

Between care and conflict: relations of resource extraction in the Peruvian Amazon

Article (Published Version)

Sarmiento Barletti, Juan Pablo (2021) Between care and conflict: relations of resource extraction in the Peruvian Amazon. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. ISSN 1470-9856

This version is available from Sussex Research Online: <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/99921/>

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.

Between Care and Conflict: Relations of Resource Extraction in the Peruvian Amazon

JUAN PABLO SARMIENTO BARLETTI

University of Sussex, UK

The article examines the ‘contradiction’ between indigenous Amazonian people’s opposition to hydrocarbon extraction and their participation in different scales of logging. It considers the literature on conflicts over resource extraction from the experiences of Joel Bardales, an Ashéninka man who leads both logging ventures and protests against hydrocarbon extraction. While scholarly debates emphasise collective responses, the article emphasises individual experiences as they motivate different strategies vis-à-vis resource extraction. Joel’s statements, stemming from a context of a relational moral economy, reveal a position that does not reject resource extraction, but its refusal to engage in reciprocal relationships of care.

Keywords: development, environmental conflicts, extractive governance, indigenous politics, political ecology, political ontology.

Joel Bardales is not a typical Ashéninka man. Born in 1962, he was a schoolteacher before leading the indigenous militia that defeated Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in Ucayali region’s Atalaya province during Peru’s internal war (1980–2000). Between 2004–2006 he served as mayor of Atalaya, a province of just under 50,000 inhabitants of which two-thirds identify as ‘indigenous’ (INEL, 2017). Since then, Joel has led protests and negotiations to access funds from the royalties that Pluspetrol pays the national government for its Camisea natural gas concession – half a day up the Bajo Urubamba river from the town of Atalaya – and compensation payments for the impact of its activities on the indigenous communities in the area. When I met him in 2007, Joel’s livelihood was based on extracting timber and planting cacao and coffee in large gardens he opened in the forests of Nueva Esperanza, his *comunidad nativa* (native community, henceforth *comunidad(es)*), the titled territories for indigenous Amazonians in Peru. Like most *comunidades* in the area, Nueva Esperanza is a mix of Asháninka and Ashéninka people with similar sociocultural practices and mutually intelligible languages (Hvalkof and Veber, 2005); together, Asháninka and Ashéninka people amount to some 120,000 people in Peru (INEL, 2017). Given their mixture in *comunidades* and among my interviewees I refer to them as Asháninka/Ashéninka people in this article.

Camisea became active in 2004 and paid US\$6.3 billion in royalties in its first decade of activity – almost 50 percent of the royalties that Peru received from extractive ventures that decade (Corral, Henderson and Miranda, 2016). Its impact on the Bajo

Urubamba's communities and ecosystems was criticised from early on (Ross, 2009; Feather, 2011). More recent monitoring revealed that *comunidades* are 'worse off than before [Camisea] in terms of health, nutrition, education, and overall perception of wellbeing' (*The Guardian*, 2016). Camisea is the flagship in the expansion of extractive concessions in Peru. In 2010, almost 50 percent of its Amazon fell within one of 52 hydrocarbon concessions, compared with only 7.1 percent in 2003; 46 of those concessions overlapped with *comunidades* (Finer and Orta-Martínez, 2010). The Bajo Urubamba valley is surrounded by six other active and proposed hydrocarbon sites, four sites for hydroelectric megadams and a series of forestry concessions. Timber companies of different sizes work formally and informally in concessions and the forests of *comunidades*: more than 9 million of the 17 million ha classified as forestry concessions are superimposed on *comunidades* (Monterroso and Larson, 2018). These concessions are between 5,000 and 40,000 ha, while the average *comunidad* in the Bajo Urubamba is just under 4,800 ha (Saldaña et al., 2019). Formal logging is challenged by Peru's legal framework to regulate the forestry sector, which does 'not take into account the de facto institutional arrangements that truly support the industry' (Sears and Pinedo-Vasquez, 2011). This contributes to a system where between 60 and 80 percent of timber exports are extracted from areas unauthorised for logging (Mongabay, 2018), and where many *comunidades* have been fined for informal timber extraction (Saldaña et al., 2019).

This article engages with what may be misread as a 'contradiction' by observers expecting indigenous peoples to follow essentialised understandings of 'environmentally-friendly' land and resource management (see Ramos, 1994 and Conklin and Graham, 1997 for critiques), as hydrocarbon extraction is contested by the same people involved in the logging ventures that have contributed to making Atalaya the second most deforested province in Peru (Ministerio del Ambiente, 2019). Rather than denouncing this 'contradiction' as the eradication of Asháninka/Ashéninka people's 'culture', I examine life history interviews with Joel to show how individual accounts can reveal the micropolitics of engagement strategies with different kinds of resource extraction, including conflict and collaboration. Building on Joel's experiences, mediated by my wider engagement with Asháninka/Ashéninka people, I approach conflicts over natural resource extraction in Atalaya as arising from a mismatch between how the main actors in hydrocarbon extraction engage with indigenous peoples, and the latter's expectations of reciprocal relationships of care that support people's strategies for self-sufficiency and autonomy, which they perceive to hold with timber industry actors. Exploring Joel's statements in the context of a relational moral economy reveals a position that does not reject extraction itself but rather the refusal of some of its actors to engage in reciprocal relationships of care with indigenous peoples. Although timber extraction is inequitable, Joel experiences it as a process in which social relations are created and maintained across time with non-indigenous people, something that has not happened with Pluspetrol employees.

What follows includes insights from 40 months of ethnographic fieldwork with Asháninka/Ashéninka people between 2007 and 2020 in the adjacent Bajo Urubamba, Ene and Tambo valleys. Throughout this time, I have implemented different kinds of interviews with indigenous and non-indigenous interlocutors, including unstructured life history interviews with Joel and other key informants. The article is also informed by my review of dozens of documents related to timber deals and compensation payments from Pluspetrol in different *comunidades*, and my participation in communal assemblies that included discussions with timber company and Pluspetrol employees.

Three Readings of Conflicts over Resource Extraction

Resource extraction has produced and reinforced patterns of inequality in Latin America, undermined social trust, fragmented social organisation, and largely failed to comply with indigenous rights recognised in international agreements (Schilling-Vacaflor and Flemmer, 2015; Leifsen, Guzman-Gallegos and Schilling-Vacaflor, 2017). Peru, with a resource export-oriented economy, is illustrative of this context (Bury, 2005; Bebbington and Hinojosa Valencia, 2011). Advocates of extractive development celebrate Peru's poverty reduction, from 60 percent of the population living below the poverty line in 2003 to 21.8 percent in 2015, as proof of its effectiveness (World Bank, n.d.). The expansion of hydrocarbon, mining and timber concessions is a continuation of an extractive development agenda justified as a pathway to progress in the wake of Peru's internal war (Sarmiento Barletti, 2021). In Atalaya, *progreso* (progress) is discussed as plans to connect it to Lima by road, as well as building roads and sidewalks in town, a larger plaza and airport, astroturf football pitches and swimming pools, and buildings to host tourists who rarely arrive (see Harvey, 2010 on development as concrete infrastructure in Peru). 'Progress' is to be funded by the expansion of timber and hydrocarbon extraction in the province, the jobs and business they will bring, and the royalties paid by hydrocarbon companies.

Peru is also the site of dozens of conflicts over natural resource extraction. The Ombudsman's Office reported 139 conflicts during 2011–2016, with 50 deaths and over 750 injuries (*La República*, 2016). Protests in Atalaya have included marches, the invasion of hydrocarbon sites and river blockades to disrupt supplies to extraction bases. There are three main scholarly positions on why these conflicts take place. For the first – the most common in Peru – conflicts are the result of governance failures such as poor conflict management and prevention, deficient redistribution of royalties from resource extraction and a lack of participatory spaces for the communities affected by extraction (Damonte, 2012; Tanaka, 2012). The solution is discussed as policy reforms to improve the governance of extractive activities through more effective and equitable redistribution policies, extending more effective participation to indigenous and local peoples, more transparent national and subnational investment of royalties, and improved regulation and enforcement of environmental standards (Merino, 2014). Yet, the emphasis on governance and policy reform carries little critical consideration for the development trajectory on which resource extraction and related policies are formed and implemented (Merino, 2018). Furthermore, it does not consider the structures and power asymmetries between the stakeholders in resource extraction and how these inequalities play out at the local level.

The second reading, political ecology, addresses these analytical shortcomings by engaging with clashes over resource extraction as 'ecological distribution conflicts' (Martinez-Alier and O'Connor, 1996) in which local men and women defend – against the state or the market – their access to and/or control over the resources extracted and/or affected by extractive processes (Martinez-Alier, 2002; Li, 2015). On this reading, also discussed as the 'environmentalism of the poor' (Guha and Martínez-Alier, 1997), indigenous and local peoples are not driven into conflicts over resource extraction by environmentalism but by their experience of the environment as a source of their livelihoods. These conflicts are understood analytically as environmental justice struggles, caused by the structural inequalities that drive formal and informal land and resource dispossession, and the unequal burden of pollution and/or forest degradation experienced by communities in the vicinity of extractive ventures (e.g. mines, hydrocarbon

sites, timber concessions) and/or related activities (e.g. smelters, pipelines, sawmills). However, the focus on resources as part of indigenous and local people's livelihoods may gloss over their cultural understandings of conflicts.

The third reading, political ontology, engages with these understandings to argue that conflicts are about the defence of the relations that people have with the non-human entities they share their territories with (Escobar, 2016). From this perspective, conflicts are not about poorly designed and/or implemented policies or about the defence of livelihoods but are struggles over different assumptions about what exists – including 'nature' (De la Cadena, 2015). Understanding nature as part of a wider decolonial project, these scholars propose that plants, animals, forests and mountains are not simply resources over which conflicts are enacted, but they are active participants in the struggle against extractive activity as they are also 'threatened by the neoliberal wedding of capital and the state' (De la Cadena, 2010; Blaser, 2013). This reading has been criticised for generalising and essentialising a wide range of indigenous people's experiences and engagements with nature and natural resources, as well as historical trajectories (Ramos, 2012; Bessire and Bond, 2014).

Although the three readings have shortcomings, they reveal different aspects that may be at play in conflicts. However, they all emphasise collective responses (e.g. communities, social movements and networks), an emphasis that homogenises the individual experiences and strategies that mediate people's desires and strategies regarding extractive activities. In what follows, I argue that individual perspectives like Joel's give us a deeper understanding of the different strategies through which indigenous and local peoples engage with different kinds of resource extraction. This focus is important given that resource extraction governance encourages individual strategies in rural communities to escape economic poverty (Arellano-Yanguas, 2011; Bebbington and Hinojosa Valencia, 2011).

Noshire and Reciprocal Relationships of Care

In 2009, 47.6 percent of children under five years old in Atalaya were chronically malnourished (Díaz, 2010). At the time, my Asháninka/Ashéninka interlocutors discussed food scarcity as the result of different kinds and scales of extractive activity, which reduced the amount of food they could fish, hunt and grow. This forced them to rely on cash incomes to buy food, most commonly by working in logging ventures and/or planting cash crops. Like other Asháninka/Ashéninka areas, households in the Bajo Urubamba 'are integrated and knowledgeable participants in a wider capitalist economy' (Killick, 2008; Peralta and Kainer, 2008).

For some of my interlocutors, addressing game and land productivity shortages by rebuilding their relationships with *aipatsite* (our earth) and the *ashitarori* (owners/masters of animals) was central to ensuring food and land productivity (Sarmiento Barletti, 2021). As I was told repeatedly, these non-human beings will only interact positively with those who hold their end of a reciprocal relationship of care. For example, *aipatsite*, the physical earth and a non-human being that allows people to grow food, will withdraw its productivity, and thus people's ability to grow food, if the land is not worked in a socially constructive manner or if people log too many trees. Similarly, the *ashitarori* will release animals for hunters only if they do not overhunt them and stay away from their homes. Many of my interlocutors explained shortages as these non-human beings rejecting extractive activity and refusing to engage with

people, share their productivity, and release their animals for people to hunt and fish (Sarmiento Barletti, 2016).

In one interview I asked Joel about the impact of logging and cacao and coffee gardens in *comunidades* on the non-human forest beings that he had assured me existed. Joel agreed on the importance of rebuilding relationships with non-human beings. He said it was obvious that *kiatsi*, the *ashitarori* of fish, was releasing less fish because Pluspetrol's boat traffic angered it. He continued:

I don't know what we could do. Some people say [non-human beings] will return if [Pluspetrol leaves], that we have to show *aipatsite* we can work together and live well. But you've seen how hard it is to hunt and fish. We have to work timber if we want to live well because there is nothing else we can do. And we will have to grow more cacao and coffee because there is not enough food for everyone, so we have to buy food or get funds for a fish farm. [...] Yes, [non-humans] will not like it, but what can we do! There is no choice. If plants don't grow as they used to [because *aipatsite* has stopped sharing its productivity], we'll have to use fertiliser so that they do, we'll have to learn. [...] It makes me sad, but what are we going to do? How are we going to feed our children or buy them notebooks so that they go to school and progress? How will we buy medicines when they're sick? [Hydrocarbon companies] won't share with us to make up for what they are doing so we need to find a way around it. (...) It isn't like when my grandparents lived and there was game and fish for everyone to share. (Joel Bardales, 2008)

Joel is proposing a strategy through which self-sufficiency and autonomy is being pursued at the expense of relations with non-humans, a necessary yet difficult sacrifice in a context of food scarcity. For my Asháninka/Ashéninka interlocutors, those who hold reciprocal relationships of care recognise each other's *noshire* (my heart/soul), the seat of a person's ability to feel, remember and make choices (Weiss, 1975). 'Knowing' how to feel sorrow for the suffering of others, love, and happiness are emotions which are central to how my interlocutors understand everyday relations of care; these emotions are counterpoised to anger, sadness and envy, all described as destructive to everyday relations (see Overing and Passes, 2000 for similar cases in Amazonia). Furthermore, as noted for other indigenous Amazonian groups (Belaunde, 2001), those who hold reciprocal relationships of care share the products of their work (e.g. food and money) and are open to receiving from others when offered the same treatment, thus mutually recognising their *noshire*. Yet, as Joel explained in a separate conversation, people prefer to share their work through *mingas* (collective work parties) as there is not enough food to share as in the past.

Sharing one's work and being open to receive that of others in relationships that are renewed through *mingas* has become central to the Asháninka/Ashéninka moral economy at a time when people cannot produce, share and receive food as they expected to do in the past. Families organise *mingas* and invite their male kin and friends to help them complete work-intensive tasks such as clearing forest to burn a new garden, plant and harvest cash crops, extract timber or build a house. By participating in *mingas* people renew bonds of friendship and reciprocity with others in their *comunidad*, as they attend the *mingas* of those who attend theirs to repay their work. Although attendance is voluntary, people gossip about those that fail to reciprocate. Attendance is generally understood as a desire to share one's work, but also of the host couple's openness to share

with their guests by feeding them a special meal (usually roasted chicken or chicken soup with spaghetti and potatoes) and manioc beer. Although *mingas* are about work, they are usually fun for participants who normally work on their own or with their wives and children, or sons-in-law if they have them. Participants expect that when they organise a *minga* the organisers of the *mingas* they have attended will renew the relationship by participating.

Joel's neighbours described him as a productive member of his *comunidad* because he had acquired his material possessions by working together with his family as well as organising large *mingas* for his coffee and cacao gardens. Joel was admired for attending all the *mingas* he was invited to or sending someone from his household when he was unable to participate. At *mingas* he would start to work before everyone else and joked with and teased other participants to keep the group's morale up. In his own *mingas* he made sure everyone had enough manioc beer to drink and food to eat. His behaviour was described as encompassing the reciprocal relationships of care expected of people who recognise each other's *noshire*. These reciprocal relationships of care are present in how Joel recounts his interactions with actors in timber extraction.

Timber Relations in Atalaya

Most Asháninka/Ashéninka men I know have worked timber since their teens; logging is so common in the area that it has become central to discourses of masculinity. My interlocutors described their engagement in logging as instructional, as they improved their Spanish, learned how to drink cane alcohol, smoke cigarettes and interact with *mestizos*.

There are three main ways in which indigenous men in the Bajo Urubamba valley participated in timber extraction (see Killick, 2007, 2008 for similar experiences in Ucayali River Ashéninka *comunidades*). In the first and most common, timber is extracted from concessions or *comunidades* in less populated tributaries as few *comunidades* in the Bajo Urubamba have precious hardwoods (cedar and mahogany) after decades of logging. Companies hire indigenous men and transport them to camps where they work 12-hour shifts in teams of 2–3 dozen workers to fell trees with chainsaws, cut them into logs, clear paths in the forest to roll the logs to rivers, and travel with the timber downriver to sawmills in Atalaya. These operations use tractors to move logs within the forest but also to open roads in the forest to move timber faster, and less visibly, than by river. In 2019, Atalaya province had 295 km of informal roads built in the vicinity of *comunidades*; almost one quarter of all new roads in the Peruvian Amazon that year (MINAM, 2020). Most indigenous men work for *patrones* for 1–6 months every year and make between GB£100–150 per month (when Peru's minimum wage is just under GB£250). The relatively small numbers of women who work in timber camps as cooks are paid around GB£80–100. They are commonly married women who join their husbands or young unmarried women. I know of many who became pregnant with the children of *mestizo* men and returned with them to their *comunidades* where in at least a dozen of those cases the men were later elected as headmen (Hewlett, 2017).

The second option is carried out to cover seasonal expenses like those associated with schooling. Commonly, groups of 5–10 men – a couple of older men and their sons, sons-in-law, or nephews – fall 1–2 trees without conferring with their *comunidad's* leaders. As the permits required by Peru's forestry service for timber extraction and sale

are difficult and expensive to get (Monterroso and Larson, 2018), men sell the logs at a cut price to *patrones* who launder them with logs they extract from concessions (Salisbury, López and Vela Alvarado, 2011). *Patrones* are keen for these arrangements for cheap timber – in 2009 a cubic foot (ft³) of mahogany was worth GBP£3 in the legal market in Atalaya, but Joel and his workgroup received GBP£0.60/ft³. This practice is risky as the forestry service fines *comunidades* when they catch people selling timber without the required paperwork rather than fining violators. A 2018 protest led by Joel that paralysed Atalaya for a week demanded the cancellation of hundreds of fines owed by *comunidades* to the government, and the relaxation of requirements for the permits needed for *comunidades* to extract and sell timber.

The third option is through agreements that *comunidades* hold with *patrones* to extract timber from their forests. All *comunidades* in the Bajo Urubamba were titled at the time of research, thereby being granted a degree of control over logging ventures (for logging relations in other land regimes, see Salisbury, López and Vela Alvarado, 2011; Feather, 2011). *Patrones* obtain all the necessary permits and sign agreements with *comunidades*, negotiating with their leaders how much timber will be extracted and at what price, and will later deduct extraction expenses from the *comunidad's* profits. *Patrones* commonly employ local men (as labourers) and women (as cooks), who receive individual wages, while the profits from the agreement are divided between all of the *comunidad's* households. The deals may also include material goods like small hydroelectric engines or outboard engines to be shared by *comunidad* members. One of the dangers with these arrangements is that, following Peruvian law, *jefes* (headpeople) can sign legally binding agreements for *comunidades*. The accounts that *patrones* presented to *comunidades* that I have reviewed held evidence of *patrones* giving money to *jefes*, buying them food and alcohol in Atalaya, covering their expenses at hostels, or giving them gallons of petrol throughout the year; adding up to thousands of GBP in a single year. *Patrones* book these expenses as loans to the *comunidad* and demand payment later, in an updated version of *enganche* relations where indigenous men were paid in advance for their work with industrially made products (García Hierro, Hvalkof and Gray, 1998). The system was based on indigenous workers never knowing how much their work was worth in relation to the materials they received, and being unable to pay their debts as the *enganche* renewed every time they received more goods. Today, *comunidades* are the debtors and pay back their loans in timber, yet they keep signing these agreements as they are the easiest way for them to profit from their forests, with less effort involved than cultivating cash crops. However, most timber income, either from work for *patrones* or the funds that families receive from *comunidad* deals with *patrones*, is controlled by men. My female interlocutors noted this excluded them from accessing market products or making decisions about household expenditure, despite the extra pressure on them to feed their children during the months their partners are away working timber. The challenges to the participation of indigenous women in the governance of their communities and resources is common throughout the Peruvian Amazon (Sarmiento Barletti et al., 2020). Typically, men travel to urban centres to sell cash crops and control the income that comes from work in gardens by both men and women. Over the years I have witnessed more women travelling with men to Atalaya when they receive their pay in order to keep part of it for food-related expenses. Notably, government cash transfer programmes for economically-poor families like *Programa Juntos* are paid to women.

Despite rights abuses throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries (García Hierro, Hvalkof and Gray, 1998), the accounts I recorded of life in the villages created around *patrones* were positive. These accounts emphasise that understanding the

different dimensions of conflicts across the extractive frontier requires an awareness of the ways in which both the past and present are imagined and mobilised around resource extraction (Himley, 2014). Like Gow's (1991) indigenous Yine interlocutors in the Bajo Urubamba, Asháninka/Ashéninka people described this period as a process in which they learned to live together in villages, stopped fighting, and underwent a creative process in terms of social relations. In this recounting of the past, small kin-based groups moved to live in villages set around large farms or timber and rubber camps where they intermarried and created *compadrazgo* relationships with other people, producing new kinship networks that included *patrones* (and sometimes their wives) and their foremen as fathers, *compadres/comadres* and godfathers/godmothers.

Varese (1968) described these processes as evidence that Asháninka/Ashéninka people are fully aware of the power of non-indigenous actors and react to it in their own terms. For example, Chevalier (1982), on the basis of work conducted elsewhere in Asháninka/Ashéninka territory, described *compadrazgo* as 'a means of concrete resistance to the most immediate threats of exploitation and poverty'. In similar vein, for Killick (2008) both Asháninka/Ashéninka groups and *patrones* attempt to control their interactions by deploying cultural institutions including *compadrazgo* relationships and related idioms of support and care. As Joel explained:

We log a few trees when we need to buy clothes for our children or pots for our wives. I've worked timber! My father worked timber too. Who hasn't worked timber? [...] Some people go to work for *patrones*, others go to the forest with their brothers and nephews and fell one, two, three trees and sell them to people they know in Atalaya to make ends meet. You can go to Atalaya and talk nicely [to *patrones*] and get a fair price. Sometimes they'll give you loans when you need cash for your family and will let you pay them back in timber. (Joel Bardales, 2007)

Within this context, Joel described his father's *patrón* in a positive light:

[He] was my godfather and used to give me gifts when I was a boy. If you worked hard, they were fine. I sell my timber to the son of my father's *patrón* and he is always fair and sometimes will pay a bit extra when I really need the money. He knows how to feel sorrow [*sabe tener pena*]. He even supported me when I was campaigning for mayor and when I had legal problems over my house in Atalaya. He felt sorrow for me and wanted to help. (Joel Bardales, 2007)

Joel portrayed his father's *patrón*, who became his godfather and thus his father's *compadre*, and his godfather's son as people who 'know how to feel sorrow', framing their interactions in idioms of support and care. From Joel's perspective, the relationships built and nurtured in timber extraction present a pathway to self-sufficiency. His interactions with Pluspetrol, as I discuss below, do not.

Camisea and the Refusal of Reciprocal Relationships of Care

When Camisea became active in 2004, Atalaya province (in Ucayali Region) was not to benefit from the Fondo de Desarrollo Socioeconómico de Camisea (FOCAM, Camisea

Fund for Socioeconomic Development) because the site is in Cusco Region, on the upper Bajo Urubamba. FOCAM is a government scheme to transfer funds from natural gas royalties to subnational jurisdictions, which was required by the Inter-American Development Bank, who financed Camisea, after pressure from indigenous organisations and their NGO allies so that *comunidades* would benefit from the extractive venture (Corral, Henderson and Miranda, 2016; see Ross, 2009 on the civil society pressure). Following a process that included input from the indigenous Matsigenka *comunidades* adjacent to Camisea and their organisations, it was decided that the funds would prioritise work in the *comunidades* in the project's area of impact; however, these elements were not respected in FOCAM's implementation. Nueva Esperanza and the other seventeen *comunidades* on the Atalaya side of the river were not initially compensated by Pluspetrol for its impact either because no extraction takes place on that side or because no pipelines transporting gas cross it. However, Atalaya province is downriver from Camisea and is thus affected by liquified gas spills on the Bajo Urubamba as the pipeline leaked five times during 2005–2006 and there have been more spills since (Mongabay, 2006). Atalaya is also the logistical centre for all extractive and exploratory hydrocarbon activity in the area, which has led to a significant rise in large boats transporting supplies to different sites. Boat traffic creates waves that turn over the canoes used locally for fishing and transport and has also led to reduced fishing yields.

In 2004, as Atalaya's demands for a share of FOCAM were getting nowhere, Joel was a councillor in the Provincial Municipality of Atalaya yet soon thereafter became interim mayor when the incumbent resigned. Joel told me that at the time he saw himself as a representative of indigenous peoples rather than of the people of Atalaya as a whole. His greatest worry was Camisea's impact on *comunidades*, and so he decided to concentrate his efforts on FOCAM and investing it in *comunidades*, because Atalaya was profiting from the business brought by the demand for services from the companies with concessions in the area. In his first move as mayor, Joel travelled to Lima to negotiate for a share of FOCAM:

I showed up [at the Ministry of Economics and Finance] and told the receptionist that I was the Mayor of Atalaya Province in Ucayali Region and showed her my credentials. She told me to wait. I was prepared to wait for days. We've been abandoned by the government since I can remember, it has never felt sorrow for us. [...] [A] man, all dressed up, came and invited me to an office. He told me he was an adviser to one of the Vice Ministers [...] I was very angry [that Atalaya's share of FOCAM had not been approved] but I controlled myself. [...] I told him that we indigenous people were worried and had not been listened to by the government. I told him about our right [to free, prior and informed consent recognised in the International Labour Organization's Convention 169] that the government had not respected [...] that we suffer because of Camisea, and that they were doing nothing to help us. (Joel Bardales, 2007)

He continued:

He told me, 'you must understand that neither the gas nor the [pipeline] come from Atalaya'. He said that there was no pollution, that [Camisea] was safe. I told him that wasn't true, that fish tastes and smells different, that there is less fish because of all the boats but he didn't want to listen to me.

He didn't know how to feel sorrow for us, he didn't think of me as someone with *noshire*. We suffer from hunger and sadness yet the government and [Pluspetrol] make so much money. I told him that I didn't throw my rubbish in his house, so why did he let [Pluspetrol] throw its rubbish in mine! [...] I told him he didn't know how we live, that he should come visit us. (Joel Bardales, 2007)

In Joel's experience, the civil servant did not recognise him as someone worthy of reciprocal relationships of care. Joel returned to Atalaya and led hundreds of protesters in cutting access to Camisea by blocking the Bajo Urubamba and Atalaya's airstrip. Protesters demanded compensation from Pluspetrol, as they perceived its activities led to diminished fishing and hunting. The government and Pluspetrol became desperate as the protest moved into the dry season, because the river would be too shallow for the company's larger boats to go upriver, and called for negotiations. Joel explained:

[W]e were invited to negotiate, to meet the Vice Minister [of Economics and Finance] and talk. [...] The Vice Minister was a good guy, and he wanted to help us. He came to visit us and learn how we live. [...] We met in Atalaya, and he drank manioc beer and ate fish with us. Some people brought him a [traditional tunic] and he wore it [...] he wore a [headdress] too. He was so happy! [...] Politicians never do that; he wanted to help us because he had seen how we live and had felt sorrow for us. He talked to us and listened to us and saw our sadness and felt sorrow for us. He knew that we have *noshire*. He even gave me his [mobile] number and told me to call him next time I was in Lima as he would receive me in his office and put me in a hotel. (Joel Bardales, 2007)

In contrast to his visit to the Ministry, Joel recounted that the Vice Minister had come to listen and negotiate rather than impose his own ideas and had been open to reciprocate what he received, which Joel understood as recognition of his *noshire*. For Joel, regardless of what his intentions may have actually been, the Vice Minister played a key part in Atalaya's achievement of FOCAM funds. Atalaya Province received 1.5 percent (around GB£3 million) of FOCAM's annual budget and was exempted from having to pay sales tax for a decade. FOCAM funds are commonly spent on roads, pavements and municipal buildings in the town of Atalaya. Exceptions are made in election years when the mayor or vice mayor runs for office and funds are commonly used to purchase gifts for *comunidades* to sway their inhabitants' votes. The protest also led to *comunidades* receiving compensation payments from Pluspetrol for *disturbios fluviales* (fluvial disturbances), an acceptance by the company of the impact of the boat traffic supplying Camisea. These payments are received with complaints about their meagreness as the company is rich but its payments do not offset the impact and the cost of the food they purchase due to fish scarcity. For example, Joel's *comunidad* received GB£3,000 for the 2009–2012 period to be shared between 65 families. Pluspetrol refused to recognise any impact from gas spills on the *comunidades* in the Atalaya side of the valley, arguing that they were too far away from Camisea for any serious impact.

Joel ran for re-election in 2006 and lost to a member of a powerful timber family, who promised to invest FOCAM funds on the town, reproducing urban Atalaya's ideals of 'progress'. Joel explained:

They didn't like me because I fought for *comunidades* [...] People said 'Bardales wants to give all the money to the *indios* [Indians] so they live better than us.' And you know what? That would have been fair! Atalaya now has paved roads, a new plaza, new buildings, but the *comunidades* are still suffering from hunger. [...] We cut timber and plant cacao and coffee to make money but now we have to spend money buying food [...] Before the [hydrocarbon companies] there was always food, my father would go hunting and bring something back a few hours later. [...] He had to work for a *patrón*, but they weren't always that bad. (Joel Bardales, 2008)

He continued:

[Pluspetrol] is worse than a *patrón*. [It] sends its [community officers] to tell us what to do and gives us *propinas* [pocket money, given the inadequate compensations]. But those guys just want the best for their own *patrones* and nothing for the people who are hungry because of their projects. They don't know how to feel sorrow for us [...] They treat us as if we had no *noshire*. They have so much but they won't share, they don't know how to share. And they won't even drink manioc beer or eat with us. They don't even want to give us jobs, we just have to wait for their *propinas*. (Joel Bardales, 2008)

Joel's take on Pluspetrol's community officers is in stark contrast to his experience with the Vice Minister, another actor he related to resource extraction. In my encounters with Pluspetrol's community officers in the Bajo Urubamba, all were non-indigenous Peruvians and monolingual in Spanish. They travel in large metal boats with outboard engines (a stark contrast to local wooden canoes), wear uniforms (long-sleeved denim shirts with the company's logo on it, jeans and boots), eat their own packed meals, sleep in their own tents and refuse to drink manioc beer. When I have asked them why, their replies have included not being able to drink on the job, that they may get sick from drinking manioc beer (because it is made with untreated water), or that they found it disgusting as its base is chewed manioc and sweet potatoes.

Joel experienced their reluctance to drink and eat with people in the *comunidades* they visit as a refusal to participate in a reciprocal relationship. This refusal is confirmed by how community officers run their meetings. Despite demands for greater discussion and compensation, Pluspetrol's interventions in villages are swift and based around telling people what the company is doing and how much money they will receive over the next period. Indigenous people's requests for work are turned down for reasons including the high-tech nature of the extraction process or that most indigenous men do not have identity cards or secondary school certificates. In most of the meetings between *comunidad* inhabitants and Pluspetrol's community officers in which I have participated, the latter responded to demands for better compensation by arguing that Pluspetrol was already paying royalties to the government and gave money to the regional indigenous organisation (GB£26,000 annually), such that villagers should be directing their complaints to the government and their own organisation's leaders. By contrast with Joel's experience with the Vice Minister, Pluspetrol does not negotiate – the *comunidad* must either take the money or leave it. For Joel, this confirms Pluspetrol's refusal to create reciprocal relationships with Asháninka/Ashéninka people or to recognise them as having *noshire*. They refuse to share even though the large amount of cargo that goes upriver to Camisea daily testifies to their wealth. The money Pluspetrol compensates

comunidades with – the ‘little gifts’ Joel referred to earlier – does not reflect a desire to share or feel sorrow for others despite their obvious suffering.

The demands that Joel makes of Pluspetrol in those same meetings and in larger forums are sometimes discomfoting to watch as they are violent, emotional and differ from how Asháninka/Ashéninka men engage with others in everyday interactions. He speaks loudly, rocking his body back and forth as he points at community officers with his left arm and slaps his right thigh with his right arm, rhythmically. He tells them that they are rich yet stingy, that they do not care about making people suffer and that they should feel ashamed of profiting from people’s misery. He tells them that if he owned the company he would employ everyone who needed a job to share his profits, and reminds them that they are only able to work in the area because so many Asháninka/Ashéninka people died fighting Sendero Luminoso. His performance resembles the ritual demands that my interlocutors described unsatisfied *ayompari* (exchange partners) in the past as making in cases of unreciprocated trades (see Weiss, 1975). An *ayompari* would try to publicly shame his partner, showing everyone else that although he had given plenty and had not been reciprocated adequately, he was still able to live well. Joel positions himself in the same way in the verbal exchanges over Pluspetrol’s behaviour towards his *comunidad* and the impact of its work on the river and forest, taking the moral high ground in relation to the exchange that has been refused. In recognising the immorality of hydrocarbon companies, both rich and stingy, these demands are made in full knowledge that they will not be reciprocated. But they are also made to show the company that people are still striving to have dignified lives despite their suffering. As he told me:

[Hydrocarbon] companies are greedy and don’t know how to feel sorrow for others [...] would they ever give us a loan or a job? Never! Pluspetrol won’t leave even if we have told them to, and the government will bring more [hydrocarbon] companies, so we need to look to our own development, use our money from timber to buy what we need, and open larger gardens to plant coffee and cacao and live well. (Joel Bardales, 2009)

Joel’s point about Pluspetrol not knowing how to share is not just about redistribution, but about the refusal to enter into reciprocal relationships of care between actors who recognise each other’s *noshire*. The issue that Joel brings up concerns the impossibility of creating reciprocal relationships of care that have happened with timber extraction and those who participate in it. Despite its impacts, it supports the reproduction of life in *comunidades* as individuals pursue self-sufficiency and autonomy.

Conclusion

Earlier I referred to three frameworks through which scholars examine the conflicts over resource extraction in Latin America. It may be that conflicts over resource extraction are the product of defective governance, or are ecological distribution conflicts, or are ontological conflicts over what ‘nature’ really is. These readings are helpful as they show the multiplicity of issues at different levels that are feeding conflicts over resource extraction in Peru and beyond. In trying to understand the motivations of individuals on the ground, whose lives are intertwined with extractive activities in different ways, I proposed a fourth reading of conflicts in terms of the reproduction and refusal of reciprocal relations of care – and thus the conditions for the reproduction of life – between indigenous communities and actors related to different natural resource extraction ventures.

Examining Joel's experiences through a relational moral economy enables us to obtain a better understanding of the micropolitics of engagement strategies with different kinds of resource extraction, including conflicts. This sheds light on how individuals attempt to engage with resource extraction ventures through their moral economies and the social relations underlining them.

Joel's current strategy emphasises the reproduction of human relationships of care that support self-sufficiency and autonomy. This has been possible with actors involved in timber extraction but has not happened with those involved in natural gas extraction at Camisea. His statements seem to indicate a possible future where reciprocal relationships of care between people are upheld at the expense of relations with non-human beings. However, given the male dominance of timber extraction practices, women may be worse off in this possible future as they lose influence in deciding how communities and households spend funds, which is critical at a time of food scarcity. Finally, examining individual strategies like Joel's will become more important as the extractive frontier continues to expand in the Amazon and Latin America as part of the reconstruction effort after the COVID-19 pandemic, given that governance mechanisms for extractive activities have encouraged individual strategies to escape economic poverty at the local level (Arellano-Yanguas, 2011; Bebbington and Hinojosa Valencia, 2011).

Acknowledgements

I thank Joel and the many Asháninka and Ashéninka men and women who over the years have allowed me to learn from them. Work towards this article was funded by ESRC grant ES/T002131/1.

References

- Arellano-Yanguas, J. (2011) 'Aggravating the Resource Curse: Decentralisation, Mining and Conflict in Peru'. *Journal of Development Studies* 47(4): 617–638.
- Bebbington, A. and Hinojosa Valencia, L. (2011) 'Conclusiones: minería, neoliberalización y reterritorialización en el desarrollo rural' in A. Bebbington (ed.) *Minería, movimientos sociales y respuestas campesinas*. IEP: Lima, 281–313.
- Belaunde, L. (2001) *Viviendo bien: género y fertilidad entre los Airo-Pai de la amazonía peruana*. CAAAP: Lima.
- Bessire, L. and Bond, D. (2014) 'Ontological Anthropology and the Deferral of Critique'. *American Ethnologist* 41(3): 440–456.
- Blaser, M. (2013) 'Notes Towards a Political Ontology of "Environmental" Conflicts' in L. Green (ed.) *Contested Ecologies: Dialogues in the South on Nature and Knowledge*. HSRC Press: Cape Town, 13–27.
- Bury, J. (2005) 'Mining Mountains: Neoliberalism, Land Tenure, Livelihoods, and the New Peruvian Mining Industry in Cajamarca'. *Environment and Planning A* 37(2): 221–239.
- Chevalier, J. (1982) *Civilization and the Stolen Gift*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto.
- Conklin, B. and Graham, L. (1997) 'Body Paint, Feathers, and VCRs: Aesthetics and Authenticity in Amazonian Activism'. *American Ethnologist* 24(4): 711–737.
- Corral, L., Henderson, H. and Miranda, J. (2016) 'Evidence from a Natural Experiment on the Development Impact of Windfall Gains. IDB Working Paper 687.
- Damonte, G. (2012) 'Dinámicas rentistas: transformaciones institucionales en contextos de proyectos de gran minería' in J. Escobar, C. Ponce, G. Damonte and M. Glave (eds.) *Desarrollo rural y recursos naturales*. GRADE: Lima, 95–122.

- De la Cadena, M. (2010) 'Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections beyond "Politics"'. *Cultural Anthropology* 25(2): 334–370.
- De la Cadena, M. (2015) *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice across Andean Worlds*. Duke University Press: Durham, NC.
- Díaz, A. (2010) 'Desnutrición crónica en la región Ucayali'. *Investigaciones sociales* 14(24): 285–293.
- Escobar, A. (2016) 'Thinking-Feeling with the Earth: Territorial Struggles and the Ontological Dimension of the Epistemologies of the South'. *Revista de antropología iberoamericana* 11(1): 11–32.
- Feather, C. (2011) What does it mean to be Vulnerable? [WWW document]. URL <https://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2011/08/whatdoesitmeantobevulnerable.pdf> [accessed 31 March 2021].
- Finer, M. and Orta-Martínez, M. (2010) 'A Second Hydrocarbon Boom Threatens the Peruvian Amazon'. *Environmental Research Letters* 5: 1–10.
- García Hierro, P., Hvalkof, S. and Gray, A. (1998) *Liberation through Land Rights in the Peruvian Amazon*. IWGIA: Copenhagen.
- Gow, P. (1991) *Of Mixed Blood: Kinship and History in Peruvian Amazonia*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Guha, R. and Martínez-Alier, J. (1997) *Varieties of Environmentalism*. Earthscan: London.
- Harvey, P. (2010) 'Cementing Relations: The Materiality of Roads and Public Spaces in Provincial Peru'. *Social Analysis* 54(2): 28–46.
- Hewlett, C. (2017) 'Revealing Social Spaces: Comparison and Modes of Relating in Lowland Peru'. *Revista Nanduty* 5(6): 1–16.
- Himley, M. (2014) 'Mining History: Mobilizing the Past in Struggles over Mineral Extraction in Peru'. *Geographical Review* 104(2): 174–191.
- Hvalkof, S. and Veber, H. (2005) 'Los Asheninka del Gran Pajonal' in F. Santos-Granero and F. Barclay (eds.) *Guía etnográfica de la alta amazonia*. IFEA: Lima, 75–280.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI) (2017) *Censo nacional*. INEI: Peru.
- Killick, E. (2007) 'Autonomy and Leadership: Political Formations among the Ashéninka of Peruvian Amazonia'. *Ethnos* 72(4): 461–482.
- Killick, E. (2008) 'Godparents and Trading Partners: Social and Economic Relations in Peruvian Amazonia'. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 40(2): 303–328.
- Leifson, E., Gustafsson, M.-T., Guzman-Gallegos, M. A. and Schilling-Vacaflor, A. (2017) 'New Mechanisms of Participation in Extractive Governance: Between Technologies of Governance and Resistance Work'. *Third World Quarterly* 38(5): 1043–1057.
- Li, F. (2015) *Unearthing Conflict: Corporate Mining, Activism, and Expertise in Peru*. Duke University Press: Durham.
- Martínez-Alier, J. (2002) *The Environmentalism of the Poor*. Elgar: Cheltenham.
- Martínez-Alier, J. and O'Connor, M. (1996) 'Ecological and Economic Distribution Conflicts' in R. Costanza, J. Martínez-Alier and O. Segura (eds.) *Getting Down to Earth: Practical Applications of Ecological Economics*. Island Press/ISEE: Washington.
- Merino, R. (2014) 'The Politics of Extractive Governance: Indigenous Peoples and Socio-Environmental Conflicts'. *The Extractive Industries and Society* 2(1): 85–92.
- Merino, R. (2018) 'Re-politicizing Participation or Reframing Environmental Governance? Beyond Indigenous Prior Consultation and Citizen Participation'. *World Development* 111: 75–83.
- Ministerio del Ambiente (MINAM) (2020) *Apuntes del bosque N° 2*. MINAM: Lima.
- Ministerio del Ambiente (2019) *Apuntes del bosque N° 1*. MINAM: Lima, 1.
- Mongabay (2006) Camisea Pipeline Leaks in Peru. [WWW document] URL <https://news.mongabay.com/2006/03/camisea-pipeline-leaks-in-rainforest-of-peru/> [accessed 2 May 2021].
- Mongabay (2018) Study Reveals High Percentage of Illegal Peruvian Timber Exports. [WWW document] URL <https://news.mongabay.com/2018/02/moment-of-truth-study-reveals-high-percentage-of-illegal-peruvian-timber-exports> [accessed 2 May 2021].

Between Care and Conflict

- Monterroso, I. and Larson, A. M. (2018) 'Desafíos del proceso de formalización de derechos de CCNN en Perú'. *CIFOR InfoBrief* 220: 1–6.
- Overing, J. and Passes, A. (eds.) (2000) *The Anthropology of Love and Anger*. Routledge: London.
- Peralta, P. and Kainer, K. (2008) 'Market Integration and Livelihood Systems: A Comparative Case of Three Asháninka Villages in the Peruvian Amazon'. *Journal of Sustainable Forestry* 27(1–2): 145–171.
- Ramos, A. (1994) 'The Hyperreal Indian'. *Critique of Anthropology* 14(2): 153–171.
- Ramos, A. (2012) 'The Politics of Perspectivism'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41: 481–494.
- Ross, C. (2009) 'Case Study: Natural Gas Project in Peru' in J. Atkinson and M. Scurrah (eds.) *Globalizing Social Justice*. Palgrave: London, 133–165.
- Saldaña, J., Valencia, F., Cronkleton, P. and Larson, A. M. (2019) 'Titulación de comunidades nativas en Ucayali' in *Perú*. CIFOR: Bogor.
- Salisbury, D., López, J. and Vela Alvarado, J. (2011) 'Transboundary Political Ecology in Amazonia: History, Culture, and Conflicts of the Borderland Asháninka'. *Journal of Cultural Geography* 28(1): 147–177.
- Sarmiento Barletti, J. P. (2016) 'The Angry Earth: Wellbeing, Place, and Extractivism in the Amazon'. *Anthropology in Action* 23(3): 43–53.
- Sarmiento Barletti, J. P. (2021) 'War by Other Means at the Extractive Frontier: The Violence of Reconstruction in Post-War Peru'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 27(1): 146–164.
- Sarmiento Barletti, J. P. et al. (2020) *¿Cómo vamos? Una herramienta para reflexionar sobre la participación de las mujeres indígenas u originarias en la gestión y gobernanza de sus territorios*. CIFOR and ONAMIAP: Lima.
- Schilling-Vacaflor, A. and Flemmer, R. (2015) 'Conflict Transformation through Prior Consultation? Lessons from Peru'. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47(4): 811–839.
- Sears, R. R. and Pinedo-Vasquez, M. (2011) 'Forest Policy Reform and the Organization of Logging in Peruvian Amazonia'. *Development and Change* 42(2): 9–31.
- Tanaka, M. (2012) 'Por qué el Estado no responde adecuadamente a los conflictos sociales? Qué hacer al respecto?'. *Economía y sociedad* 79: 36–43.
- Varese, S. (1968) *La sal de los cerros*. UPCT: Lima.
- Weiss, G. (1975) *Campa Cosmology*. AMNH: New York.
- World Bank (n.d.) Peru. [WWW document] URL <https://data.worldbank.org/country/peru> [accessed 2 May 2021].

Newspapers

- The Guardian* (2016) Pioneer Gas Project in Latin America fails Indigenous Peoples. [WWW document] URL <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/andes-to-the-amazon/2016/jun/02/pioneer-gas-latin-america-indigenous-peoples> [accessed 2 May 2021].
- La República* (2016) Gobierno de Ollanta Humala deja a PPK más de 200 conflictos sociales sin resolver. [WWW document] URL <http://larepublica.pe/imprensa/politica/782724-gobierno-de-ollanta-humala-deja-ppk-mas-de-200-conflictos-sociales-sin-resolver> [accessed 31 March 2021].