expressions of human diversity. The ethical mission of both the ancestral and the present visions is to appreciate difference as a resource for knowledge, creativity, and social cohesion. From an educational perspective, these findings underscore the necessity of reevaluating pedagogical methodologies to promote a genuinely intercultural education. This necessitates the recognition of ancestral knowledge as a legitimate system of knowledge, necessitating the incorporation of their practices and symbols into the educational process. As Cole posits in 2020, the scope of inclusion in education should extend beyond mere curriculum modifications. A comprehensive transformation of the knowledge base is imperative, fostering an environment

conducive to recognizing and nurturing the cognitive strengths of each learner. Within the Wayúu context, this entails a shift in perspective regarding the classroom, from a mere conduit for the transmission of information to a forum for diverse learning methodologies.

From a theoretical perspective, the study underscores the pertinence of the dialogue of knowledge proposed by Santos in 2019, wherein modern science and indigenous epistemologies can coexist in an equitable relationship. This approach promotes the reconsideration of education as a diverse practice, where concepts such as intelligence, learning, and difference are redefined based on cultural and cognitive plurality. The relationship between neurodiversity and Wayuu knowledge, therefore, does not aim for a complete fusion of concepts, but rather a convergence that respects the complementarities of both.

Pedagogical research suggests the adoption of intercultural educational strategies, integrating traditional practices such as weaving, oral storytelling, and ceremonial rhythms. These practices are recommended not only as cultural manifestations, but also as teaching methodologies with profound cognitive and symbolic value. These strategies have the potential to contribute to the cultivation of the Wayúu cultural identity, while concurrently unveiling novel pedagogical approaches for non-indigenous educators, thereby fostering more human-centered and contextualized learning environments.

From a social and political perspective, the results underscore the necessity of formulating public policies that guarantee the educational autonomy of indigenous communities. The development of the Indigenous Educational System (SEIP) must be carried out with a vision of cultural and cognitive inclusion that values the diverse ways of understanding and learning present in the community. Consequently, intercultural education must be conceptualized not merely as an environment of passive tolerance, but rather as an active process of transformation that cultivates respect and equity in the diverse forms of knowledge.

This study makes a significant contribution to the theoretical framework of intercultural education and neurodiversity from a Latin American and decolonial perspective. The acknowledgement that diverse cultures possess distinct modes of thought and education signifies the recognition of the heterogeneity of the human species in terms of cognitive and symbolic structures. As Walsh (2018) points out, "educating from decoloniality is educating to re-exist" (p. 40). In this sense, the Wayúu community provides a lesson for the contemporary world, demonstrating that diversity does not create divisions, but rather adds value to the collective fabric of existence.

8. Recommendations

In light of the findings and reflections outlined in this analysis, the following proposals are put forth to enhance intercultural education, to place value on Wayúu ancestral knowledge, and to incorporate cognitive diversity into teaching methods and social processes:

1. Include Wayuu ancestral knowledge in the curriculum in a natural way and not as an add-on. This means recognizing cultural practices—such as crafts, oral transmission, or elder guidance—as legitimate methods of teaching and learning, which can stimulate memory, creativity, and collective identity.
2. To promote teacher training in intercultural and neurodiversity approaches, focused on understanding the cognitive and cultural characteristics of indigenous students. This training should equip educators with skills to adjust teaching to

different learning styles, avoiding considering only Western diagnostic categories as valid assessments.

3. Strengthen the Indigenous Education System (SEIP) through the creation of public policies that ensure sustainable resources, curricular autonomy and the recognition of the knowledge of the communities. Educational institutions must move towards collaborative management where scholars, community leaders, and teachers work together to create appropriate educational programs.

4. To stimulate interdisciplinary research that connects education, anthropology, psychology and neuroscience from an intercultural perspective. This research could examine how traditional practices affect cognitive, emotional, and social development, contributing to a culturally rooted approach to neurodiversity.

5. To promote dialogue between indigenous communities and the academic field, where native peoples actively participate in the generation of knowledge. This exchange would make it possible to move towards an ecology of knowledge that recognizes the legitimacy of ancestral knowledge and its impact on modern education.

6. To reevaluate educational inclusion policies from the neurodiversity approach, in such a way that they recognize cultural and cognitive diversity as part of the same continuum. Inclusion should be considered not as an integration into a single model, but as a co-creation of pedagogical spaces in which all forms of thought are valued and accepted.

7. Create bilingual and intercultural pedagogical resources, developed in conjunction with Wayúu teachers, that integrate symbols, stories, and examples from the local environment. These resources should reflect the linguistic and conceptual richness of Wayuunaiki and facilitate learning that reinforces the sense of cultural belonging.

8. Establish academic networks in Latin America focused on investigating the relationship between ancestral knowledge and cognitive diversity, in order to consolidate a regional line of research on inclusive intercultural education, which can offer evidence and suggestions for creating more equitable educational policies.

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