Extractive relations: natural resource use, indigenous peoples and environmental protection in Peru

Article (Accepted Version)

Killick, Evan (2020) Extractive relations: natural resource use, indigenous peoples and environmental protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 39 (3). pp. 290-304. ISSN 0261-3050

This version is available from Sussex Research Online: <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/80923/>

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies and may differ from the published version or from the version of record. If you wish to cite this item you are advised to consult the publisher's version. Please see the URL above for details on accessing the published version.

Copyright and reuse:

Sussex Research Online is a digital repository of the research output of the University.

Copyright and all moral rights to the version of the paper presented here belong to the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. To the extent reasonable and practicable, the material made available in SRO has been checked for eligibility before being made available.

Copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru.

EVAN KILLICK

University of Sussex

Through ethnography of Ashaninka communities' involvement in timber extraction in Peruvian Amazonia and an engagement with recent discussions around *Buen Vivir* the article interrogates the common association between indigenous notions of 'living well' and environmental protection. A key insight is that Ashaninka individuals emphasise everyday well-being and equality over the preservation of their surroundings. Older critiques of extractivism are used to show the recent advent of environmentalist discourses and highlight issues with emphasising ontological difference. The article concludes that that *Buen Vivir* would be better framed as a desire, and right, to self-determination rather than being associated with specific behaviours.

Keywords: Amazonia, Indigenous Peoples, Environmentalism, Forest Conservation, Post-development, Buen Vivir

Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru.

EVAN KILLICK (*University of Sussex*)

The recent rise in the political and academic importance of notions of well-being based on indigenous notions of *Suma Qamaña* or *Buen Vivir* (Gudynas, 2011 and 2012) have tended to emphasise distinctions between indigenous and ‘modern’ forms of being in the world (Escobar, 2012:xxxii). These distinctions are particularly apparent in discussions around environmental protection. Particularly where indigenous forms have been put to use politically as sites and acts of resistance to the forms of extraction being imposed from outside. As well as in the construction of new national constitutions and forms of development (De Angelis, 2011, Gudynas and Acosta, 2011, see also Caria and Domínguez, 2016). Political and economic realities in both Bolivia and Ecuador (Walsh, 2011:63, Laing, 2015, Anthias and Radcliffe, 2015 and Anthias, 2018) show the limitations of these legal forms, while other cases in this volume also attest to a more complex reality in which indigenous peoples are involved in the extraction of natural resources in various forms.

This article looks at one such example, Ashaninka communities on the Ucayali River in eastern Peru and their involvement in the timber industry. Specifically the article considers how and why Ashaninka people continue to be involved in timber extraction in this area and how they understand and try to control the economic and social relationships with outsiders that these activities bring. The article suggests that timber extraction can be considered part of ‘living well’ for these communities. A further insight is that Ashaninka individuals are preoccupied with maintaining social and political equality in the current moment rather than focusing on the preservation of their surroundings. In line with this volume as a whole, the article emphasises the diversity and complexity of indigenous relations to capitalist expansion and, in turn, questions the common association between notions of *Buen Vivir* and environmental protection. In the final part of the article an engagement with older literature on mining is used to show how the discourse of environmentalism is a relatively recent aspect of indigenous relations with extractivism and highlight some of the issues with emphasising ontological difference. These discussions lead to a final conclusion that for *Buen Vivir* to remain politically relevant and useful it would be better framed as a desire, and right, to self-determination rather than being associated with specific behaviours or uses of the environment.

Natural Resources, *Buen Vivir* and Anthropological Theory

The common and popular image of indigenous responses to resource extraction is of indigenous communities resisting the incursions of large-scale projects onto their lands. Standing, protesting and marching against gas, oil and mining companies. In the media this is usually connected with concerns for conserving the local and global environment, such that indigenous peoples and their everyday forms of

living are generally understood as exemplifying ways of living harmoniously with the environment. Particularly in the Latin American context, recent political and academic discourses have formulated such distinctions around the concept of *Buen Vivir*. Translated to English as ‘living well’ or ‘good living’ the term is meant to represent indigenous concepts of well-being. As Gudynas notes however, beyond a general idea of ‘quality of life’ in its wider usage *Buen Vivir* is associated with the specific idea that ‘well-being is only possible within a community’ (Gudynas, 2011:441). This sociality is further understood to extend out to encompass ‘not only persons, but also crops and cattle, and the rest of Nature’ (Gudynas, 2011:444). It is in this form, as centring on a communal sociality that encompasses ‘Nature’ that the concept becomes politically evoked as a counterweight to the global, economic system.

Across the continent this version of *Buen Vivir* has gained increasing political momentum, particularly among left wing politicians, culminating in the inclusion of these indigenous forms in the constitutions of both Bolivia and Ecuador. Its rise is also apparent in academic work. One of the most prominent writers in this field is Arturo Escobar who has taken forward his post-development critique to argue for seeing the present moment ‘as one of intense struggle between two visions of globality: globality defined as modernity writ large, or globality as a pluriverse’ (Escobar, 2012:xxxii). On one side of this vision we have the modernist ontology, emphasising humans’ separation from their surroundings, that underpins capitalist extractivism and can lead to extensive environmental and social upheavals. On the other we have indigenous ontologies, broadly categorised as the view that humans have social connections to their surroundings and a different set of values which underpins fundamentally different outcomes.

The power and political importance of such views is clear and can be linked to the broader aims of post-development theory and decolonisation to highlight the strategies of cultural and social domination inherent within the discourses and strategies of mainstream development, including academe, and the wider economic system of which it is a part (Escobar, 2012:vii). Part of this is about opening up academe as well as wider political and social life to other ways of knowing and being in the world (Radcliffe, 2017:330). As Quijano observes: ‘Outside the “West”, virtually in all known cultures, every cosmic vision, every image, all systematic production of knowledge is associated with a perspective of totality’ (Quijano, 2007:177). These ways of being are held up in contrast to the detached, Western, empirical observer, positing not only that humans (culture) cannot be separated from nature but also that the whole must be understood as mutually constitutive, and therefore not fully decipherable when taken as individual parts. As Escobar puts it, the struggles between different groups in Latin America: ‘can be read as ontological struggles [that] have the potential to denaturalise the hegemonic dualisms on which the liberal order is founded’ (Escobar, 2012:xxviii, see also Blaser, 2010 and de la Cadena, 2010).

While the power and potential of these alternative worldviews on both a political and philosophical level are great, the danger of these approaches is that they obscure a more complex reality in which different groups are constantly interacting, while the very form and processes of these interactions are in constant

Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

dialogue and exchange. In an earlier critique of Escobar's work Bebbington notes that post-development approaches see 'little possibility of improvements in human well-being without radical political economic change' and that they leave 'little space for a continuing dialogue with the development experience to date' (Bebbington, 2000:495-6). He argues that this can be countered through ethnographic analyses of the 'sedimented history of a place' and 'actual processes of livelihood and landscape transformation' (Bebbington, 2000:496).

In contrast to popular imaginaries or the political valorisation of *Buen Vivir*, this article argues that indigenous peoples on the Ucayali River can be understood as caught up and engaged in extraction activities and the broader capitalist system, without obvious opposition. While it is difficult to foresee a positive long-term future for the communities' engagement with the timber industry at this point those activities are an important part of local cultural and social formations. The article thus supports the wider aims of this volume to show the complexity and possible contradictions involved in local engagements with both environmental surroundings and broader, regional, national and global economies. Further, in showing how for Ashaninka people in these communities working timber is part of their current understanding of how to achieve their desired quality of life, the article suggests that the concept of *Buen Vivir* needs to move from associating indigenous lives with a specific idea of communality and sociality to a more general one of self-determination that better reflects and supports the complexity and diversity of lived realities.

Peruvian Amazonia and Ashaninka People

The article engages with these debates through a close, ethnographically-based engagement with Ashaninka people and other populations on the Ucayali River. It is based on almost 20 years of interactions with people in the area, centred on long-term ethnographic research and participant observation in particular communities. Predominantly this work has focused on everyday life in the communities but it has also encompassed timber camps, life on the river in boats and rafts, as well as the lives of indigenous peoples and timber workers in the city of Pucallpa.

Ashaninka people constitute the largest Peruvian Amazonian indigenous group and one of the largest in Amazonia as a whole. While there are continuous debates over the composition of this group and others to which it is closely related, and particularly of the cultural and linguistic differences between Ashaninka and Ashéninka, this article follows Santos-Granero in using 'Ashaninka' as 'the general term used to refer to the cluster of Arawak-speaking peoples living in Peru's Selva Central region, a cluster that includes speakers of Ashaninka, Ashéninka and Nomatsiguenga' (Santos-Granero, 2017:101).

Such debates emphasise the complexity of the historical and contemporary experience of indigenous peoples in the region as they have faced the reconfiguration of local identities and social and political relations as well as integration into the wider nation state. In some areas Ashaninka groups have formed strong federations that engage in local and national politics while in other areas, and particularly on the part
Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

of the Ucayali on which this article focuses, communities have remained relatively outside of institutional politics. All communities, however, have some engagement with the state, mainly through government-funded schools as well as a few social welfare programs that sporadically reach them including public health and nutrition programmes.

The diversity of Ashaninka experiences and lives is compounded by their geographic range, which stretches from the slopes of the Andes across to the Brazilian state of Acre, and thus the different situations they find themselves in and their relative integration into Peruvian society. It is also constituted in the different forms of living Ashaninka people experience, from large towns and cities, including Lima, to still living in relative isolation in the forest. Thus, while the communities described in this article identify themselves as Ashaninka and have many of the general social and cultural characteristics associated with Ashaninka ways of being, it is important to recognise the variation across the whole and understand that no individual's nor individual community's experience stands for all. Further, timberwork is mainly conducted by Ashaninka men and the analysis of this article should therefore be understood primarily to reflect an Ashaninka male perspective.

The work on which this article is based began in 2001 with over two years of continuous ethnographic fieldwork in two communities on a section of the Ucayali where there are no roads, and which is therefore relatively isolated from the rest of the Peruvian economy. Following a line of extractive regimes that included rubber in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, for the last 50 years the centre of economic activity in the region has been timber extraction. This occurs through selective logging rather than the clear-cutting techniques infamous in other parts of the Amazon. Timber extraction is centred around Pucallpa and the highway that connects it to Lima and thus the Peruvian and global economy. Finance also funnels through Pucallpa in chains of credit and debt, known locally as *habilitación*, that connect individuals from all sectors of Peruvian society from sawmill owners and international exporters down to the poor mestizo and indigenous individuals that provide its physical labour. Various forms of capital, equipment and goods are provided in advance through this network on the understanding that the debts created will ultimately be repaid in timber, or a return of monetary capital. Sears and Pinedo-Vasquez (2011) have noted the complex historical social, political and economic relationships on which the industry continues to be based, arguing that it is the failure to engage with this reality that has undermined the Peruvian government's recent attempts to control the industry and enforce sustainability into its practices. Having laid out the methodological underpinnings of this article as well as the broader social, political and economic realities of the region the article now turns to its central ethnographic example.

Pijuayal, Timber and Living Well

Pijuayal is an Ashaninka community situated on a small tributary of the Ucayali River. It was officially recognised as a *Comunidad Nativa* in 1985 after which its members received a collective title to the land and Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environment⁴ Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

availed of a government-funded primary school teacher. Situated roughly ten miles from the main river and below the Cerros del Sira, a small but rugged mountain range to the east of the main Andes. In 2001 the mountain range was designated a communal reserve with restrictions on human activities within its area and its surrounding communities officially designated as managing the protected area (ParksWatch, 2003). Coupled with its rugged landscape of cliffs, steep slopes and narrow ravines the mountains themselves are uninhabited and are relatively untouched. They thus form a green and imposing backdrop to the communities that surround them.

The centre of Pijuayal itself, where the school is situated and a few families have their houses, is two to three hours walk from the base of the hills and the official boundary of the reserve. This space, which is held through a communal land title, is dotted with households and garden plots. Unlike many other Amazonian groups Ashaninka people in this community prefer not to live in close proximity to each other. Instead nuclear families live relatively spread out through the forest, with their houses built beside the felled clearings in the forest where they plant manioc and a few other crops. Relative clusters might be discerned where a group of siblings have built their homesteads close to that of their parents, but the overall impression of the landscape is one in which humans do not dominate and live relatively lightly across it.

This is relatively true too of the community members' everyday interactions with their surroundings. The main subsistence activity is the agriculture of the gardens supplemented by some gathering of forest produce such as palm fruits and insect larvae. Manioc is the key staple crop. It is eaten at every meal and also forms the basis for *masato*, a brew made from the boiled and fermented manioc roots that is seldom absent from a household and forms the cornerstone of Ashaninka hospitality and sociality (Killick, 2009). The other main source of food is hunting and fishing in the surrounding forests and streams. Fishing can be done by all members of the household at different times and with various techniques; including lines, spears and arrows as well as the use of natural fish poisons. Hunting is conducted mainly by men using shotguns who go into the forest on their own to look for larger mammals such as deer and peccaries but who will bring home anything they encounter including monkeys and birds. While in my experience the average distances covered while hunting have increased over recent years, it is still common for local people to comment on the easy availability of food in the community in comparison with life in the local city. One man, Raphael, as we recently sat drinking *masato* suggested that the reason why he had many more children than me was because he did not have to worry about being able to feed them. He told me that he would always be able to grow, fish and hunt enough for them, however many he had, unlike a city-dweller like me who had to pay for everything.

Such conversations, and comparisons between living in the city and the forest, were not uncommon with many bemoaning the cost of food when they visited the city and particularly the difficulty of making or procuring *masato*. In their view the forest still offered them an abundant life and underpinned their ability to live as they wished, tranquilly with family and friends. Another important aspect of this preferred form of

Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

living is that social reproduction is maintained by individuals or immediate families acting independently and respecting the autonomy of others (Killick, 2007 and 2008).

In other Ashaninka communities the connection between such preferred forms of living and the idea of *Buen Vivir* have been made explicit, with some communities using the Ashaninka words *kametsa asaiki* as a direct translation (CARE, 2011 and Sarmiento Barletti, 2016a). In Pijuayal there was no explicit, local equivalent formulation of such terms in either Ashaninka or Spanish but nevertheless Pijuayal's preferred form of living could be considered as fitting well with *Buen Vivir's* emphasis on well-being, peace and social justice (Escobar, 2012:xxvi). The limits of this parallel are reached, however, when it comes to ecological aspects, where as noted above, *Buen Vivir* is usually associated with living in a healthy and 'ecologically balanced' manner.

My conversation with Raphael occurred when I was visiting Pijuayal after an absence of seven years. I had arrived back in the community that afternoon, travelling from the local city of Pucallpa with a timberman, Melvin, who has long worked with people in the area. We had pulled in at Raphael's house in order for Melvin to check on the progress that Raphael had made on some timber while also passing over some of the things that he had requested from the city. These included a new mosquito net for one of his daughters, some clothes for all of the family, a new cooking pot, soap, school exercise books and then some tools including axes and a new chain for his chainsaw. Raphael and particularly his wife, Lyta, were clearly pleased by the items and the children immediately started trying on the new clothes and commenting on them. If Raphael had been clear to me that there was no shortage of food for him and his family, the same could not be said of other items that they felt they needed in order to live as they desired. None of the goods noted above could be considered particularly luxurious. Rather all of the items might be considered as necessary for staying clean and healthy and caring for children, that is of 'living well'. While such goods can be gained through a number of channels, including selling crops and pigs and chickens to itinerant traders who will sometimes visit the area it is difficult to meet the needs of a growing household in this way. Such traders can not be relied upon to bring specific goods and are sporadic in their visits. As such the majority of households rely on timber extraction to give them regular access to such goods, an engagement that has only increased in recent years.

This increase had been evident in our journey up to Pijuayal that day as we passed numerous rafts of timber being put together and towed by various Ashaninka men, as well as a number of timber camps set up by outsiders like Melvin who were working with local people. Two of these, Melvin explained, were *Shihuahuaceros* practicing a new form of extraction in the region. *Shihuahuaco* or 'Brazilian Teak' (*Dipteryx micrantha*) has in the past decade become a key part of the local industry, feeding the growing flooring market in China, and represents nearly half of Peru's timber exports (Putzel et al., 2011). Other types of timber need to be transported in large, twelve-foot-long logs that are floated in rafts to Pucallpa, like those we had passed that day. There they are sawed into long planks in large timber mills. *Shihuahuaceros* in Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

contrast bring mobile timber mills with them and cut the logs into small tablets that they then transport in boats. This means that instead of the relatively large labour gangs needed to work other types of timber, groups that are usually led by outside timbermen, many Ashaninka men are now choosing to work logs with only two or three of their friends or family that they can sell to the *Shihuahuaceros* in the community.

This increase in activity has been further strengthened by the fact that many families can now afford their own chainsaws and outboard motors after the costs of these goods has fallen precipitously in recent years, linked to the import of cheaper, Chinese variants. This emphasises that while the timber industry has a long history in the region its extent and pace have only increased in recent years in response to ever-growing local, national and international demand and despite government attempts to regulate and curb it (Sears and Pinedo-Vasquez, 2011). Such trends are not particularly surprising, however the length of time since my last visit to the community made them all the more clear. Moreover, the intervening years had been marked in the rest of the world by the rise of concerns around climate change and forest conservation. Conversations that, as was noted in the introduction, have often featured indigenous forest peoples as one potential counterweight, to the global system and processes that have led to the rise in global atmospheric carbon.

These activities, then, must also form a part of a description of Pijuayal. While the relatively large area covered by the community, the dispersed nature of its households and their subsistence activities fit with an idea of them living relatively lightly on the land, timber extraction is nevertheless part of those activities. The complexity for Ashaninka communities along the Ucayali is that there is a real sense that living well currently includes being able to obtain outside goods, particularly those that give their children a better life and allow them, above all, to go to school. On the Ucayali this is best achieved through extracting timber.

Where the oil and gas extraction that is occurring in other parts of the region with its reliance on complex technology and a relatively limited labour force can be understood to be at one end of a spectrum of forms of natural resource extraction (cf. Sarmiento Barletti, 2016b), timber stands at the other. As a resource that is more clearly in the world of local people themselves, and which depends almost entirely on their manual labour. There are two salient aspects to explore in this reality. The first is Ashaninka people's use and relations with the forest around them. The second is their social relations within this system and how they try to control their relations with outsiders. This article now turns to the first of these.

Ashaninka People and the Forest

The correspondences between indigenous environmental beliefs and practices and outside, 'Western' notions of conservation and environmentalism are contested. While arguments have been made in Amazonia for seeing dietary or hunting taboos as 'conservation mechanisms' (McDonald, 1977:734) others emphasise a general lack of evidence of conscious or unconscious strategies that might be linked to environmental

protection (Kretch, 1999 and Hames, 2007). There is not space here to fully run through these arguments, instead this article follows Ellis's observation that:

research in historical ecology has revealed intricate and inextricable links between people and their environment, indicating that humans are neither straightforwardly destructive towards the environment nor singularly biodiversity-promoting. (Ellis, 2004:125)

A conclusion from this complexity is to emphasise that each group's beliefs and practices must be considered in and of themselves. As Smith notes: 'whether or not a group conserves is an empirical question, not an inherent characteristic of indigenous people in general' (Smith, 2001:430). To fully answer such empirical questions would take a style and form of research, involving long-term quantitative assessments of both human activities and flora and faunal populations, that I have not undertaken. I can, however, offer a general analysis based on observations of the practical behaviour of the individuals and communities I have studied for over 15 years

The first clear point is that in these Ashaninka communities there is no explicit or obviously conscious preservation of forest resources. Thus, there are no major restrictions on hunting, with no general taboos on where or what to hunt. Further when asked, men would tell me that they would be happy to kill as many animals as they could on hunting expeditions, restricted only by their ammunition supplies or their ability to carry the meat back to their houses. Similarly, fishing with leaf poisons will clear out whole streams for a month or two as all fish are asphyxiated and rise to the surface for easy collection (cf. Smith, 2001:436). In the contemporary period of timber extraction the depletion of particular species in the area and the move to new ones, such as *Shihuahuaco*, again attests to a lack of a sense of the need or desire for the long-term preservation of the forests' resources.

In part this reflects the environmental reality of this area where the landscape and forest show few signs of human domination. A common discussion when issues of forest conservation are raised locally is to question how it would be possible for people to destroy all of the forest. In an area where population density is still low, logging focuses on taking out only specific individual trees and there is no industrial agriculture it is difficult for local people to imagine how quickly other areas of Amazonia have been deforested. Further, the Sira hills behind the community, which are too steep and rugged to be permanently inhabited, appear to act as a natural reservoir of animals and birds, meaning that while people note the depletion of animal numbers in the areas immediately around their settlements, animals continue to come to the areas further away from human habitation.

The culmination of these factors is that even though the Sira Communal Reserve has now been in existence for 15 years there is no local discourse around curbing existing practices (see also ParksWatch, 2003:18-20). Indeed arguments about the need to preserve the forest and its animals in any active way and Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

particularly at the expense of current living opportunities are actively dismissed. This is in spite of the communities described here having been visited by numerous delegations and representatives over the years, actively engaging surrounding communities in participatory processes of communal conservation. This has including collaborative workshops as well as more top down educational interventions discussing environmental degradation and the conservation of animal and plant resources. Individuals in neighbouring communities have also been appointed as '*guardaparques*' (park rangers) and are meant to check that no illegal activities are occurring within the boundaries of the reserve. While most people know who these individuals are and their role, they also note that they have never taken action against anyone.

These ethnographic observations of environmental use emphasise that local forms of environmental protection are not inherent to indigenous ways of living. Indeed, where they are articulated in ways that fit with global environmental concerns they are likely to have been actively constructed and based in no small part, on outside, 'Modern' conceptions of 'conservation' and environmental control based on local experiences of outside conservation efforts.

In these communities the relatively limited ways in which practices of conservation have been offered to them offer no real alternative to the extractive forms with which they are much more familiar and have already 'domesticated' to some degree. That is, while the timber industry is led by an outside demand, nevertheless the Ashaninka people described here must be understood as knowing and active participants in these processes. It is to this active engagement with the industry to which we now turn and specifically to the point that while all individuals on the Ucayali can be understood to be part of the global system of capitalist production both Ashaninka individuals as well as their *mestizo* counterparts draw on their diverse cultural ideas and experiences in opportunistic and creative ways to mediate these relationships. Specifically while actors are aware of the different points of view that distinct individuals bring to these relationships, and of the political and economic disparity that usually exists between them, they attempt to control these relationships through the use of particular cultural institutions and idioms associated with morality and social order.

Trading Relations

While over the years I have observed a number of close relations between Ashaninka community members and particular *mestizo* timbermen, my most extended experience has been with Melvin, the timberman with whom I was travelling in the journey recounted at the beginning of this article. That same day presented more examples of the long-term relationships that Melvin has built up with people. The first was that the raft of Melvin's timber was being secured by Percy, an Ashaninka man in his later 20s whom Melvin has known since birth. Percy was the youngest son of Nelson, an Ashaninka man who had worked with Melvin when he first entered the community over 30 years ago and although Nelson had died a few years previously Melvin now continued his work with his sons with whom he had both a friendly and mutually trusting relationship. Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

Both sides often talk fondly of the other and both clearly trust the other to complete on any promises of work or payment made.

Building on earlier work, my view is that the best way to understand these types of relationships is by seeing them in terms of the local cultural forms of *ayompari* trading partnerships from the Ashaninka perspective and *compadrazgo* from the *mestizo* point of view (Killick, 2010). *Ayompari* trading partnerships have a long history among Ashaninka peoples in this region of Peru, and were recorded by the Franciscan missionary Biedma (1989 [1682]) back in the 17th century. In the 1970s Bodley described the institution in the following way:

In what may be called the *ayompari* system, an individual agrees to trade on a regular basis with another individual... a man will give his *ayompari* a set of arrows thereby establishing a debt relationship, and ask him to give a steel knife in return. The second man will have an *ayompari* in another region who is perhaps in contact with white patrons or traders and from whom he can trade for a knife. Eventually the first man will get the knife he requested and the debt will be paid. (Bodley, 1971:51)

Whereas in the past it appears that non-Ashaninka were specifically excluded from being considered *ayompari*, timbermen have now become the preferred form of *ayompari*. This has worked successfully, in part, because of the clear parallels between the *ayompari* form of trade and the system of *habilitación* or debt peonage that has long been favoured by extractivist regimes in the region. The clearest parallel between the two systems is that they are both based, at least in theory, on the idea of delayed and balanced reciprocity and that, for the Ashaninka, they offer access to otherwise unavailable outside goods. Most importantly, by placing timbermen in the position of *ayompari*, Ashaninka men have tried to counteract the relative economic and political power of the timbermen while still maintaining access to desired goods.

The success of this strategy of making these outsiders feel part of a relationship based on trust and amicability is attested to in examples such as Melvin and Nelson and his family. At its heart the *ayompari* relation is associated with ideas of trust and loyalty. It is a relationship that emphasises the debts that exist between individuals and uses them as a means of strengthening and prolonging that bond between them. In drawing outsiders into this form of relationship, Ashaninka individuals attempt to make them feel the same social and moral obligations that they feel themselves. In cases such as Melvin's, the power and success of this strategy is clear. Whereas other timbermen might be exploitative or leave without repaying people properly, the fact of Melvin's continued commitment to Nelson's family, even after the death of Nelson himself attests to the moral responsibility Melvin feels. This feeling of mutual trust and affection has also now been built between Melvin and Raphael whose larger family and strong work ethic have made him a

Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

key part of Melvin's on-going operations in the area and Melvin has recently cut his own garden plot close to Raphael's and has made a semi-permanent home there.

A deeper point from these observations is that this is the core manner in which Ashaninka people in the community engage with the timber industry. When they complain about timbermen it is not focused on the trees themselves nor about the wider ecological impacts of timber extraction. Rather the focus is on issues of recompense and labour. That is individual timbermen are gauged in terms of their relative generosity and trustworthiness, and those who renege on promises or are deemed to be stingy or too demanding find it difficult to recruit others to help them in the future. This emphasis on social considerations and monetary returns but not on environmental concerns is attested to by the way in which the activities are transforming. Particularly in the way that Ashaninka families, who can now afford their own chainsaws and outboard motors, are increasingly likely to work the timber for themselves cutting out all but the most trustworthy and intimately connected of *mestizos* from the process. This has been further supported by the rising importance of *Shihuahuaco* which means that timber can be worked in much smaller groups.

All of which emphasises that Ashaninka people are using their own idioms and understandings to mitigate and control their relations with capitalist extractivism but not along the lines laid out by environmentalists or popular ideas of *Buen Vivir*, that would posit their rejection of such forms of extractivism. Here an examination of indigenous relations with mining can be illuminating for showing earlier parallels with the Ashaninka case and also the limitations of the post-development critique.

Of Mines, Devils and Commodities

In discussing mining it is useful to engage with the seminal works of June Nash (1993) and Michael Taussig (1980) which both focused on Bolivian tin mining, which Taussig also analysed comparatively with Colombian sugar plantations. Both drew on the Marxist perspectives dominant in anthropological theory at that time and, similarly to more contemporary post-development approaches, can be understood as broadly political in the manner in which they emphasised the social and historical particularities of the capitalist system by emphasising its distinct reception in different parts of the world.

In Nash's narrative the miners were aware of their position within the capitalist system and its inherent contradictions. Drawing on both their knowledge of global capitalism as well as cultural and religious ideas to navigate their positions and maintain their way of life. In her work she emphasised a number of aspects but placed particular emphasis on the importance of families and personal relationships in supporting the miners and fostering solidarity, ultimately allowing them 'to transcend the definition of themselves as meaningless cogs in an industrial enterprise' (Nash, 1993:121). The Ashaninka people described in this article are doing something similar, drawing on social understandings and the power of social idioms to try to control and negate the worst forms of exploitation that can occur in the timber industry.

Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

Another, lesser, motif in Nash's work is that of *El Tío* – the local representation of the Devil, that also draws on the older Andean figure of Supay, who oversees the mines and the fate of those who work underground. In contrast to Nash it is this idea that Taussig took forward in his work seeing the devil as 'a stunningly apt symbol of the alienation experienced by peasants as they enter the ranks of the proletariat' (Taussig, 1980:xi). His central argument being that this hybridised image of the devil and the associated mythology of redemption 'came to mediate the dialectical tensions embodied in conquest and the history of imperialism' (Taussig, 1980:xi). Where Nash shows how these cultural symbols are combined with more physical and political forms such as unions and direct political action, for Taussig it is these cultural forms that are central. Intellectually Taussig also goes further than Nash in explicitly aiming to put a critique of capitalism at the heart of the anthropological endeavour itself. As he puts it in the introduction to the book 'The task before us is to liberate ourselves from the fetishism and phantom objectivity with which society obscures itself, to take issue with the ether of naturalness that confuses and disguises social relations' (Taussig, 1980:5). For Taussig it is these subaltern accounts of capitalism as 'vividly unnatural, even as evil' (Taussig, 1980:4) that help Westerners to undermine the 'naturalised' view of the capitalist system.

To me the parallels to the post-development theorists are clear. Here alternative views of the world are being held up as a critique of the apparently hegemonic capitalist system. The vividness, memorability and power of such an argument is clear but it is also explicitly political, while obscuring some of the complexity of how indigenous peoples attempt to subvert everyday forms of exploitation in practical ways. Criticism here lies in both too little as well as too much variation. On the one hand this ontological framing tends to homogenise the indigenous experience (Hale, 2009) denying or downplaying its variability across time and space. On the other it emphasises absolute difference, suggesting a fundamental incommensurability between cultures, a view which performs a violence of its own while masking the agency and flexibility of local populations.

Escobar sets up a separation between the global 'universe' of capitalist extraction and the 'glocal – pluriverse' constructed across space and social relations. This acts to obscure precisely the way in which the local and the international, those apparently in 'modernity' and those in 'locality' are entangled and that the contemporary versions of both have been produced by historical and on-going interactions. That is to recognise on the one hand that local, indigenous peoples have been part of the formation of local forms of capitalism and, on the other, to recognise that, particularly in the forms of 'glocal' movements on which Escobar focuses, of those led by women and environmentalists, modernist ideas and formations are also in play (see Harcourt and Escobar, 2005 and Escobar, 2006:122).

In the current realities of mining it is arguably environmentalism that has formed a key part of that resistance, replacing the older forms of labour resistance described by Nash. This can be seen in highly publicised sites of resistance, such as against the Conga mine in Peru, where a multi-national mining company has been pressured into abandoning its plans by local forms of resistance coupled to a broader
 Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental
 Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

message of environmental protection (TheStreet, 2015).

Referring to the previous anthropological focus on labour and capitalism in relation to the mining industry Kirsch (2014) has noted the role that new technologies have played in transforming labour politics since the 1970s. Specifically his argument is that in the newer open-cut and more capital intensive mines there is no longer the need for the large, unskilled labour force needed in the deeper, underground mines (Kirsch, 2014.). This smaller labour force, whose solidarity is further undermined by the use of temporary and subcontracted labour (Smith and Helfgott, 2010), can no longer use the strategies documented by Nash of union membership, labour action and links to a wider discourse of nationalisation. Instead Kirsch argues that there is a move to environmentalist discourse as the primary language for opposition.

It is notable that neither Taussig nor Nash make any mention in their 1970s and 80s work of environmental relations. For them the central question was one of local encounters with the global capitalist system through relations of labour and economic exploitation. In the decades since, while economic questions remain important it is capitalism's impacts on the environment and climate that have come to the fore. It follows that attempts to 'denaturalise' the capitalist system should now have moved to focus on alternative relations with the environment. While my wish is not to undermine those forms of analysis that emphasise that capitalism is not the 'natural' condition of human societies the point here has been to emphasise that local, indigenous forms are not necessarily in direct opposition to it. Local people can make pragmatic choices for how their own values are best served, including valuing economic development in terms of maintaining and improving the life and health of themselves and their children. Their relations with their surroundings may also not be in direct opposition to forms of capitalist extraction. Indeed their own cosmovisions and understandings of their relationships with other objects and beings in the world may lead them to their own human-privileging activities. In such cases equating local worldviews and practices with environmentalism may well be another cultural and intellectual imposition.

A final point to draw from Kirsch's analysis of transformations in the form of mining, however, is that similar processes might start to occur in Ashaninka communities. Arguably this has already occurred in other areas of Ashaninka territory where large-scale, high-tech and low-labour intensive gas extraction projects have begun (Sarmiento Barletti, 2016b). On the Ucayali it might occur if the region starts to become more like Brazil's infamous 'arc of fire' with clear-cut logging and then the forest's replacement by large-scale agriculture – a distinct possibility if the current growth in palm oil plantations continues in Peru. In such situations where indigenous groups are driven entirely from their lands or left in marginal areas with few agricultural or employment opportunities and they have thus lost any semblance of social or economic power their rhetoric, perspectives and tactics are likely to transform dramatically. As it stands, however, as with the miners of the 1970s people in Pijuayal are still intimately involved in the core of the extraction industry itself, supporting the continued relevance of their primary mode of understanding, and thus their attempts to achieve a degree of control over it through social and labour relations.

Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

Conclusion

In concluding we return to Nash, and her emphasis on the informed ways in which local individuals and communities play with older and newer cultural forms to actively resist some forms, reform others and generally create a new hybrid world in which to live. For Nash:

‘The opposition of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ or ‘rational’, of ‘heteronomy’ and ‘autonomy’, deny the potential for reinterpretation and growth in a cultural idiom different from that of the developed centers of the world but nonetheless capable of generating new understandings and adaptations’ (Nash, 1993:310)

Nash’s critical work makes the key point that globalisation is not something that is being done to people, but rather emphasises the need to recognise the manner in which they are often conscious participants in these processes. This article’s contribution has been to add the environmental protection aspect to this mix, noting the danger of seeing individuals’ and groups’ relations with their surroundings in binary and oppositional terms and thus obscuring their complexity and possible futures.

While there are important and complex reasons for the manner in which environmentalism has become bound up with indigenous identities and rights, the example of Ashaninka people on the Ucayali emphasises that it cannot be taken as a universal. Instead what is needed is an understanding of the different histories, social realities and everyday livelihoods (Bebbington, 2000) of different contexts and the manner in which extractive practices may be integrated into local forms of living and not only in opposition to them. In the case presented here we have seen how and why timber extraction has become part not only of everyday life in these Ashaninka communities but also crucial to giving families the quality of life that they desire for themselves and their children. This observation underlies a final suggestion, that to fully encompass, reflect and support the complex and myriad forms of indigenous ways of being *Buen Vivir* would be better framed as a desire, and right, to self-determination rather than being associated with specific behaviours or ways of relating with the world.

References

- Anthias, P. (2018) *Limits to Decolonization: Indigeneity, Territory, and Hydrocarbon Politics in the Bolivian Chaco*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca.
- Anthias, P. and Radcliffe, S. A. (2015) 'The Ethno-environmental Fix and its Limits: Indigenous Land Titling and the Production of Not-quite-neoliberal Natures in Bolivia'. *Geoforum*. **64**:257–269.
- Biedma, M. (ed. A. Tibesar) (1989 [1682]) *La conquista Franciscana del Alto Ucayali*. Editorial Milla Batres: Lima.
- Bodley, J. H. (1971) *Campa Socio-economic Adaptation*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oregon, Ann Arbor.
- Blaser, M. (2010). *Storytelling Globalization from the Chaco and Beyond*. Duke University Press: Durham.
- Caria, S. and Domínguez, R. (2016) 'Ecuador's *Buen Vivir*: A New Ideology for Development'. *Latin American Perspectives*. **206**(43): 18–33.
- CARE. (2011) 'Kametsa Asaika: El Vivir Bien de los Asháninkas del Río Ene'. [WWW document] URL <http://careashaninka.org/kametsa-asaika/> [accessed 14 August 2018]
- De Angelis, M. (2011) 'Climate Change, Mother Earth and the Commons: Reflections on *El Cumbre*'. *Development* **54**(2): 183-189.
- De la Cadena, M. (2010) 'Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections beyond 'Politics''. *Cultural Anthropology* **25**(2): 334-370.
- Ellis, D. M. (2004) 'Promoting Consumption in the Rainforest: Global Conservation in Papua New Guinea', in D. G. Anderson and E. Berglund (eds.) *Ethnographies of Conservation: Environmentalism and the Distribution of Privilege*. Berghahn: Oxford, 119-138.
- Escobar, A. (2006) 'An Ecology of Difference: Equality and Conflict in a Glocalized World. *Focaal* **47**:120-37.
- Escobar, A. (2008) *Territories of Difference: Place, movements, life, redes*. Duke University Press: Durham.
- Escobar, A. (2012) *Encountering Development: The making and unmaking of the third world*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.
- Gudynas, E. (2011) 'Buen Vivir: Today's Tomorrow'. *Development* **54**(4): 441–447.
- Gudynas, E. (2012) 'Estado compensador y nuevos extractivismos: Las ambivalencias del progresismo sudamericano'. *Nueva Sociedad*. **237**:128-146.
- Gudynas, E. and Acosta, A. (2011) 'El buen vivir más allá del desarrollo'. *Revista Qué Hacer* **181**: 70–81.
- Hale, C. (2009) 'Review of Arturo Escobar, *Territories of Difference*'. *Journal of Latin American Studies* **41**: 826-829.
- Hames, R. (2007) 'Game Conservation or Efficient Hunting?', in D. Penn and I. Myerud (eds.) *Evolutionary Perspectives on Environmental Problems*. Aldine Transaction: New Brunswick, 53-66.
- Harcourt, W. and Escobar, A. (eds.) (2005) *Women and the Politics of Place*. Kumarian Press: Bloomfield.
- Killick, Evan. 2018. Extractive Relations: Natural Resource Use, Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Protection in Peru. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. In press.

- Killick, E. (2007) 'Autonomy and Leadership: Political Formations among the Ashéninka of Peruvian Amazonia'. *Ethnos*. **72**(4):461-482.
- Killick, E. (2008) 'Creating Community: Land titling, education and settlement formation amongst the Ashéninka of Peruvian Amazonia'. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*. **13**(1):22-47.
- Killick, E. (2009) 'Ashéninka Amity: A Study of Social Relations in an Amazonian Society. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute'. **15**(4):701-718.
- Killick, E. (2010) '*Ayompari, Compadre, Amigo*: Forms of Fellowship in Peruvian Amazonia', in A. Desai and E. Killick (eds.) *The Ways of Friendship: Anthropological Perspectives* Berghahn: Oxford, 78-112.
- Kirsch, S. (2014) *Mining Capitalism: The Relationship between Corporations and Their Critics*. University of California Press: Oakland.
- Kretch, S. (1999) *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* W.W. Norton: New York.
- Laing, A. (2015) 'Resource Sovereignties in Bolivia: Re-conceptualising the Relationship between Indigenous Identities and the Environment during the TIPNIS Conflict'. *Bulletin of Latin American Research* **34**(2): 149-166.
- McDonald, D. R. (1977) 'Food Taboos: A Primitive Environmental Protection Agency (South America)'. *Anthropos* **72**(5/6): 735-748.
- Nash, J. (1993) *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us: Dependency and exploitation in Bolivian tin mines*. Columbia University Press: New York.
- ParksWatch. (2003) 'Profile of Protected Area – Peru El Sira Communal Reserve'. [WWW document] URL www.parkswatch.org/parkprofiles/pdf/escr_eng.pdf [accessed 14 August 2018]
- Putzel, L., Peters, C. M. and Romo, M. (2011) 'Post-logging Regeneration and Recruitment of *Shihuahuaco* (*Dipteryx* spp.) in Peruvian Amazonia: Implications for Management'. *Forest Ecology and Management*. **261**: 1099–1105.
- Quijano, A. (2007 [1999]) 'Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality'. *Cultural Studies* **21**(2):168-178.
- Radcliffe, S. (2017) 'Decolonising Geographical Knowledges'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* **42**(3): 329-333.
- Sarmiento Barletti, J. P. (2016a). 'La comunidad en los tiempos de la Comunidad: bienestar en las Comunidades Nativas Ashaninkas'. *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'études andines* **45**(1): 157-172.
- Sarmiento Barletti, J. P. (2016b) 'The Angry Earth: Wellbeing, Place, and Extractivism in the Amazon'. *Anthropology in Action: Journal for Applied Anthropology in Policy and Practice* **23**(3): 43-53.
- Sears, R.R. and Pinedo-Vasquez, M. (2011) 'Forest Policy Reform and the Organization of Logging in Peruvian Amazonia'. *Development and Change* **42**(2): 609–631.

- Smith, N. (2001) 'Are Indigenous People Conservationists? Preliminary Results from the Machiguenga of the Peruvian Amazon'. *Rationality and Society* **13**(4): 429-461.
- Taussig, M. (1980) *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*. University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill.
- TheStreet. (2015) [WWW document] URL www.thestreet.com/story/13464462/2/newmont-mining-nem-earnings-report-q4-2015-conference-call-transcript.html [accessed 14 August 2018]
- Walsh, C. (2011) 'Afro and Indigenous Life-Visions In/And Politics. (De)Colonial Perspectives in Bolivia And Ecuador'. *Bolivian Studies Journal /Revista de Estudios Bolivianos*. **18**: 49-69.