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Indigenous Agency in the Peruvian Amazon

Logging in the Amazon causes a shift from subsistence modes of livelihood among the indigenous people, pressuring them to keep up with the changing economic dynamics of their surroundings. In order to survive in this new economic system, the indigenous people are forced to engage in a profit-seeking system marginalizing their traditional values and creating a society where powerful development discourses prevent them from having control of their resources. Changes in the livelihoods of the indigenous people of the Peruvian Amazon caused by incursions into their territory from outsiders, mainly logging companies and other groups who seek to profit from the natural resources of the forest, have forced the local people to conform to the system of markets and depart from former subsistence livelihoods. However, the indigenous people are not always victims, and through systems of self-governance many indigenous groups have succeeded in managing their resources, securing their land for use in sustaining their livelihoods and protecting the land from exploitation by outside logging groups.

Research Methods

For my research, I closely read several texts presenting an in-depth description of field research and detailed analysis focused on specific indigenous communities of Peru as well as sources addressing issues and patterns of thought widespread throughout the indigenous communities of the Peruvian Amazon, and the structures of power contending for supremacy over the resources of the Amazonian forests. I integrate main themes between several pieces illustrating this interplay of discourse within the social structures surrounding the forest and specifically the communities living there.

Local Livelihoods Group

One of a set of three, this paper fits in with a study by Meaghan McGovern entitled "Changing Landscapes of Local Livelihoods: forest resource management and illegal logging in the Peruvian Amazon" addressing how locals use their forests and how logging is changing this use. The third is a study by Dillon Vasallo entitled "Genocide in Peru: the impacts of illegal logging on the uncontacted peoples in the Amazon", focusing on the tribes of the Amazon who chose to remain in voluntary isolation, and how they are threatened by logging. This paper will focus more on the specific ways local communities participate in systems of governance, and the contrast between communities who are able to make an impact on the

logging system through engagement in local governance and those who remain marginalized and unable to effect change in their environment.

Literature Review

This paper uses "Environmental Governance and Implications of Small-scale Logging: the case of the indigenous groups in the Ampiyacu Basin in the Northeastern Peruvian Amazon" by Carolina De La Rosa to exemplify the success of local people operating in a largely self-governed system. Administered through the indigenous federation FECONA, governance helps the indigenous people gain recognition and control over their land. At the same time, the positive effects of this system of self-government are sometimes sabotaged by internal corruption among the management of FECONA. The largely positive outcomes of self-governance are contrasted with the indigenous case studies presented in the paper, "Loggers, Development Agents and the Exercise of Power in Amazonia," by Medina, Gabriel, Benno Pokorny, and Bruce Campbell (2009), which illustrates the hegemonic influence of development discourse and how it silences the voice of the indigenous people, claiming the ignorance of the indigenous people leaves them incapable of governing their own lives and resources. I will use the three stages of challenges to establishing self-governance faced by local communities set forth in this piece and apply them to the communities of the Ampiyacu Basin as studied by De La Rosa, connecting how the Ampiyacu people confronted each of the three challenges in contrast with the communities studied by Medina *et. al.* (2009).

I begin with a focus on the work "Transboundary political ecology in Amazonia: history, culture, and conflicts of the borderland Asháninka" by Salisbury *et. al.* (2011) to explain how the choice of the individual family unit effects the creation of a community, and how they chose whether or not to participate in anything beyond the family unit, whether it is participating in a larger Asháninka community or entering into agreements with the patrones of the Habilitado-Enganche system. This range of participation in the market system from family unit to family unit is further discussed in "Market Integration and Livelihood Systems: A Comparative Case of Three Asháninka Villages in the Peruvian Amazon." (Peralta and Kainer 2008), which also examines how distance from markets affects the living patterns of a village. While the market is seen in this literature as the strongest force affecting the lives of the indigenous villages, it also illustrates the autonomy and freedom of decision in the face of dominant market discourses often exercised by the individual family unit. The characteristics of this discourse the communities must combat are analyzed and critiqued in "Forest policy reform and the organization of logging in peruvian Amazonia" 2011 by Sears, R. R., and M.

Pinedo-Vasquez, which analyzes the discourses behind reform initiatives, and the search for sustainable forest practices.

The importance of self-determination within a community is exemplified in the work "Progress of the Victims: Political Ecology in the Peruvian Amazon" by Søren Hvalkof. Showing the change in the Asháninka people from objectified victims to a people with agency in the future of their livelihoods, the work describes how a land titling project effected this change. This work emphasizes the legitimacy of the Asháninka people as a self-determined people, and the strength of their ability to change their circumstances in the face of development discourse when they are unified as a community, collectively pushing for titled rights to their indigenous territory. The key tangible product of self-governance, titled land gives a community the ability to impose their own regulations on who logs the forest, and the quantity and size of logs removed. De La Rosa's case study of the Ampiyacu region shows the positive benefit to communities of having these rights.
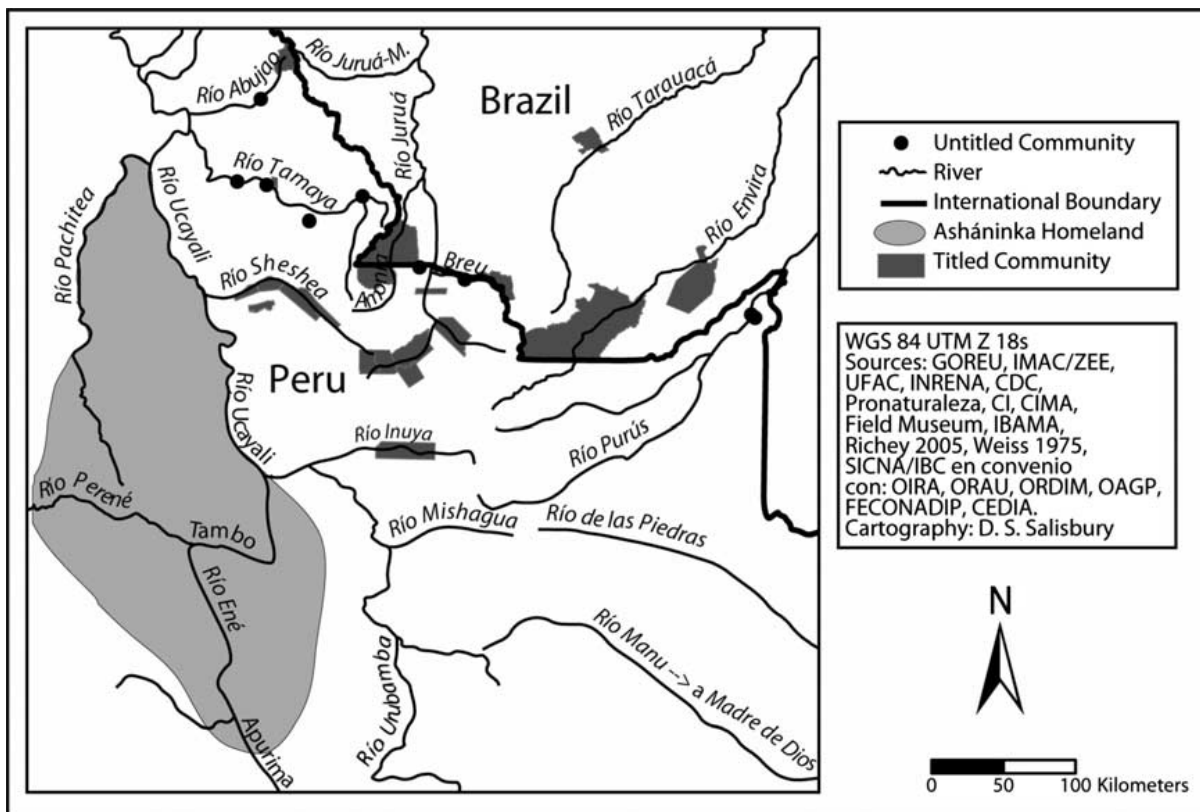
Background of the Asháninka People

The Asháninka people of the Peruvian Amazon consist of at least six subgroups, and are one of the largest Arawakan indigenous groups. They originally utilized a vast expanse of territory, but when rubber tappers began exploiting the area they enslaved the Asháninka people and distributed them through distant territories to harvest rubber. Due to this dispersion throughout the Amazon, the current Asháninka are not in full possession of their homeland, and have only managed to gain title to a fraction of the land they once called home.

This map illustrates the dispersal of the Asháninka people (Salisbury *et. al.* 2011: 158)
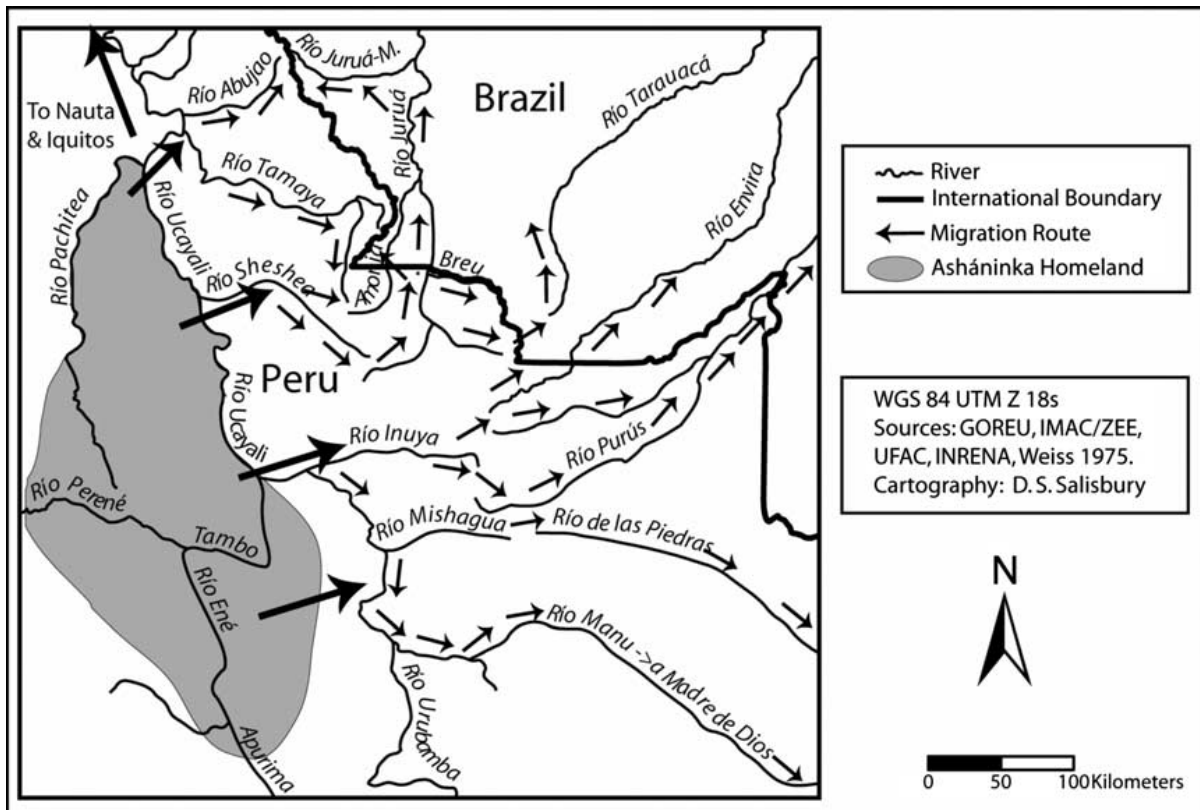
While this map shows the small amount of territory the Asháninka people currently have title to (Salisbury et. al. 2011: 159)

While this is only a fraction of what the land they once inhabited, the fact that they have pursued titling of the land shows the resiliency and agency of the Asháninka people.

Traditionally tending toward mobile family units as their most important governmental structure, imbalances in the degree to which different families participate in the market system occur as a result of the arrival of profit-seeking companies in search of valuable resources. Asháninka people transitioned to a scale of living connected with the wider community and the system (Salisbury *et. al.* 2011). This often causes discrepancies in the degree of relationship each clan unit forms with outside cultures, and as a result causes stratification within communities. Made at the family level, the decision to assimilate by trade and communication with Western culture means a redesigning of traditional subsistence resource management practices and family member roles. Producing for an outside market means the family must produce beyond the subsistence level, causing the family to need more labor power (Peralta & Kainer 2008). Their energies are no longer focused solely on what they need for themselves, but on what they can produce for the market.

Unfortunately, this family unit centered society presents a disjointed, dispersed people to the outside viewer, a weakness making the Asháninka seem fragile and incapable of governing themselves. In order to appear as a unified community deserving of a title and rights to land, the family units must form a cohesive front. Once again, however, the perceived value for forming this community differs between family units; some want the protection against logging and benefits of education offered in the unity of a wider Asháninka community, while others enjoy the freedom of creating their own systems of resource extraction and would rather remain separate from a greater community (Salisbury *et. al.* 2011). In Medina *et. al.* (2009), two of the communities studied were made up of households who negotiated individually with logging companies, and this caused conflict between the households within the community. At the clan level, actions are governed by unwritten customs and mutual agreements of social organization. Participation in a larger network of organized clans, however, means integration with a system of written laws and regulations of forest management (De La Rosa 2009).

Asháninka Participation in the Market System

Increased exposure to Western society causes a heightened attachment to the market system, and a growing desire to participate in the acquisition of goods and wealth possible through the market system. The indigenous people sold goods they produced such as sesame and cacao seeds, coffee beans, peanuts, rice, and even poultry or wild animals such as monkeys or birds, and purchased from the outside products such as guns and ammunition,

clothes, medicines, and steel tools such as axes and machetes (Peralta & Kainer 2008). Families in the Asháninka community who desired to gain status over other families because of their more integrated connection with the outside markets saw these externally produced goods as an essential part of this shift in their livelihood, and increased production of agricultural products in order to acquire the wealth necessary to purchase these goods the means to advancing in this new market-driven society. As villages begin to assimilate into this society outward evidence of cultural change appears in their clothing and their increased use of Spanish over their native tongue (Peralta & Kainer 2008). Ever since the arrival of colonists in the 16th century the Asháninka people have been exposed to the concept of trading for foreign goods, and the market, even more than foreign militaries and missionaries, has been responsible for the colonization of the Asháninka people (Peralta & Kainer 2008). This desire to participate in markets has drawn the indigenous people toward the timber industry, to the extent that in De La Rosa's study of the indigenous people along the Ampiyacu River, timber was found to be the primary economic activity of all of the indigenous people in the area (De La Rosa 2009: vii).

Indigenous Family Structure and the Habilitado-Enganche System

The head of a family clan is usually the patriarch, and sustaining the family is the dominant force driving the actions and decisions of the head. They may feel pressure to participate in the market system, seeing other options such as continuing to exist with their traditional subsistence methods as leaving them economically and socially behind other clans that chose to participate in the system. This prioritizing of family responsibility carries over into other areas of indigenous life. For instance, commonly practiced among relatives within the Asháninka community, the idea of reciprocal exchange is highly valued. As an interviewee from Yoyato, an Asháninka village, says, "we are accustomed so that if I need and have no seeds or chickens, I have some from my brother-in-law or my nephew" (Peralta & Kainer 2008: 159). Sadly, exploitation of this communal trust in mutual generosity occurs at the hands of the 'patrones' under the habilitado-enganche system, who provide goods such as soap, batteries, ammunition, etc. in return for the labor of the indigenous people in the harvesting of forest resources. Overpricing the goods they provide to the indigenous people, the patrones hold the indigenous people in slavery to a pattern of debt they cannot work themselves out of.

Finding Agency in the face of Conservation and Development Discourses

The Habilitado-Enganche system is not the only entity struggling for power over the Asháninka people. The conservation discourse of international nongovernmental

organizations places preservation of the rainforest over the needs of the local people who have drawn their subsistence from the land for centuries. Attempts to create new management plans to promote sustainable use of the forest may at times come into conflict with the traditional systems of forest management the local communities have had in use for years. Often discredited and ignored, the voice of the local people has no importance in the eyes of those who value formal education and political power over the extensive, personal knowledge of the physical geography of the forest and the forest's resources the local people have gained from life experience.

The principle force behind development agents, the habilitado-enganche system, and the increasing worth of money in the eyes of indigenous people, the demand for timber products by developed nations drives development and extraction companies to exploit the natural resources of the rainforest regardless of the cost to the local communities living in the area and to the forest ecosystem.

Progression of local people in discovering their own agency helps strengthen their influence in the face of dominating social structures. Logging companies and other development agents often have very different ideas of how a forest should be managed than the local people do (Medina *et. al.* 2009). When the logging companies establish the direction of forest management, their approach will differ from the traditional values of forest management the local community would have naturally gravitated towards. Giving the local people freedom to practice these traditional values leaves them with control over how much they participate in the system. However, "local arrangements can be fragile and need to be anchored in wider national institutions of accountable governance" (De La Rosa 2009: 16). Left to themselves, without being encouraged to establish laws governing use of their forest resources and without the ability to enforce these laws, communities are vulnerable to logging companies who extract timber from their land without any permission. Governance provides a community with help in getting their voice heard and recognized, and also enables the local people to have the knowledge and power to properly enforce the incursions of illegal logging in their territory (De La Rosa 2009).

**Barriers to Achieving Self-governance**

Medina *et. al.* (2009) outlines three stages of difficulties a community must overcome in order to achieve self-governance. First, the community must create their own management system for use and access to the forest. We see this in the Ampiyacu Basin of the Northeastern Peruvian Amazon, where the indigenous people have adapted their traditional livelihoods to include forestry, in the way they feel is best for the utilization of their

resources. The second requirement, ability to organize across community and family clan lines, is essential to establishing a secure system of governance, "well-organized communities sharing collective identities have better prospects for implementing their management approaches" (Medina et. al. 2009: 746). For the Ampiyacu people, this organization manifests in the forming of the indigenous federation FECONA. This federation is also the way the Ampiyacu communities overcome the third barrier to effective governance, which is getting society at higher scales of power to recognize their management strategies. FECONA's affiliation with AIDESEP, a national and internationally recognized indigenous federation, gives the Ampiyacu people a platform for securing assistance and validation from the wider Peruvian community.

FECONA's objectives are defending the indigenous territory and the natural resources the territory holds, as well as health and education initiatives. Achieving new or expanded land titles as well as making their territories more difficult for illegal loggers to access (De La Rosa 2009), FECONA has demonstrated the importance for a community to be seeking the support of governance at all levels of national and international influence. Operating at the highest local level of governance, above the community and family clan level, FECONA created a series of written rules directing access to forest resources which give permission to any member of the thirteen communities in FECONA to harvest timber from the forest provided they request and pay the necessary fee for the '*pase*', or timber logging permit. Those outside of the Ampiyacu basin, even other indigenous people, are prohibited from extracting timber from the forests. In contrast to the indigenous communities studied in Medina *et. al.* (2009), where outside logging companies carry out their timber operations with crews of loggers hired from outside of the indigenous communities, completely removing the indigenous people from any connection to the logging process, local people in the FECONA communities carry out their own logging operations. FECONA enforces the laws prohibiting outside logging and monitors legal logging with two sub-headquarters in two of the communities in the federation, Brillo Nuevo and Estiron del Cusco. These bases monitor the logs coming out of the forest, verifying the loggers have a valid timber permit with a receipt of the fee payment, and are taking out an acceptable number of logs. FECONA has set the quota for the number of logs a family is permitted to extract in a logging season at 100, and fees are levied for each log over this quota. Establishing these laws and the quota enables the indigenous communities of FECONA to control the amount of logs taken from the forest and prevent extraction by outside logging companies. This system also directly involves the local community, as the surveillance posts are run by community members. Having this

opportunity to take direct action in enforcing control of their territories with laws backed up by the authority of FECONA at the basin scale, and AIDSEP at the national and international scale, gives the communities agency in controlling their own resources.

Research site with Logging camps, Timber permits and Control posts
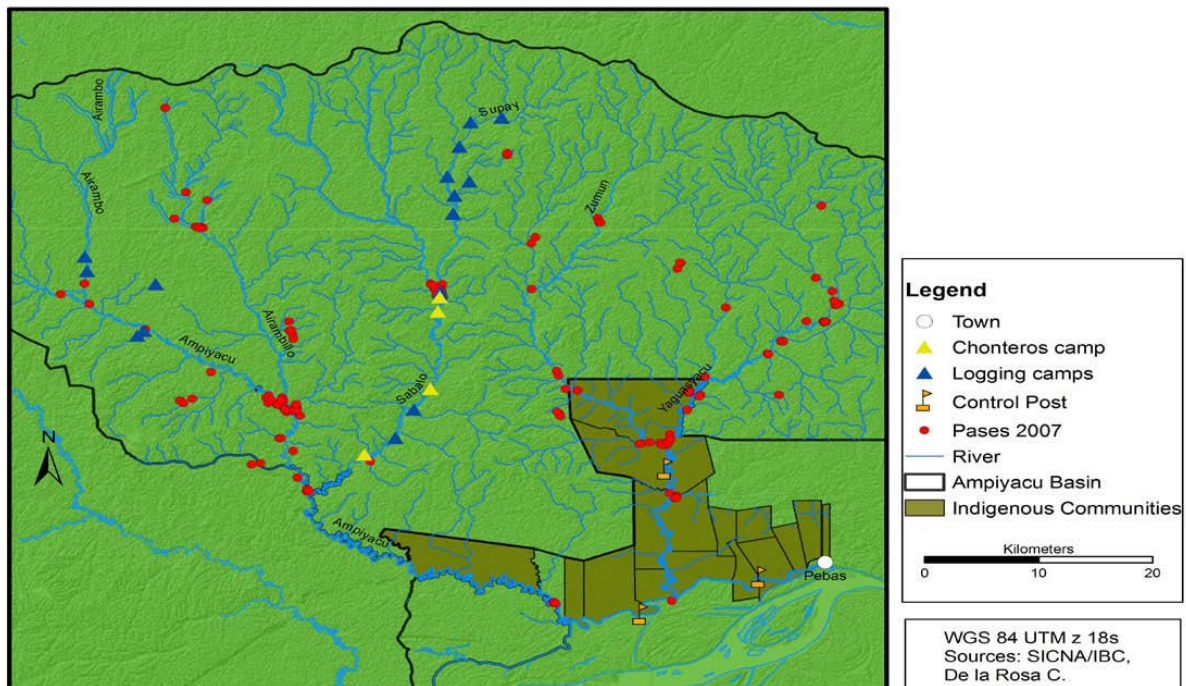
(De La Rosa 2009: 99)

In this map, the control posts can be seen at the edge of the indigenous territory. Also, strategically distributed local logging camps show how the local community has endeavored to demonstrate ownership and control of the land by the spatial distribution of their camps. This protects the area from looking like unclaimed area, ripe for timber exploitation, in the eyes of outside illegal logging groups (De La Rosa 2009: 133).

Furthermore, FECONA's laws for forest use include an article stating "the subsistence forest use by dwellers, their family, or community, as well as for traditional uses, repair and construction of dwellings, canoes, and other domestic elements, which are not destined to commercialization, do not require permission or authorization" (De La Rosa 2009: 77). This preserves the right of the communities to live according to their traditional practices if they should chose to do so, without having to submit to the dictates of systems of governance set up to control extraction for markets. In this way, a family is able to avoid participation in the system if they wish, and their traditional livelihood is affected as little as possible.

Community Forest Management

Under the Community Forest Management system described in Medina *et. al.* (2009), community members are engaged in the system through participation in training workshops on forest management, and although they were involved in the processes of forest management it was ultimately the development agents who directed the course of the timber harvesting project. While CFM makes the effort to involve the local people they are only inviting them to participate in a system whose discourse, objectives, and process of implementation has already been decided. Most households in two of the study areas expressed their preference to harvest their own timber, and in Vaca Diez the households set aside a portion of the profit from each tree they sell in the hopes of being able to manage their own forests in the future (Medina *et. al.* (2009).

Evidence of the pre-establishment of the process of extraction by the facilitators of Community Forest Management and the ineffectiveness of the local voice in influencing these processes is seen in the way not one of the community suggestions for the forest management plan was accepted by the development agents. One suggestion of a community was to log areas used as part of their slash-and-burn system, protecting the mature forests and the brazil nuts that played an important role in their livelihoods (Medina et. al. 2009: 755). Harvesting only in these areas would clearly have much less impact on the ecology of the forest, but obviously pursuing this method would accrue less profit, so the community's suggestion was disregarded. This contrasts with the situation in Ampiyacu, where the involvement of the local people in every process, with true influence in decision making even in scales of influence above the community level, models what the Vaca Diez community desires.

Loopholes and Drawbacks of Forest Management

Outside logging companies, however, are still able to exploit loopholes in this system of community participation and protection of laws and rights. Companies sponsor a village, helping them obtain a commercial timber permit from INRENA, which requires payment of a $166 fee, and a forest management plan along with other paperwork (De La Rosa 2009). The company then signs a contract with the village, giving the company full access to the indigenous land for the extraction of all the logs the permit allows. However, in all the Ampiyacu villages where this took place, the logging company refused to discontinue the logging operation even after they had harvested all the logs allowed by the permit, but would expand their extraction to include the indigenous lands neighboring the extraction area (De

La Rosa 2009: 78). The companies had to be forced out by the collaborative action of settlers and government authorities.

The high rate of participation of community members in attending community assemblies and assisting in formulating agreements about forest management yet their comparatively low rate of actually conducting their logging operations in accordance with the laws they help to create shows their willingness to participate in the governance systems set up by FECONA, but also a lack of investment in the initiatives to create more sustainable logging practices. A local man married to a woman from one of the FECONA villages explained this disconnect between participation in regulation initiatives and abuse of these same regulations, saying "We get permits and pay fees but we cut the timber that we need to solve our financial problems" (De La Rosa 2011: 82). The permits, the local people complain, are expensive, and in order to profit at all from timber harvesting after payment of the permit and community fees local loggers are compelled to harvest more timber than their permit allowed. With the highest priority of supporting themselves and their families, loggers have no motivation to protect the ecological balance of the forest when it comes at a cost to their livelihood.

Corruption among FECONA's management hinders the system from operating to its fullest potential. Records of FECONA officials receiving money or durable goods, such as a boat motor, from logging companies as a form of payment for their abuse of the law causes the indigenous people to feel their authority over their land has been violated. They are no longer motivated to take action against loggers who take illegal timber past the community control posts, because the community members know financial arrangements have already been made between FECONA and the loggers (De La Rosa 2009: 85). FECONA management must cease allowing exceptions to the ban on outside logging; not withholding their end of the agreement in backing up the authority taken by the community members over their land jeopardizes the system and the potential the system has to positively impact forest management practices. Obviously frustrating to the members of the local community, especially those who are directly involved in overseeing the control posts, this situation privileges the money and social power of the outside logging companies over the marginalized local people. The Brillo Nuevo control post coordinator expressed this collective frustration:

> We feel tied up due to this situation, because it provokes chaos in the community due
> to coordination of activities and agreements with loggers in the community who are
> uncomfortable with the inequalities in the control of their activities while outsiders

have freedom to act in the basin due to financial arrangement with FECONA and they

do not know how to act in these situations (De La Rosa 2009: 89).

From the perspective of FECONA management, "the fee payment is justified, we need to make arrangements with the communities and visit them. Also FECONA needs the money to record the legal documents about the organization in the Peruvian Public Records" (De La Rosa 2009: 90). Even though FECONA feels justified in their deals with the logging companies because the money goes to supporting the community, they should uphold the standards they set for both the local communities and outside logging companies simply as a matter of principle. The local people have enough of a struggle to face in the fight for agency over their land, without being undermined by their own federation. In addition to the corruption of FECONA frustrating their struggle for equal recognition, many of the plans of the indigenous communities to achieve national recognition and land rights are foiled by government bureaucracy. As one leader explains,

Ampiyacu residents were working hard because of the creation of the conservation

area while they thought that territorial expansion would be approved by the

government. However, since then they were told not to take for sure the negotiation

with this governmental institution because the negotiation is still in process. The

people have put all their trust and security on that; now they feel discouraged and

have discontinued taking care of these areas and starting working in timber extraction

(De La Rosa 2009: 91).

Cooperation of the government with the local communities' endeavors is essential not only to the morale of the local community, but also to the community's ability to move forward into the laws and management practices they have designed for establishment in their land.

Including Logging in Traditional Livelihoods

These laws and management practices stem from what has been passed down for generations within the community. Communities usually have customary rules for use and management of forest resources, and areas of the forest they have traditionally used for gathering subsistence food products as well as timber. This timber harvesting is often integrated with the rest of the community's subsistence practices. Typically, the process of the logging operation begins when a family clan goes into the forest to gather food and other products they use in their daily life and also sell to markets, such as supplies for making handicrafts. While gathering these products clan members will mark trees they have identified as good specimens for logging. After selecting trees, the clan obtains funding for the logging operation and then assembles a logging crew, which may consist of an outsider

skilled in chainsaw use, and may even include women and children of the family, who help with cooking, clearing paths for dragging the logs and other small tasks (De La Rosa 2009: 102).

Usually the felling of the trees occurs in the dry season, and the logging crew will drag the trees to the side of streams for transport when the rainy season causes the water level in the streams to rise. Dragging the logs is usually done by hand, with sometimes the assistance of a few basic tools. At times, logs must be left in the forest because the crew has insufficient labor capacity or funding to remove them. The logs are then left to rot in the forest. With more careful planning and estimation of the labor capacity need to move the logs and whether or not the crew possesses the resources necessary to carry out the operation, this waste could be avoided. In addition to this waste, harm to the ecology of the rainforest occurs when the paths are cut to drag the logs over, causing erosion. For many logging locations throughout the Amazon "the geographic distances logs are moved, the difficulty of traveling to locations where logs are extracted, and the active informal market for logging documents present major obstacles for forest authorities to verify the sustainability of any element of logging operations" (Sears & Pinedo-Vazquez 2011: 612).

However, there are two factors at play in the Ampiyacu basin leading possibly to verification of sustainability. The continuously controlled surveillance posts at the exit to the Ampiyacu territory, coupled with the system of issuing timber permits, enables the community to keep track of how much timber both local and illegal loggers remove from the forest, even if they are not always able to enforce the laws because of FECONA corruption. Secondly, because they use at most basic hand tools for removing the logs from the forest, we can deduce that the methods of indigenous extraction are more protective of the forest environment because there is no need for building roads or clearing wide paths for the large machinery used by commercial loggers.

Practices to Preserve the Forest

Carrying out logging operations while considering the ecological balance of the forest was at least on the minds of the logging crews, as some crew members referenced forest regeneration and protection of seed trees, but in all of the logging operations studied by De La Rosa none of these practices were found. In fact, loggers do not spare desirable seed-trees if they are in a location convenient for harvesting, claiming the seed trees located in inaccessible areas are sufficient for continued regeneration of the species. Optimally, logs should only be harvested with trunk diameters larger than the diameter at which the tree produces the most seeds. This not only protects the trees during their most productive stage

but also ensures there will be trees to harvest in that area in the future (De La Rosa 2009: 111). Some improvements could be made in this current system of extraction, increased knowledge of the effects of removing seed trees on future production volumes would motivate the local loggers to exercise greater restraint during harvest. However, because providing for their family remains the primary motivator for the local logger, they will tend to do whatever brings them the biggest profit in that moment. Bringing in outside knowledge to teach the local people how to manage their forests, however, can lead to the Community Forest Management practices witnessed in the areas studied by Medina *et. al.* (2009), where outsiders who believe they have the most scientific and sustainable methods of harvesting timber impose their ideas at the expense of any input from the local community.

Found only in rare cases, the delicate balance between assisting local people in expanding their knowledge of forest practices they are ignorant of, and imposing a plethora of scientific management practices intended to supersede all traditional patterns of forest management, should be the goal of any outsider seeking to improve the circumstances of the local community. Some plans of forest management reform fail because of corruption, insufficient enforcement, or not enough power being exerted by the system of governance, "while those factors may be responsible for the persistence of illegal logging, an underlying condition for that persistence is that the legislative and regulatory frameworks demonstrate little regard for or understanding of the historical and existing social, cultural, economic, geographical and bio-physical realities in which the timber industry operates" (Sears & Pinedo-Vasquez 2011: 610). Making the effort to truly understand the context of the lives of the local people helps in knowing when it is prudent and helpful for an outsider to intervene, and when the system should best be left in the hands of local governance.

Forest Use, Access, and Governance

Logging operations are funded 94 % of the time by external funding through the *habilitación* system. The contractor provides the crew with all the provisions necessary for the operation in exchange for a predetermined number of logs. The goods provided by the contractor include rice, soap, machetes and saws. Loggers report that the amount of timber the contractors demand for these products severely overvalues them, making a system where loggers have difficulty making a profit, because so much of their timber goes to the contractor. The remaining 6% of logging operations are internally funded, where loggers use their own funds from the sale and exchange of products such as fish, bananas, and handicrafts in the local markets (De La Rosa 2009: 113). This 6%, however, is only very small scale

logging operations, where the crew quickly harvests a small amount of timber, a process enabling the loggers to avoid the cycle of debt of the *habilitación* system.

Governing bodies must take into account these prior systems of use and sustainability when formulating new laws and regulations for a community. Among the thirteen communities along the Ampiyacu River the area of land the indigenous people used for gathering food and products for participation in the market was much larger than the area titled for them by the State (De La Rosa 2009: 30). The local people have the best knowledge of the extent of land they use for harvesting crops for their livelihoods and timber to sell to outside markets, and unless those in authority listen to their voice, their needs will always be underestimated.

Control of resources comes from all scales of leadership in the forest. At the lowest scale of the family clans, practices of forest management are based on a system of unwritten rules, while organization at the community and basin levels uses written laws to govern actions. As a result, access to the forest is controlled by the written laws of the community and the federation, while actual extraction methods are dictated by the unwritten family clan laws. This established system of the Ampiyacu Basin sets up conditions for rule of forest resources not by the exclusive power of a ruling group but a dispersion of power across all scales of governance. The community meetings where the local people actively participate are a model of fair governance, and the control posts where logs coming out of the basin are monitored are evidence of efforts to decentralize enforcement of laws and civil action (De La Rosa 2009: 132).

Conclusions

With the exceptions of the incidents of corruption among FECONA management, this system was effective in involving the local people in roles that were not just superficial, but actively engaged in protecting their communities from the exploitation of outside logging companies. Within the local communities, timber operations seem to run smoothly, and only when external forces infringe upon their resources does conflict arise. Although FECONA and the collaboration of the indigenous communities has not been able to completely prevent outsiders from finding ways to steal timber resources from community lands (De La Rosa 2009: 133), they are able to capitalize on the agency of the indigenous people by organizing them to participate in the creation and enforcement of laws. In effect, the indigenous people of the Ampiyacu Basin contradict the objectifying "portrayal of indigenous groups as having precarious existences, objectified in the historical processes as mere victims with no influence on their own situation, reinscribed them into the dominant modernist discourse as

essentialized cultural isolates, prone to measures of protection by the liberal state, leaving little options for their political agency" (Hvalkof 2006:196).

In a similar way, the Asháninka community overcame marginalization and suppression, and going "from being seen in a national perspective as objectified, extrasocial labor subjected to grand cattle ranching schemes and colonist exploitation, the Asháninka themselves became active political agents of social change and democratization" (Hvalkof 2006: 197). Hvalkof credits the motivation of this push toward agency to an indigenous land titling project by which the Asháninka regained rights to their some of their original territory. Even in the face of exploitative logging contracts the Asháninka people are forced to participate in, a growing sense of agency and control over their own fate empowers the Asháninka people to push for land titling and other rights. Not just passive, helpless victims, the Asháninka people are empowered by their own resiliency and the strength of numbers when then chose to become unified as a community. Necessary for taking this control of their land, collaboration between family units and communities into a broader and higher system of governance, even if it goes against the traditional patterns where the family unit has the highest authority, creates not only the cohesion necessary to present to the Peruvian government in order to show legitimacy as a indigenous people group, but also organizes enough people into a common purpose to be able to enforce regulations set in place against illegal logging.

As the dominant driver of forest extraction, the global market for timber and other forest products determines the actions of those, both outside and inside of indigenous lands, who seek profit from the rainforest. But "if globally driven resource plundering is preeminent, the agency and interaction of the physical geography and local people is also of critical importance to the formation and defense of boundary lands" (Salisbury *et. al.* 2011). The traditions and knowledge of those who have been living on the land for centuries lead to the most sustainable practices for harvesting resources from the forest, and only when the indigenous people are driven by the system to seek profit from the forest do their practices deteriorate into those that bring harm to the forest. Just as the local community in Medina *et. al. (*2009) who wanted to use only the timber growing in land that was already used for slash-and-burn practices, and would have been wasted anyway, the natural inclination of an indigenous people is toward protection of the cycles of regeneration of the forest. A system similar to what FECONA has established, where permits for even for the indigenous people are strictly controlled, but are only necessary when the logs are destined for markets and are not necessary when the forest resources will only be used for sustaining traditional

indigenous livelihoods, effectively finds a balance between market and local uses of forest resources. Local communities must feel they have a choice in how to live their life, knowing they are not required to participate in logging and are protected from the scheming negotiations of commercial logging companies by a system of governance controlled mainly by members of their own community.

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