

**That which Doesn't Break Us:
Identity Work in the Face of Unwanted Development**

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ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS	
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That which doesn't break us: Identity work in the face of unwanted development

Abstract

Studies on identity work have focused primarily on internal organizational relations, and have yet to examine if, and how, identity work occurs amongst stakeholder groups. Our paper addresses this gap in the literature through an ethnographic study of one Indigenous group – the Machiguenga, a remote Indigenous tribe affected by the Camisea Gas Project in the Peruvian Amazon. We also introduce concepts such as 'glocalization' from anthropological studies of Indigenous identity processes and integrate these with organizational knowledge of 'identity work.' Our findings demonstrate that Indigenous cultural identity can be both threatened and strengthened in response to natural gas development and is related to how individuals, communities and the Machiguenga (as a collective) engage in identity work.

Key Words: Indigenous, 'identity work,' stakeholder, natural gas

The Camisea Gas Project in Peru is a complex arena of human relations. On the one hand, there are large corporations, valuable natural gas and foreign direct investment with an estimated \$4.5 billion in fiscal revenues (IDB, 2006). On the other hand, there are remote Indigenous cultures like the Machiguenga struggling to survive in a fragile ecosystem. According to AmazonWatch (2004), an international non-governmental organization based in Washington, the Camisea Project cuts through a biodiversity hotspot and is “one of the most damaging projects in the Amazon Basin.” “Pluspetrol is alleged to have intimidated the traumatized Machiguenga...and threatened them by saying that if they did not relocate they would be arrested as terrorists, decimated with diseases and dealt with by the army” (Goodland, 2004:22). In April 2008, tribes forcibly shut down one of Pluspetrol's natural gas pipelines. To explain their actions against Pluspetrol, Indigenous groups said “We are not against development...but first our rights must be respected.”

This is not an isolated case (O'Rourke & Connolly, 2003). A growing number of management studies confirm that mining, oil and gas production, logging and hydro-electric projects have strong negative impacts on Indigenous cultures, and that many groups actively resist unwanted development (c.f. Whiteman, forthcoming). However, empirical research on the *processes* by which Indigenous cultural identity is affected by natural resource development is under researched. In contrast, Indigenous identity processes are a central issue within contemporary anthropology, where Indigenous identity is conceptualized as a dynamic process (Baumann, 1999; Eriksen, 1993) that evolves through oppositional interactions with external groups (Spicer, 1971).

Organizational theory on 'identity work' also highlights the importance of cultural and discursive processes within organizations. Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003: 1164) introduced the concept of 'identity work' as a process where "people [are] engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising their constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and destructiveness" (p. 1165). Individual organizational identities shift over time and in response to external threats and internal pressures for change. Subsequent literature has looked at identity work as a boundary spanning activity across the individual and organizational levels (Kreiner et al., 2006). While intriguing, studies on identity work have focused primarily on internal organizational relations, and have yet to examine if, and how, identity work is a result of external stakeholder relations.

Our paper addresses this gap in the literature through an ethnographic study of one Indigenous group – the Machiguenga, a remote Indigenous tribe affected by the Camisea Project. We contribute to the emerging body of management literature in two ways. First we introduce the theoretical concepts of cultural identity processes from anthropology and the concept of organizational 'identity work' to help us better understand the processes by which local stakeholders are affected by externally-driven natural resource development. Secondly, we provide empirical findings on Indigenous community reactions to the Camisea Project in the Peruvian Amazon. These findings demonstrate that Indigenous cultural identity can be both threatened and strengthened in response to resistance to gas development and is related to how individuals, communities and the Machiguenga (as a collective) engage in identity work. We end with a discussion of these findings and implications for human relations.

Theory and Previous Literature

Land use conflicts between Indigenous Peoples and the natural resource sector have been reported all over the world (Whiteman & Mamen, 2002). Explosive hostilities result when natural resource development occurs without prior informed consent from local people and severely damages Indigenous cultural identities (Whiteman & Mamen, 2002). Land use conflicts are also characterized by institutionalized power imbalances between Indigenous Peoples and companies and government agencies (Banerjee, 2000; Whiteman, 2004; Whiteman, forthcoming).

Management scholars have explored the topic of Indigenous Peoples and the extractive industries via an ethical, stakeholder, critical theory or organizational justice lens. Little attention has been paid to local cultural processes that Indigenous Peoples experience (or engage in) when their cultural identity faces an external threat from unwanted development. However there are a few existing management studies on this issue. For instance, Whiteman and Cooper (2000) identify the central role of Cree tallymen – senior hunters and leaders of family hunting grounds – within Cree culture in northern Canada. Tallymen have responsibility for their local traplines and this leadership role is an important pillar of Cree identity. Whiteman (2004) further demonstrates how this traditional cultural role has been seriously damaged over an ongoing series of hydro electric projects starting in the 1970s and continuing today. In contrast, an earlier anthropological study by Salisbury (1986) argues that Cree cultural identity was actually strengthened by their resistance to the first James Bay Hydro-electric project because it resulted in greater social cohesion at the macro level when the Cree created a collective Grand Council. The Grand Council was an effective

organization that successfully resisted part of the planned hydroelectric development. In a reverse position, the Grand Council of the Crees recently chose not to resist a new large-scale hydro-electric project despite protests at the local level because of a large benefit sharing agreement (Whiteman, 2004). The Grand Chief stated that this was necessary for Cree cultural identity in an increasingly developed territory. Cree cultural identity thus appears to be the result of a dynamic flux between the macro and grassroots levels over time and in response to external development. However, Indigenous identity processes in response to development remains under-explored.

The dynamic nature of identity construction has been strongly emphasized by Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) within organizational theory. They argue that the creation of a sense of self ('who am I' or 'who are we') is not static and identity is continually recreated through on-going interpersonal challenges, formed and transformed by their organizational contexts. Identity work emerges from both self-doubt and self-openness – when people are faced with inconsistencies, they engage in identity work as a process to address conflicts within their own identity constructions (which may be multifaceted) and to address inconsistencies with the images others may have of them (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). Identity work also occurs between individuals and a larger collective (e.g., organization) and thus is a boundary spanning dynamic activity, negotiated “at the interface of individual and organizational identities” (Kreiner et al., 2006: 1318). Identity work between and across individuals is discursive in nature, and cultural ethics (or morals) can be a powerful strategic resource for such work (Kornberger & Brown, 2007). Finally, ethnic identity work can be anticipated when members of one culture work as immigrants in a new society (Pio, 2005), including the

development of a bicultural identity, where immigrants adopt the clothes, makeup and food of the dominant culture. Ethnic identity work is of “considerable importance when the migrant is a minority” and thus lacks power (p. 1279). In her study of Indian migrant workers in New Zealand, Pio also shows that ethnic identity work can be complex in nature, resulting in both acculturation and also a re-emergence and reinforcement of ethnic identity particularly when migrants experience conflict and marginalization from the dominant society. Research on the identity work of stakeholders is an exciting extension of this work.

Anthropological theory is useful in this context. In the construction of Indigenous identity, studies have shown that three important aspects come to play: self-identification, community-identification and external identification (Weaver, 2001). Spicer (1971) argues that ‘persistent ethnic identity systems’ emerge and are maintained through ‘oppositional processes’; that is, a culture’s ‘persistent ethnic identity system’ is a direct result of efforts to assimilate such groups into the larger whole. In this sense, Eriksen (1993:10) states: “When we talk of ethnicity, we indicate that groups and identities have developed in mutual contact rather than in isolation.” Anthropologists further suggest “that without the antagonism created by resistance to incorporation, persistent identity systems would fail to develop” (Stephen, 1991: 103).

For Indigenous Peoples, self- and community identification are strongly linked to place, territory, traditional homelands and a shared history (Weaver, 2001; Whiteman & Cooper, 2000). A collective community identity will be maintained in relation to the identity of neighbouring communities; many Indigenous Peoples will actively determine criteria for membership within their community, which is a form of identity regulation

(Weaver, 2001). The criteria for membership form the boundary of the group identity and lead to a certain feeling of 'sharing'. These criteria can be based on different things, including a shared historical past and also an ecologically embedded approach to land management (Whiteman & Cooper, 2000). Traditional handicrafts, clothing and certain ritualized expressions are also important forms of cultural expression (Eriksen, 1993). Generally speaking, group identity becomes most important the moment it seems threatened (Eriksen, 1993). When one group perceives harm to itself as the responsibility of another group, the collective identity often is used as an instrument to rebalance power relations (Ashmore et al., 2001). Although several factors can lead to such a perceived threat, it is always related to some kind of change - whether migration, change in the demographic situation, industrialization or other economic change (Eriksen, 1993). In such situations, stereotypes may be created between both groups (Eriksen, 1993). According to Ashmore et al. (2001) this can eventually lead to intergroup violence: "groups that have a socially shared sense of "us" as victim and "them" as dangerous are more likely to cope with threat via intergroup violence than groups that do not have such a view of "us" and "them".

Indigenous identity can be a powerful resource to buffer against an external threat or commercial pressure (Stephen, 1991). For instance, among Latin American tribes, a number of groups have been able to engage in the market economy and at the same time maintain and reinforce their cultural identity through rituals and kinship structures. Stephen (1991) found that these groups had a number of features in common, including the continuation of some form of local land ownership and traditional land management such as hunting or agriculture. In such situations, Eriksen (1993) highlights the process

of 'ethnic revitalization' within a group that feels threatened. That is, Indigenous Peoples begin to recognize their latent cultural similarities when the culture appears to be under external threat. "Under these circumstances, people are more liable to reflect upon and objectify their way of life as *a culture* or as *a tradition*, and in this way they may become *a people* with an abstract sense of community and presumed shared history" (Eriksen, 1993:85). Indigenous identity is thus a 'resource' that can be revitalized and used to achieve collective aims to resist cultural change. Numerous anthropological studies demonstrate the effectiveness of ethnic revitalization (e.g., Brysk & Wise, 1997; Conklin 1997; Cowan et al., 2001; Kirsch, 1996; Korff, 2003; Nagel, 1995; Sawyer 1997; Sieder, 2002; Stephen, 1991).

Anthropological research also demonstrates that Indigenous Peoples actively link local Indigenous identities to transnational political discourse as an effective strategy to resist unwanted development and gain land rights (Conklin, 1997; Kirsch, 1996). Such actions are an example of a boundary spanning identity process across both the global and local stage (Korff, 2003:12):

Sometimes the affected local groups are able to set up a resistance and succeed even against powerful multi-national enterprises or states.

Two main variables influence the outcome of the conflict: 1. the ability and efficiency to organize on a local scale, and 2. the ability to globalize the local issue

Indigenous Peoples have also learned to strategically present their cultural identity in ways that fit into pre-existing (and stereotyped) global images of Indigenous Peoples. By doing so, local communities have been able to achieve global awareness and support for

their issues (Conklin, 1997). Indigenous organizations can be strengthened not only through their ability to 'scale up' beyond the local (Salisbury, 1986), but also through emphasizing their shared collective identity which demonstrates what they believe is Indigenous (Perreault, 2003). The globally constructed 'Indigenous identity' of local communities forms the base of transnational networks which enhance the political power of these communities (Perreault, 2003; Keck & Sikkink, 1999; Guadelupe Moog Rodrigues, 2004). This phenomenon has been called 'glocalization': "the (re)constitution of identities and organizations in local places but simultaneously global in nature" (Perreault, 2003:83). While effective in stopping unwanted development, critics argue that such processes can also result in an essentialized and atemporal Indigenous identity (Cowan et al., 2001). It also remains unclear how local Indigenous Peoples reconcile these 'glocal' identities with their traditional perspectives of self-determination and local cultural identity. We investigate this further through empirical research on the Camisea Project.

The Camisea Project

The development of the Camisea Project began in the 1980s when gas fields were discovered by Shell International. In 1988, a formal agreement for the exploitation of Camisea was signed between Petroperu (state-owned oil company) and Shell. Shell's exploration activities were immediately criticized by NGOs for the potential environmental damage, as well as for significant health and socio-cultural problems for the local Indigenous Peoples. The project was eventually put on hold due to economic reasons. In the early 1990s, Shell returned and promised extensive community

consultation. However, negotiations between Shell and the Peruvian government ended in a deadlock, and Shell cancelled the project in 1998. In February 2000, the Peruvian Government awarded the license for Camisea to a consortium led by Pluspetrol Perú, with the participation of Hunt Oil Company from the USA, SK Corporation from South-Korea and local company Tecpetrol del Perú (TPG).

The Camisea reserves are ten times greater than all other existing natural gas reserves in Peru (Proyecto Camisea, 2004). In order to finance the project, the Camisea Project sought loans of up to \$400 million from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (Amazon Watch, 2004). Although economically beneficial at the national level, the location of the project is far from ideal. Nearly 75 percent of the gas extraction (the Upstream project) is located within a state reserve for Indigenous Peoples (Goodland, 2004). This reserve was 'demarcated' in 1989 and formally created in 1990. The reserve now covers 457.435 hectares and was created with the purpose of protecting vulnerable ethnic minorities (Goodland, 2004). These Indigenous tribes live with little or no contact with the outside world and are fatally vulnerable to Western diseases (e.g., influenza and respiratory diseases). The Machiguenga are one of the main tribes on the Reserve (Goodland, 2004). According to government statistics, the Machiguenga constitute 3.62% of the total Indigenous population in Peru (Peru Ecologico, 2005). This number, however, does not include the more isolated population, which remain uncoun-
ted.

Due to their aversion to Western contact, studies about Machiguenga culture prior to the Camisea Project are uncommon. However, most Machiguenga communities in the Urubamba region continue to follow traditional subsistence practices and hunt, fish and gather food for their daily consumption. On a small scale, these activities are combined

with the commercial cultivation of coffee and cacao or logging (Napolitano & Stephens, 2003).

In preparation of the first block of the Camisea Project (Plot 88), eight public hearings were carried out by the consortia between September 2001 and March 2002. Both the Upstream consortium and TGP conducted various social-environmental impact assessments (EIAs) (Proyecto Camisea, 2004) and established a Community Relations Program. Pluspetrol also conducted workshops in 22 Indigenous communities that were directly and indirectly impacted by the Upstream project. In these workshops, both the EIA results and the Environmental Management Plan were presented (Proyecto Camisea, 2004). More recently, the consortium organized public hearings on a second phase of the Camisea Project (also known as Plot 56 or Camisea 2).

From the onset, Camisea encountered serious opposition from the Machiguenga. Negative impacts of gas extraction were documented in reports by various international NGOs and activists (Goodland, 2004; Amazon Watch, 2004; E-tech International, 2004). For instance, during the first 18 months of the project, five gas spillages occurred (Amazon Watch, 2004). Other impacts included forced relocation, environmental damage, an influx of non-Indigenous migrants into the protected reserve, poor employment opportunities, increased sexual diseases, prostitution and alcohol abuse (E-tech International, 2004). Construction also reduced game stocks, and disregard for safety regulations by project workers allegedly killed one Machiguenga child (Amazon Watch, 2004). A new organization, COMARU, was established in 1992 by the Machiguenga to fight against the project. The public hearings on Plot 56 were rejected by the Machiguenga community in April 2005.

Methodology

Our study is based upon qualitative interviews and participant observation of the Indigenous communities affected by the Camisea Project in the Urubamba Valley, Peru. Ethnographic fieldwork was done from January until June 2005. In total, 59 interviews with people from nine different Machiguenga communities were conducted. Men and women living very close to the extraction of the gas in the Lower Urubamba and Machiguenga living in the Upper Urubamba (further away from the extractive operations but close to the gas pipeline), were interviewed. Interviews took place in Quillabamba, home base to the local organization COMARU and in two remote Machiguenga communities: Monte Carmelo and Chaokopishiato. Most interviews were in Spanish, with some exceptions in Monte Carmelo, where a few inhabitants were interviewed in Machiguenga with the help of a translator. The interviews were semi-structured. Because of the informal setting, ethnographic conversations and informal interviews were not taped but recorded in field notes. The first author also acted as a participant observer of several special meetings which included a three-day workshop for the Machiguenga communities of the Higher Urubamba about territorial rights, a meeting between TGP and community members of Monte Carmelo and a public hearing concerning Plot 56 in Quillabamba. Finally, we conducted document analysis of organizational literature from COMARU, particularly the 'Machiguenga Bulletin', which publishes facts about gas spillages, independent assessments and reactions of community members in relation to the Camisea Project every month. In addition, environmental impact assessments of international and national NGOs were reviewed.

Findings

Our findings illustrate that the environmental and socio-cultural consequences of the Camisea Project led to a growing resistance among the Machiguenga, including the emergence of COMARU which in turn helped local Machiguenga communities fight against Camisea. Machiguenga's reactions to the Project and the resistance movement itself arose from, and contributed to, complex identity processes that initially weakened and then strengthened Machiguenga cultural identity across individual, community, and transnational boundaries. We identify a number of discrete yet overlapping phases of identity work including: i.) Identity work in the face of initial impacts; ii) Collective identity work to revitalize and protect the Machiguenga ; iii) Identity work as active separation and conflict – 'Us versus them'; and iv) Identity work through glocalization and collective opposition. We describe these in more detail below.

Local identity work in the face of initial impacts

Our field work confirmed that the vast majority of Machiguenga continue to live a traditional subsistence life from fishing and hunting activities and from their *chakra* (farms), which produce manioc, bananas, maize, and various medicinal plants. The majority also continued to use traditional Machiguenga tools and technology including bow and arrows, harpoons, machetes, and traditional Machiguenga round knotted nets for fishing. The Machiguenga also collected a large variety of products from the woodland and the river such as wild fruits and palms, honey, various grubs of insects, beetles, bird eggs, crabs, shrimps and frogs. They also continued to use the leaves of various palm

trees for the roofs of their houses and buildings, as well as baskets, colanders and mats. Feathers of different birds were used for different purposes inside the house.

During interviews, many local community members voiced traditional beliefs that it is important to have respect for the environment by taking care of flora and fauna, and only taking natural resources in ways that can keep the natural balance. Also, people emphasized their adherence to a variety of cultural taboos about non-subsistence activity: “We need the animals of the jungle. We also need free land. We do not want to live without having contact with nature. To conserve nature is the most important. We want to study and to read, but we will always respect nature and we will conserve it” (*Inhabitant of Chakopishiato*).

There was unanimous agreement that The Camisea Project has negatively disturbed the relationship between the Machiguenga and the land they live on. According to the Machiguenga interviewed, fishing and hunting yields had fallen drastically in both the Lower and Upper Urubamba since the launch of the Project. People also believed there was a decline in water quality, and the water was described as “troubled”: “There is less fish than before and less ‘meat of the mountain’. Before, we always caught fish after half an hour, but nowadays it takes about three days to catch fish. There is noise of the machines and the animals escape. About the gas spillage, they [the companies] say that this was only notable on top of the water, but it is not like that. We know nature, because we live on it and the gas spillage affects for sure. There are dead fish. We are also concerned for our health. We bathe in that river” (*Inhabitant of Shivankoreni*). Despite the continuation of their traditional lifestyle, perceived threats to Machiguenga identity from the Camisea Project clearly existed at the individual and community level,

particularly from environmental impacts. Our data also showed that the Camisea Project offered temporary employment which created an identity paradox among the Machiguenga.

During interviews, people all referred to the significance of the natural environment within their livelihood, and were concerned how environmental changes would affect this identity: “We do not agree. It is not in our interest. The project affects us. One should have respect for flora and fauna. We always have lived here and now – all of a sudden - we do not have the opportunity to hunt and fish, to collect fruit. Where are we going to? We should live peacefully and comfortably here. I care about the fact that we have an environment, that there is no contamination. They have to show respect” (*Inhabitant of Chakopishiato*). The Machiguenga also perceived the Camisea Project as a serious direct threat on the future of Machiguenga culture: “Where are our children going to live? And our animals? How are our families going to live? Nature as a whole will be contaminated. We think about future life. We know about the problems in other communities. They [the companies] do not care. They only have talked with the government, the ministries” (*Inhabitant of Chakopishiato*).

A complex process of socio cultural changes was also found among the Machiguenga communities, accelerated due to the temporary employment of Machiguenga men in the Camisea Project. Although total employment figures were impossible to confirm, a report from the IDB states that during the construction phase, “455 [workers] were from native communities”, out of a total workforce of 2900 (~16%). A sizable number of Machiguenga men were employed temporarily in unskilled, low-pay construction jobs. It was unclear from our data if these jobs were accepted because of

poor hunting and fishing conditions, or because of the appeal of the cash economy, or some combination. Employment, even when temporary, caused significant identity work at the individual and community level. According to COMARU,

The transnational companies, with eagerness to plunder our resources, play a strategic role by misleading some leaders offering them advantages and opportunities of jobs that are temporary. Since the peasant is in need of money, he accepts any offer, but there the matter does not rest. For all that support and service, given by the companies, they want to achieve great advantages from which the Indigenous Machiguenga suddenly realizes it has been misled and it then gets annoyed about itself for not thinking before taking a decision (Machiguenga bulletin, nr.1, 2005).

Individuals had to work to resolve identity paradoxes and in some cases abandoned traditional Machiguenga identity and relocated away from the communities. "There are also social impacts: How the men of the community spend the money they earned in the company! A lot of them go to the city and they never come back, leaving their wife and family behind" (*Leader of Shivankoreni*). "The money seems a good thing, but if someone does not know how to use it, the money destroys a lot" (*Inhabitant of Montecarmelo*). "At present, we are already suffering from hunger, health problems and other difficulties which every settler experiences day by day because of some smooth peasants who sell themselves for a job" (Machiguenga bulletin, nr.1, 2005).

In particular, our interviews with women indicated that the employment of Machiguenga men negatively affected household structures and placed significant burden on Machiguenga women. Traditionally, the Machiguenga divide subsistence tasks strictly

along gender lines, with Machiguenga men being responsible for fishing, hunting and some other agricultural activities. Employment with Camisea changed these relationships and placed significant burden on Machiguenga women who became responsible for the entire household.

In addition, some felt that this shift towards a cash economy was destroying families. This resulted in a new focus on education as a central pillar of Machiguenga community identity: “The people should be prepared more, be educated more. Education is the base. It is a temporary job, not a job of slavery” (*Leader of Shivankoreni*). Many community members believed that this increase in the cash economy detrimentally changed the pattern of alcohol use within the communities. Traditionally, Machiguenga of almost all ages consume *mazato* on a daily basis¹. Containing maize and sweet potato in addition to manioc, *mazato* plays an important role in the nutrition of the Machiguenga and its consumption both on a quotidian basis and at special occasions has an important social and cultural function. At the time of our study, however, commercially-produced beer was increasingly available in the Urubamba communities through traveling traders. Its consumption, without any ancestral social meanings attached to it, was identified as a serious problem for the communities during our interviews.

The increasing amount of money in the communities attracted a growing number of non-Machiguenga merchants. Whereas the Machiguenga previously would provide their own shelter, clothing, food and medicine, after Camisea, a number of families relied upon monetary income to maintain an increasingly Westernized lifestyle. It was clear during our field work that many Machiguenga wore Western clothing, and the traditional

¹ The strength of *mazato* can vary significantly depending on the number of days it is left to ferment. Usually, it is the strength of a weak beer. Yet it can be substantially stronger, especially when brewed for a social or ceremonial occasion, when it is consumed in large quantities.

female *cushma* was becoming an exception. According to community members, this was a new phenomenon -- The *cushma* was still worn up until a few years prior. Yet most of the female respondents of Montecarmelo and Chakopishiato who were interviewed did not wear the *cushma*. When asked about this, they answered that the *cushma* was not convenient and “because almost nobody is wearing it anymore”.

Local people explained that the increased use of Western products within the Machiguenga communities had both positive and negative impacts on Machiguenga identity. Access to medicines and soap, for example, was perceived to increase standards of personal hygiene which could contribute to lower incidences of disease. However, people also felt that money also created dependence on external products and contributed to a loss of ancestral skills, cultural knowledge and patterns of self-reliance. Some Machiguenga feared that they were losing cultural practices and values: “Nowadays, fathers do not practice with their sons anymore to teach the use of the bow and arrow. There is less attention and interest for the making of traditional clothing and typical handicrafts. In addition, certain cultural values get lost. Less and less people know how to use medicinal plants” (*Inhabitant of Chakopishiato*).

Collective identity work to revitalize and protect the Machiguenga

Prior to Camisea, the Machiguenga were locally organized in a village and family structure with no formal organization working across communities. COMARU was officially founded in 1992 to bring together 12 Machiguenga communities of the Lower Urubamba and 17 of the Upper Urubamba. Our document analysis indicates that from the beginning, the organization had the objectives of collective resistance to natural

resource development, to educate the Machiguenga about relevant national and international regulations, and to promote the economic, social and cultural development of the member communities. Revitalizing and protecting Machiguenga identity in the face of unwanted development was a primary activity of COMARU:

In view of the events taking place in our Indigenous communities as a result of the exploitative companies already present since a lot of years, our organization has always maintained a loyal position towards ethnic principles, with respect to our identity and our biodiversity, considering the fact that it deals with our natural habitat (...)

We consider the Machiguenga the largest ethnic group of this part of the Amazon, who were obliged to change their traditional habitat and their ancestral uses and habits in the last few years as a consequence of various factors characterized as extractive and mercantilist in an attempt to protect themselves of the foreign penetration, through this conventional organization, as is COMARU.

Data show that COMARU positioned the Machiguenga as a culture whose identity had been strengthened as they learned how to resist the Camisea Project more effectively over time. For example, COMARU released this statement in relation to the development of Plot 56, the next stage of the Camisea Project:

[The consortium] would like to repeat the same history with the Plot 56 [expansion of the Camisea Project], using the same strategy. However, this time the companies and the state clash with the Machiguenga people, determined to fight before handing over another plot of land, which would affect its environment and pollutes its rivers (Machiguenga bulletin, nr.1, 2005).

The emergence of COMARU also helped to strengthen Machiguenga cultural identity at the community level. The statements of COMARU – primarily through radio broadcasts and the monthly Machiguenga Bulletin -- had extensive reach at the community level, where our interviews indicate that the organization's views were widely shared and supported. Moreover, local people who were interviewed were very clear about the position of COMARU within Machiguenga culture and their own position towards COMARU: "The project has a lot of impacts. The companies say a lot of things they do not fulfill. The companies have misled us. They made use of the ignorance, but we have learned. We are too late to avoid the exploitation of Plot 88, but we are in time to oppose the exploitation of Plot 56. The most important thing is that the communities get stronger through COMARU as if it were one community. COMARU has an important role in this. COMARU is there to defend our rights, to mobilize and to claim. The bulletin is important because it is for all the inhabitants of the communities. In that way, the bulletin informs and mobilizes" (*Inhabitant of Montecarmelo*). Others confirmed this perspective: "COMARU is supporting. The leader [of the community] has said that every community has to mobilize to form the base of COMARU. COMARU supports us through radio communication, the bulletin and through courses and conferences. In that

way, we are all informed. We are brothers, we have this bond of being Machiguenga. We have to unite” (*Inhabitant of Chakopishiato*). “We are the foundation of COMARU. We inform COMARU about deficiencies. The coordination with COMARU is very important. They come up with dates for meetings. They demand respect for the rights, the culture and the natural resources. We need to have more influence within the dialogues [with the companies] in order to demonstrate what we want” (*Leader of Shivankoreni*).

Our data show that COMARU actively attempted to resolve identity confusion by strengthening collective identity:

These entire circumstances make that we sometimes get confused. Sometimes we do exactly what others tell us to do, but we have to realize that with every generous activity of development positive and negative impacts come; and if we are not prepared we easily fall into the games of the companies, such as what we are experimenting nowadays that because of the fact that we are receiving canon through the sale of the gas, apparently they make us believe that we are developing, but to whom does it benefit directly? (*Machiguenga bulletin, nr.2, 2005*).

COMARU members believed that if the Machiguenga were to be successful in their battle against Camisea, they would need to resolve their identity questions.

Data indicate that COMARU actively promoted an image of *the* historic Machiguenga identity in order to address confusion. This refocusing of cultural identity also explicitly made reference to the external threats:

This is the moment to wake up, brothers of the Machiguenga people, to let them respect our identity and our territory as a people. We do not permit that

more concessions and plots are being given. If we permit that, we are at risk because soon we will be wiped out as a people, with a great socio cultural wealth, out of which we –if we are taking advantage of it- would be contributing to a sustainable development of our country (Machiguenga bulletin, nr.2, 2005).

COMARU also organized working groups on various themes to help strengthen Machiguenga cultural identity. The workshop coordinator explained to us that the overall aim of these working groups was to help the Machiguenga become aware of *who* they are: “Not the government, but you should defend your communities. Be proud of the Machiguenga culture”. Participant observation of the working groups revealed important insights concerning the perceived rights and duties of the Machiguenga identity. According to the participants, the collective rights of the Machiguenga range from “living peacefully” to making use of natural resources. In addition, the right to be a community member, and the right to possess land were identified as important dimensions of cultural identity. People also emphasized that they, the Machiguenga, have the right to raise a family and to defend their traditional way of life.

Identity work as active separation and conflict – ‘Us versus them’

Our data also identified a growing sense of “Us vs. Them,” with local identity work as a process of active separation and conflict. By using their strengthened collective identity as an instrument the Machiguenga began to draw clear lines between the Machiguenga as caretakers of the environment (us) and the Peruvian government and transnational companies as “representatives of modernization” (them). In spite of the

temporary employment of some Machiguenga men, and companies' policy to "keep a balanced and respectful relationship with the local people and their environment", the perception of the majority Machiguenga at the local communities was of anger and frustration. People repeatedly voiced anger at the government and companies for failing to show respect for the Machiguenga cultural identity and way of life. Within the communities, people used their revitalized traditional identity as environmental caretakers as a key distinction between them and the companies and the government.

The government, what do they know? They do not know anything about nature nor about the way of life of the native communities. They are in Lima. How do they know where they are talking about? They do not know the life in the forest. We go into the woodland, we go out to fish. Natives really work with nature. We have been born here. It is our territory. We are equal, but they do not respect us. (*Inhabitant of Chakopishiato*).

In addition, people argued that the Camisea Project only benefited companies instead of the people who lived on the lands where the project is located:

The animals leave, the plants are affected. This is our territory, our Peru. The companies do not want to compensate. They only come to take our money, they take our money away. That really makes angry, because they abuse our territory. That is why we formulate claims. We want compensation, because we do not have fish anymore. They [the companies] say that there is no pollution, but where do the fish give birth? In the River Urubamba. Let the

representatives of the companies come here to go to the river directly in order to see if there is fish or not. (*Inhabitant of Puerto Rico*)

There is a lot of environmental pollution. The Camisea Project causes gullies, I have seen it. The companies do not inform us. There are no explanations, there is no transparency. We do not have the opportunity to say if we agree or not. The companies have put monitors, but they do not do their work. They are not doing anything. They only drink alcohol and they are hanging around. (*Inhabitant of Montecarmelo*)

Numerous community members emphasized the strengthened cross-village links and said they were aware of difficulties and negative consequences of the project for the broader Machiguenga community.

We are aware of all the things that happen in other communities. We communicate about the problems by radio. We know that animals are leaving. The bad thing is that they do not warn us. They keep silent if something happens (for example if somebody dies due to the project). That is very bad. It should not be like that. It is not fair. The companies should give us more information and there should be more communication. If there is a conflict, the project is the attack. (*Inhabitant of Chakopishiato*)

Moreover, the companies were vehemently blamed for not doing what they said or promised. This fact was also linked back to their own ignorance at the beginning of the project.

The companies do not keep their promises. For instance, they do not do anything to improve the road. They said they were going to maintain the road. There are more ravines and the river is polluted by collapses (of the land). There are also documents regarding the reforestation of the forest but in reality, they have not done anything. The companies should have more control. They do not fulfill anything. They do not have respect either. Some workers entered into the community. Before, we did not know anything, but now it is not that easy. In the beginning, they convinced us. They made use of the ignorance in this countryside. TGP does not keep its promises. They did not plant anything; not even one tree, not even one plant! (*Inhabitant of Montecarmelo*)

Identity work through 'glocalization' and collective opposition

Our data shows that another key strategy of COMARU was to actively inform local Machiguenga about the global movement on for Indigenous Peoples' rights. Workshops on international Indigenous rights were organized by COMARU in collaboration with INRENA (*Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales*), the National Institute of Natural Resources. The purpose of these was to increase the local knowledge of international Indigenous rights and "to demonstrate the international legal instruments about the rights of the Indigenous Peoples as persons and as peoples; in particular the ILO Convention No.169 with the emphasis on territorial rights". Participants also learned about international laws on Indigenous Peoples rights to meaningful consultation. Participants then identified a practical process to implement their international rights by establishing a cultural rule that outside people must

first contact COMARU prior to any local community visit. This included a formal protocol for entry: every external institution or actor would have to ask for permission by writing a so-called *solicitud* (request). A community member said: “You can not just come in here without a *solicitud*. Foreigners always think they can just come in, but we think that shows a lack of respect. You can not come in just like that. We have to know who you are, where you are coming from and what you come for.”

Interviews at the local level indicate that the knowledge obtained in workshops on international Indigenous rights was transmitted back to the local communities. For instance, in Chakopishiato, leaders organized a special meeting with the aim of informing the community members about a COMARU workshop in Quillabamba. The chief asked community members to discuss the importance of reflecting on the global Indigenous movement: “We have to question ourselves: who are we? This is important to defend our territory. What does it mean to be an Indigenous People?” He also explained the ILO Convention 169 and the rights of Indigenous Peoples to prior informed consultation and consent. He related this back to the Camisea Project: “We do not benefit from the Project. It is not fair. They take a lot, but they leave us with nothing behind.” He also explained to community members about a meeting of COMARU concerning recent plans for Plot 56. While showing the map of the new plot of land, he said: “There are concerns about the impacts of Plot 56 (Camisea 2). We have to mobilize. The situation nowadays is very bad. We have made a mistake due to ignorance. We have to pay a lot of attention.”

COMARU also explicitly framed the globalization of Machiguenga identity as a complementary process to local identity processes which would allow the Machiguenga to develop in new ways and simultaneously strengthen their traditional identity:

To be exposed to the present neoliberal politics and the globalized world does not mean that we should forget about neither our cultural identity nor the traditional knowledge of our ancestors. On the contrary; although we have to acknowledge that to develop as a people, we have to learn new techniques in order to apply these according to our reality (Machiguenga bulletin, nr.2, 2005).

Through their local, regional and global interactions, the Machiguenga realized that their collective identity as Machiguenga had instrumental value. This was summarized in the Bulletin:

The companies and the state have experienced that a people of whom they thought of as easy to manipulate confronted them with the ungrateful surprise that when the Machiguenga people rises in order to claim its rights and dignity, nobody can stop it although they try to bribe the leaders. This time they got a hard knock and it will be difficult to convince us again, we will be fighting frontally until the state recognizes our rights as a people. We demand of the companies that they obey international quality standards or else we will not accept the public hearings, because we do not want to be affected by others who develop themselves at our expenses" (Machiguenga bulletin, nr.1, 2005).

This eventually led to collective regional opposition to the expansion of the Camisea Project via Plot 56: “The companies are terrible liars. They only want to make use, they want to cheat. We use the public hearing to protest. In that way we demonstrate that we are capable, that we have the ability to protest” (*Inhabitant of Shivankoreni*). On the 8th of April 2005, the Machiguenga collectively released a public Community Statement rejecting the planned expansion of the Camisea Project with Plot 56. They declined to participate in any further consultations saying “Our territory and lives are worth more than the gas.”

Discussion & Conclusions

In this paper, we argue that a deeper understanding of the process of identity work across the individual, community and collective regional level, improves our understanding of how unwanted natural resource development affects Indigenous cultures. Our findings demonstrate that gas extraction can be a serious threat to Machiguenga identity (particularly when individuals engage in temporary paid labour) and at the same time, the Machiguenga's collective resistance to the Camisea Project strengthened and revitalized cultural identity at the community and regional level. Furthermore, the identity work used by COMARU to revitalize Machiguenga culture was also tied to international Indigenous rights – thus identity work is a boundary spanning activity at the local, regional and international levels.

Like previous studies, our findings confirm that local Indigenous Peoples suffer serious cultural impacts from negative impacts to the local ecology and through societal

changes related to oil and gas development (O'Rourke & Connolly, 2003; Whiteman & Mamen, 2002; Widener, 2007). Unlike previous studies, we show how the Machiguenga actively engaged in boundary spanning identity work in the face of such dynamic changes. For instance, the Machiguenga rejected the Camisea Project and at the same time, numerous men from the communities were employed by the Project. Employment provided cash benefits used to purchase non-Machiguenga clothing and products, many of which were voluntarily adopted by the Machiguenga. Like Pio (2005), the Machiguenga displayed some degree of Western acculturation (e.g., through non-traditional clothes and products) and at the same time voiced concern over other cultural changes. In particular, the influx of cash into a previously egalitarian and subsistence culture brought social changes in terms of new hierarchies, alcohol and drug abuse, and the breakdown of traditional family structures. Despite voluntary employment with the Camisea Project, people were deeply concerned about the loss of local flora and fauna. People also believed that such losses were serious threats to Machiguenga cultural identity. At the individual and community level, the Machiguenga engaged in identity work to help resolve such identity confusion and change.

Our findings show that identity work occurs over time and in response to external and internal threats to cultural and individual identity (Eriksen, 1993; Spicer, 1971; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). The Machiguenga developed responses to these dynamic and negative changes to their culture demonstrating clear boundary spanning behavior (Kreiner et al., 2006). First, they organized themselves under COMARU; second, in a number of community meetings and in their Bulletin, they began to promote traditional Machiguenga cultural values as a means for revitalization; third, COMARU

actively trained Machiguenga communities about their relationship between their cultural identity and global Indigenous identity struggles, which were then embedded in individual and community beliefs. This ultimately resulted in increasingly strong rejections of the Project, culminating in their boycott of consultation meetings and the Community Statement. During this period, they also strengthened their demands for outsiders to respect traditional Machiguenga procedures and practices, which provided additional support for Kornberger and Brown's (2007) argument that cultural ethics can be a powerful discursive resource for identity work. Given that many of the Machiguenga still pursued a traditional lifestyle, Machiguenga identity work was strengthened by a revitalization of this traditional way-of-life and rituals (Stephen, 1991).

Our findings suggest that Indigenous cultural identity in the face of natural resource development is shifting, paradoxical, and that a group's cultural identity work can both contribute to cultural disintegration and also strengthen group identity. That is, the Machiguenga culture was weakened by large-scale natural resource development, and some individuals also contributed to negative cultural impacts (e.g., the Machiguenga men who sought out employment opportunities despite the transgression of their cultural beliefs). At the same time, the widespread negative impacts created pressure for the Machiguenga to revitalize their Indigenous culture and to effectively create new organizations to fight against the project. Thus, community identity work, over time, resulted in a revitalized cultural identity despite the continuance of negative social and ecological impacts. Aside from some basic acculturation in terms of Western clothes and some products, we did not find that the Machiguenga's strategy of 'glocalization'

(Conklin, 1997; Perreault, 2003) resulted in identity confusion at the local level. This may be due to the Machiguenga's ongoing emphasis on their traditional ways.

In general, our study demonstrates that the concept of 'Identity work' is important for research on stakeholder relations. Future studies can usefully analyze how various stakeholders (at the individual, group and intra-group level) actively engage in identity work as a boundary spanning activity (Kreiner et al., 2006). Our study also highlights the use of 'glocalization' as an intriguing form of identity work (Conklin, 1997; Perreault, 2003). Future studies in identity work may benefit from greater integration of anthropological insights on identity processes. Our study also offers a new understanding of identity work that is related to specific geographic locations and shared cultural history (Weaver, 2001; Whiteman & Cooper, 2000). A geographic and deep cultural dimension of identity work may have relevance to other stakeholder groups.

At a practical level, our study suggests that if identity work is not taken into account as a complex process of shifting stakeholder relations, firms can expect increasing conflict with local groups. That is, firms may misinterpret relations with local communities as positive if they offer local employment. Our findings suggest greater nuance -- individuals may simultaneously accept temporary employment and yet at the community level strongly resist development. Increasing conflict and 'us-versus-them' categorization can quickly develop as cultural identity is used to counterbalance marginalized power relations (Ashmore et al., 2001). Future research is needed to explore if and how identity work helps us unravel the causes of blockades, kidnapping, and forcible closure of oil and natural gas production.

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