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Conservation and Indigenous Resistance: Protected Areas and Extractive Agendas in the Peruvian Amazon

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Abstract

Expanding natural protected areas in the Peruvian Amazon compete with indigenous interests and resource extraction, in a dynamic process of endorsement and enforcement by local indigenous communities. The analysis presents a geographical case study of Peru's emblematic Camisea gas extraction project in the Amazonian Lower Urubamba valley, Cusco. The focus is on two protected areas —Matsigenka Communal Reserve and Megantoni National Sanctuary— that were created alongside the gas project in the early 2000s, strategically supported by local indigenous communities. The study argues that the intersections of extractive and conservation agendas in Camisea have created ambiguous and novel spaces for the expression of local indigenous agendas, while neoliberal conservation territorial logics simultaneously limit them. This empirical analysis contributes to a deeper empirical understanding of Indigenous conservation priorities, political demands, and long-term strategies regarding territorial and legal categories of conservation, carefully negotiated within highly fragmented and weak formal institutional state arrangements in the Peruvian Amazon.

Keywords: Protected Areas, extractivism, conservation, indigenous, Amazonia, hydrocarbon.

Conservación y Resistencia Indígena: Áreas Protegidas y Agendas Extractivas en la Amazonía Peruana

Resumen

La expansión de Áreas Naturales Protegidas en la Amazonía peruana compite con los intereses indígenas y la extracción de recursos, en un proceso dinámico de respaldo y cumplimiento por parte de las comunidades indígenas locales. El análisis presenta un estudio de caso geográfico del proyecto de extracción de gas en el valle amazónico del Bajo Urubamba, Cusco. El artículo se enfoca particularmente en dos áreas protegidas, la Reserva Comunal Matsigenka y el Santuario Nacional Megantoni, que se crearon junto con el proyecto de gas a principios de la década del 2000 con el apoyo de las comunidades indígenas locales. El estudio argumenta que las interconexiones de las agendas extractivas y de conservación en Camisea han creado espacios ambiguos y novedosos para la expresión de las agendas indígenas locales, mientras que las lógicas territoriales neoliberales de conservación las limitan simultáneamente. Este análisis empírico contribuye a una comprensión más detallada de las prioridades indígenas de conservación, las demandas políticas y las estrategias a largo plazo con respecto a las categorías territoriales y legales de conservación, cuidadosamente negociadas dentro de arreglos estatales institucionales altamente fragmentados y débiles en la Amazonía peruana.

Palabras clave: Áreas Protegidas, extractivismo, conservación, indígena, Amazonía, hidrocarburos.

1. Introduction

Peru has the second largest share of the Amazon Rainforest, with protected areas and Indigenous territories together accounting for more than 50 % of the Peruvian Amazon that are, however, highly heterogenous, threatened, and fragmented. Across all of Amazonia, Peru shows the highest rate of Indigenous titled lands (34 %), paired with the lowest percentage of natural protected areas in the Amazon basin (21 %) (Encalada et al., 2021). At first sight, this seems to suggest that the country may prioritize Indigenous land rights allocations over nature conservationism land arrangements, but this does not tell the whole story. In fact, Indigenous land rights and territories have grown, but only alongside intensified extraction that has led to messy and overlapping land rights allocations, ecological degradation and non-committal environmental governance narratives related to sustainable management.

Indigenous territories and protected areas face threats from deforestation and extractivism including hydrocarbon, mining, logging, and cattle-ranching, which have sharply increased over recent decades in the Peruvian Amazon (Finer et al., 2015; Finer & Mamani, 2020), exacerbated further by a long history of marginalization. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic added significant impact by weakening environmental surveillance and legal protection in Amazon Indigenous communities (Watson & Davidsen, 2021).

Although environmental and Indigenous participation rules and institutions in Peru have advanced in the last decades, they have remained within the dominant system that reinforces colonial values and epistemic injustices. These, in turn, reinforce Western dominant territorial arrangements and nature epistemologies through nature commodification, regulation, and accountability, as well as their related narratives of sustainable management of natural resources (Larsen, 2015; Orihuela, 2020b; Paredes & Figueroa, 2021). The same system has also buttressed and promoted neoliberalist extraction pressures. Hydrocarbon concessions increased dramatically during the 2000s oil boom: from covering 7.1 % of the region in 2003 to 48.6 % in 2010 (Finer & Orta-Martínez, 2010). Since 2003, the number of national protected areas in Peru has similarly grown significantly by more than 60 %, with more than half of them located in the Peruvian Amazon (Castillo et al., 2021; Servicio Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas (SERNANP), 2021). However, only 13 % of the newer protected areas in Peru are dedicated to local indigenous livelihoods as Communal Reserves (Reservas Comunales), typically co-managed by the state and the local communities. Most interestingly, these growing land allocations have led to the situation that about 25 % of the Peruvian Amazon finds itself in overlapping and even contradictory land rights and categories (Anderson et al. 2018), particularly oil and gas projects clashing with indigenous

lands and growing conservation areas, as the following map highlights (Figure 1). These various trends have turned the home of Amazonian Indigenous groups into conflicted political spaces where their diverse interests and local knowledge systems clash with the power, ideas, and values associated with the state's designed protected areas and extractive development.

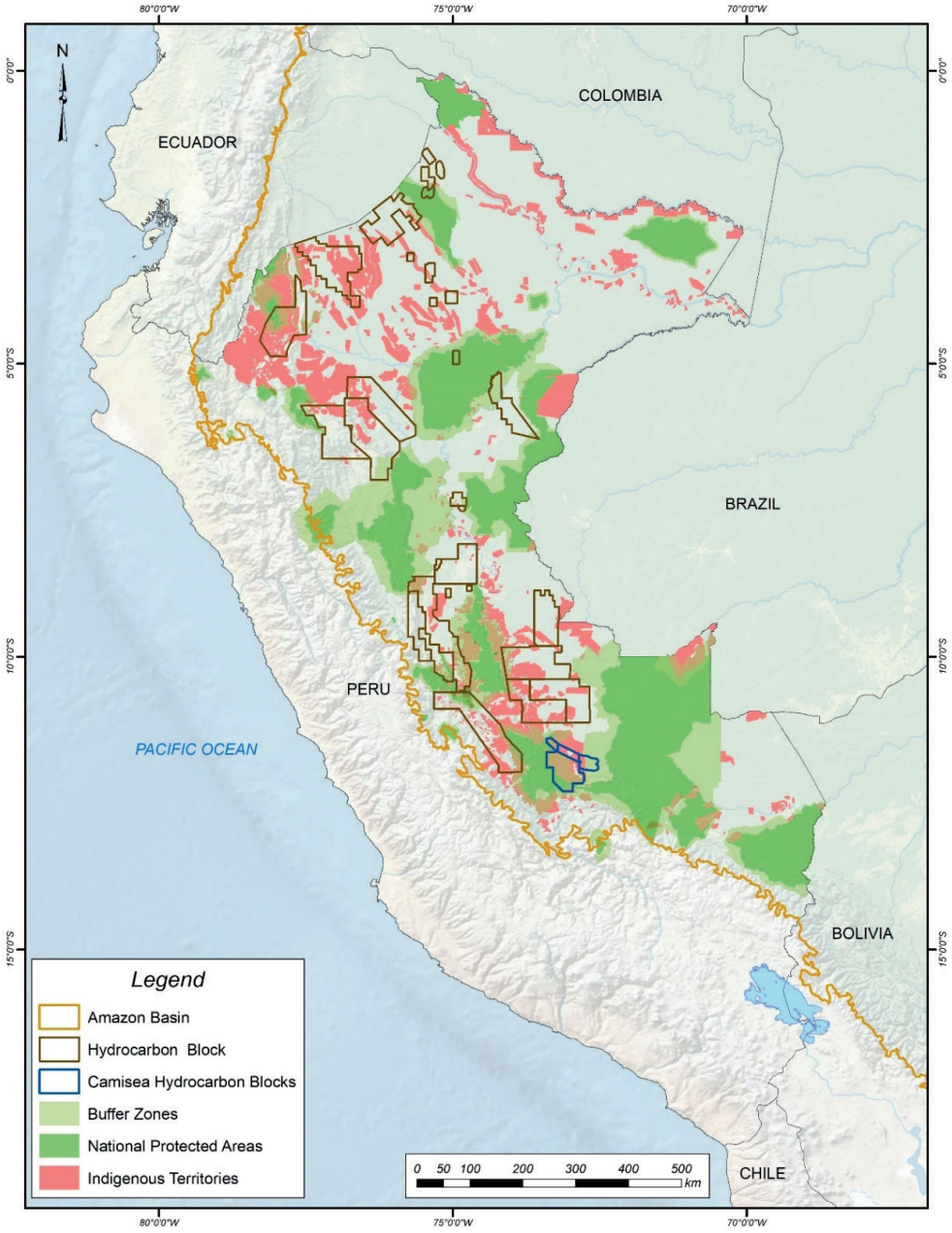
The configuration of this landscape motivated this study to analyze the tangled relationships between the extractivist, environmental, and local Indigenous political agendas of this highly relevant region. Within these, the analysis aims to understand how local communities deal with hydrocarbon corporations and environmental concerns surrounding natural gas extraction, in short Indigenous strategies of response or resistance vis-à-vis expansion of protected areas and hydrocarbon extraction. Instead of assuming that local organizations for forest management arise when protected areas are created, the main focus is on the precedents set by local Indigenous organizations. These exemplify rules for everyday practices and institutional set-ups that can be applied to protected areas within the extractive context.

Drawing on political ecology and qualitative methods, our analysis employs a geographical case study of Peru's Camisea gas extraction project in the Amazonian Lower Urubamba valley. The Camisea project presents a significant case in this context, as it highlights Indigenous conservation support, political demands, and strategies regarding territorial and legal categories of conservation, which occur within a highly fragmented and weak articulation of formal institutional state arrangements. Most importantly, the case of Camisea represents an internationally renown, and framed, "sustainable extraction" political spearhead initiative, and its international donor support was conditionally tied to the simultaneous creation of two protected areas created in its vicinity.

The paper argues that protected areas in Camisea have two opposing effects on local Indigenous agency: On one hand, the protected areas create space for growing Indigenous local resistance as they provide opportunity, training, and momentum for local indigenous communities to rise as political agents in transnational and national narratives and networks. On the other hand, the protected areas simultaneously restrict Indigenous input as preconceived local service providers of environmental knowledge systems, while neoliberal logics and external values continue to drive Camisea's decision-making structures and perpetuate inequality.

Three dimensions intersect in the analysis of protected areas in Camisea: a) the legal terrain of flexible resource access within Peru's institutional system of protected areas; b) narratives and contestation within and beyond local and environmental constraints; and c) emerging environmental collective subjectivity that articulates demands via a genealogy of struggle for social justice. With these, the paper contributes to the body of scholarship on extractivism by empirically outlining strategic

Figure 1. National Protected Areas, Indigenous Communities and Hydrocarbon Blocks in the Peruvian Amazon



Source: Own elaboration on data from 3 sources: national protected areas 2020 (SERNANP n.d.); licensed hydrocarbon blocks January-2019 (Instituto Geológico Minero y Metalúrgico, n.d.); and Indigenous territories (Instituto del Bien Comun 2020).

Indigenous engagement practices, and priorities, related to using protected areas as a tool to challenge and influence extractivist and conservationist state regulatory repertoires.

The next section presents an overview of the key concepts of extractivism and neoliberal conservation, a means to review diverse forms of the repoliticization of nature conservation in natural resource extraction contexts. The third section describes the research design. The fourth section provides an overview of the Peruvian national system of protected areas, considering its implications for Indigenous participation and inclusion of traditional values. This section also details the empirical case of the emblematic gas extraction project in Peru that has become internationally renown and framed as sustainable extractivism.

The fifth section examines protected areas as a resistance tactic in Camisea, explored through three aspects: a) Indigenous people's political opportunity to influence and escalate their position for land control in the political network; b) the implications of the protected areas in participatory decision-making, given the juxtaposed and fractured territorial governance regimes; and c) the potential drivers of environmental knowledge production in the context of extractive landscapes and inequalities. The sixth section discusses both the ambivalent effects of, and the limits on, the power of protected areas as a territorial and discursive Indigenous resistance strategy to gain opportunities to influence gas extraction land use decision making in Peru's Camisea. The final section reviews the findings and potential meaning for policy and research.

2. Theoretical Concepts: Extractivism and Neoliberal Conservation

A growing literature on both extractivism and the analysis social impacts of protected areas has outlined how the establishment of protected areas and extraction share some effects and dynamics, including:

– Reinforcing and depending on nature as separate from humans (Gudynas, 2020; West et al., 2006).

– Presenting nature as a basket of material assets, commodities, or services that will produce growth (Castree, 2008; Escobar et al., 2011; Roth & Dressler, 2012; Svampa, 2019).

– Demonstrating top-down hegemonic dynamics in which the (nation) state manipulates or practises coercion and domination for territorial control (Frederiksen & Himley, 2020; Stern, 2008; Véron & Fehr, 2011).

– Existing within power dynamics that can result in the material and symbolic marginalization and displacement of local groups, even when using a rhetoric of consensus (Büscher, 2013; Fletcher, 2010; Frederiksen & Himley, 2020; Gudynas, 2014; Minteer & Miller, 2011).

Most interestingly perhaps in the context of this analysis, protected areas elsewhere have previously been used as a conservation demand by local communities who strategically wish to proclaim protected areas as a way to defend their territories; such a move recognizes that Peru's conservation regimen seems to be more potent than the Indigenous rights agenda and as way of state control of Indigenous peoples for the purpose of conservation (Paredes & Kaulard, 2020). And yet, the academic literature tends to analyze these topics separately, while a more comprehensive analysis of the intersection of environmentalist dynamics from extraction and protected areas is needed particularly vis-à-vis Indigenous agendas (Apostolopoulou et al., 2021; Fletcher & Cortes-Vazquez, 2020). Even more so in the Amazon region, where environmental legitimacy vs legality debates are central (Larsen, 2017).

2.1. Extractivism

This analysis treats extractivism as a material and discursive process. The material approach follows resource extraction as the "physical process of displacement by which 'gifts of nature' are removed from the earth and transformed into useful raw material" (Bridge, 2017, 1). While many emphasize the mechanical act of removing natural resources and transforming them through economic capitalist relations, it also instantiates a capitalist approach to understanding and connecting with nature. Further, as a political process, resource extraction expands values and creates new forms of social power linked to particular resources (Bridge, 2017; Bunker, 1985; Hanna et al., 1996; Hanna & Jentoft, 1996). Exploring the rollout of extractivism as this co-produced process foregrounds how society shapes its connections with nature, the role of knowledge production in legitimizing the extraction, and the exchange of moral values wherein different actors hold diverse views about the territory with the promise of zero impact (Bakker & Bridge, 2006; Bridge & Bradshaw, 2017; Escobar, 2006; Gudynas, 2014; Hanna & Jentoft, 1996).

Resource extraction has a long history in Latin America that goes back to the colonial period. Extractivism has devastated lands, marginalized Indigenous peoples, and challenged the capacities of the nation-state and elites to capture rents and distribute prosperity (Bértola & Ocampo, 2012; Clark & North, 2006; Crabtree & Durand, 2017; Veltmeyer, 2013). Current extractivism is immersed in a global network of transnational supply chains that privilege lands for extraction

and promulgate narratives about promoting sustainability and local development. Further, this extractivism supposedly protects nature by simplifying social demands and ecological effects into expertise knowledge or technical evaluations (Brock & Dunlap, 2018; Canel et al., 2010; Gudynas, 2012, 2014; Sikor et al., 2013; Svampa, 2019; Veltmeyer, 2013; Verweijen & Dunlap, 2021). Contemporary extractivism in the Peruvian Amazon is positioned between nation-state narratives of modalities of conquests and discovery (frontiers regimes), and modalities of social participation, Indigenous recognition, and environmental conservation (post-frontiers regimes). (Larsen, 2015).

Today, extraction dominates political spaces in Latin America, shaped by faith in the capacity of Western environmental knowledge to define, measure, resolve, or even compensate local Indigenous communities, under the logic of accumulation and natural resources commodification. Thus, it is crucial that the unfolding extractivism narratives, with their interconnections with environmentalism, be well understood. As the historical and biophysical characteristics of resource extraction inform this insight, we cannot study extractive phenomena inserted in international dynamics without considering the local narrative interpretations. These then ripple out into emerging authorities, territorialization, and governance mechanisms that promote articulations of local communities within the state and the expansion of capitalism via biodiversity conservation initiatives such as the establishment of protected areas (Rasmussen & Lund, 2018).

2.2. Neoliberal Conservation

Neoliberal conservation is an attempt to reconcile neoliberal dynamics with biodiversity conservation practices (Arsel & Angel, 2012; Büscher, 2013; Castree & Henderson, 2014; Igoe & Brockington, 2007; Sullivan, 2014). Since the 1990s, protected areas have been notable as tools to conserve biodiversity and bring progress, coupled with an international apparatus to regulate global eco-development discourse (McAfee, 1999). Promoted and supported by international organizations, this neoliberal vision of nature is highly technocratic and top-down. It gains legitimacy by disciplining the environmental behaviour of citizens and forming institutions and public policies (Arsel & Büscher, 2012; Brockington et al., 2008; Roth & Dressler, 2012). Neoliberal conservation is gaining political leverage through a promise to simultaneously achieve economic growth, local participation, and ecological sustainability, even while ecological losses soar, and local participation remains ambiguous at best.

Although protected areas have increased significantly in the past decade, biodiversity has nonetheless markedly declined (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), 2019; UNEP-WCMC

& UICN, 2021). Biodiversity priorities have created a prominent lens and influential narrative for global land-use planning, but they fail to include approaches and nature values that go beyond charismatic species or the polarizing lens of biocentric (wilderness) or anthropocentric (services to human) worldviews (Pascual et al., 2021). As such, the creation of new protected areas does not necessarily accommodate or reconcile human–environment relationships. Instead, protected areas' framings may be attached to consumption ideologies; non-human aspects are disconnected from their traditional contexts but deserve to be defended from humans and to support Western human progress (Brockington et al., 2008; Kay, 2016).

In this vein, protected areas can also (re)produce the power and knowledge uneven dynamics of the participants and decision-makers, which may include the terms on which nature conservation is understood, and for whom the forest is actually preserved (Arsel & Büscher, 2012; Büscher et al., 2012; Castree & Henderson, 2014; Goyes & South, 2019; Igoe & Brockington, 2007). As a political space, protected areas also facilitate common narratives about authoritative environmental knowledge linked to their creation, which helps to build coalitions and contest some governmental aims (Forsyth, 2020). Thus, protected areas can shape human–environment knowledge by privileging dominant worldviews and nature values that offer the chance for regulated sustainable harvesting and commodification of the scenic wild or precious resources, in contrast to under-regulated polluted extraction.

For local communities, protected areas may represent an alternative to safeguard their forest from state sponsored extractivism or to increase their participation in the local government. Indigenous co-management or community-based approaches for protected areas nourish this promise of gaining control and voice over these areas (Dovers et al., 2015; Gambon & Bottazzi, 2021). Nevertheless, co-management still occurs amid asymmetric power relationships built on domestic decentralization agendas, dominant Western conservation values, and racialized views of Indigenous peoples (Adams and Murombedzi 2005; Ribot, Agrawal, and Larson 2006; Holmes and Cavanagh 2016; Alonso-Yanez, Thumlert, and de Castell 2016; Mollett and Kepe 2018; Rudd et al. 2021; Hutton 2005; Pascual et al. 2021).

2.3. Research opportunity

Extensive literature has shown that central narratives of Indigenous resistance to extraction projects are connected to several fears: political marginalization; the negative impacts on nature, traditional livelihoods, and culture; and distrust of the government and institutions (Conde & Le Billon, 2017; Escobar, 2006). Following

this idea, analyses usually examine successful Indigenous resistance as marking anti-extractive victories. Correspondingly, Indigenous engagement with extractivism is framed as a failure, an imposition, a win of a well-planned corporate social responsibility program, or just a pragmatic local strategy. However, such binary perspectives limit understanding of the nuances and specific contexts in which Indigenous tactics of engaging with protected areas are deployed within extractive landscapes. Moreover, they portray Indigenous peoples as agents disconnected from neoliberalism (Radcliffe, 2020), while obscuring that they actively create their political repertoires and coalitions with creativity and vision, building upon centuries of colonial resistance.

This paper thus moves away from monolithic fixed views of sociological categories (classes, ethnicities, and so forth) that have proven inadequate to capture the environmental encounters of extractivism—which sometimes produces shifting relationships with ambiguous collaborations and tensions (Li, 2015). Extractivism and neoliberal conservation concepts are employed here to understand the opportunities and limitations of Amazonian Indigenous peoples who employ bottom-up initiatives to challenge the simultaneously eco and extractive politics in their territories. These regions help them to navigate the co-existing state governance perspectives that see their territories as wild and uncivilized, awaiting development, yet in need of protection through regulated environmental and social safeguards (Larsen, 2015). Furthermore, Indigenous strategies do not necessarily pursue totalizing changes or the exclusion of capitalist economic relations (Radcliffe, 2020; Slowey, 2008). Considering these layered dynamics, the concepts presented above facilitate the discussion of extractivism with respect to the discursive momentum and power of aligning extractivist and neoliberal conservation efforts in the Peruvian Amazon. They also enable examination of protected areas as conflicted spaces that evidence antagonism, collaboration, and the production of new collective identities.

3. Methods

The study has a qualitative design, which enables an in-depth examination of the various connected dimensions of the social world and the particular context (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Hammersley, 2013; Hay, 2010). A qualitative approach advances the understandings of the social phenomena while enabling examination of and insight into the empirical case study. Moreover, the qualitative analysis supports exploration into the co-produced material and narrative of conservation and extractive territories in the Amazon, which illustrates the power dynamics.

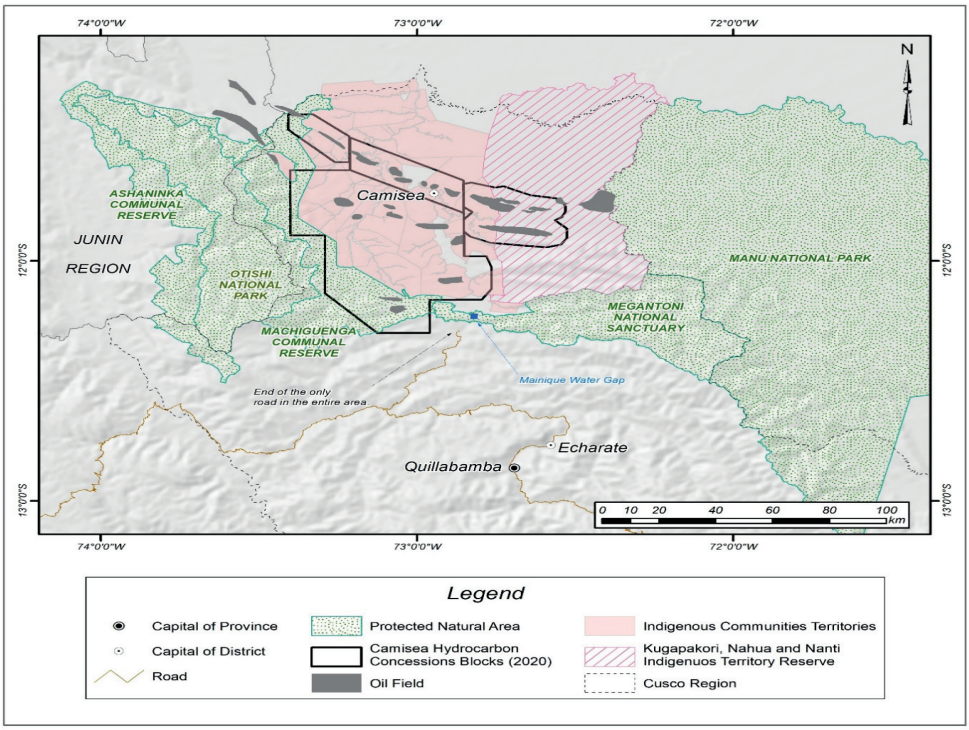
This paper's empirical focus is on Peru's flagship gas extraction project Camisea, located in the Lower Urubamba (Figure 2), and uses the Camisea project as an

instrumental study case (Stake, 2003) in order to provide a holistic understanding of the converging agendas of expanding protected areas, extractivism, and Indigenous rights recognition in the Amazon.

The significance of the study case back on the tremendous impact of the Camisea gas project on the domestic economy and energy balance within a rhetoric of sustainable energy with a low biodiversity footprint in the Amazon. Camisea project is also called a sustainable gas extraction or an environmental example in Peru because of its roadless operational design. The offshore, inland extraction in Camisea is proposed as a voluntary, company-led, best practice to reconcile forest conservation with extractive development principles in the Amazon (Finer et al., 2015; Inter-American Development Bank, 2015). In addition, the state of Peru made a commitment to create two protected areas adjacent to Camisea hydrocarbon blocks, with the promise of conserving the 'pristine' area to support the Indigenous communities. However, the conservation narratives of Camisea, with its reduced environmental footprint, have not secured benefits for the local Indigenous communities who have been affected by the extraction.

Data collection comprised document review, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation collected during one year of fieldwork in Peru from 2018 to 2019. Documents included newspapers, legal instruments and protocols, public reports, and minutes from the negotiation process or public gathering. A total of 75 semi-structured interviews of one to two hours were conducted with indigenous community members, Indigenous organizations, local and national authorities, private sector actors, religious leaders, and non-profit sector organizational figures who hold deep knowledge and expertise about the Camisea project and area. Interviews helped contextualize the other data, and include voices not considered in the written documents (Boyle, 2009). The overall aim of those interviews was to understand the power relations between them, and the connections between discourses. The selection criteria followed a purposeful sampling with a maximum variation strategy. So, rather than statistical representation and breadth; intensity, depth of information, and experience of the phenomenon being studied were the most important criteria. In Indigenous communities, current and former authorities were interviewed, as well as villagers. This also included snowball approaches to identify further respondents of relevance. Additionally, participant observation in three different Indigenous communities' supplemented information from the interviews. Participant observation occurred over 18 weeks spent at the three Amazonian Indigenous communities. Being part of public hearings, taking field notes, and watching from a distance allowed for greater insights into the power relations within the communities and social norms in a context that is more typical than interviews.

Figure 2. Camisea Gas Extraction Project



Source: Own elaboration on data from 3 sources: National Protected Areas 2020 (SERNANP, n.d.); licensed hydrocarbon blocks January-2019 (Instituto Geológico Minero y Metalúrgico, n.d.); and Indigenous territories (Instituto del Bien Comun, 2020)

The qualitative analysis followed a three-level coding process conducted by the same researcher. Coding decisions included both a top-down and bottom-up approach, to allow the analysis to engage existing social realities from the data. To explore the power dynamics, the coding scheme involved the following aspects: a) conflicts of knowledge systems—that is, which way of knowing and for what purpose; b) interpretation of conservation practices and norms by different actors—that is, what does conservation mean; and c) consequences for Indigenous participation—that is, who participates and who decides. Rather than a linear process, the coding phase involved an ongoing process and constant review.

Triangulation across the data sources and data types helped identify the asymmetric power relations at play in this case (Woodside, 2010). By contrasting the data types and sources, triangulation allowed to trace the convergences and silences among the multiple information and codes. This compensated for the limitations of each source and allowed to take advantage of their benefits while providing a rich picture of the issue. Triangulation also revealed which stakeholders referred to

the gas extraction, how they did so, which voices were dominant, and the resistance strategies of the local Indigenous communities. The analysis focused on the power relationships that contributed to the creation and categorization of the protected areas, as part of the international commitments of the Peruvian government to support and frame the Camisea gas project as sustainable gas extraction.

The analysis highlights the diversity of agents who give form to the state-led protected areas at the local level through multiple strategies that participate in, respond to, or adapt the diffusion of extractivism principles. The paper also investigates the various actors' efforts, including a coalition of the local Indigenous communities and organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and energy companies. Finally, results are grouped to safeguard individual participants against any adverse consequences, as well as to protect the relationship of trust the researcher built and the ethical commitment of the research.

4. Research Background: Protected Areas and 'Sustainable Gas' Extraction in Peru

4.1. The Politics of National Protected Areas in Peru's Amazon

Peru's laws define protected areas in these terms:

> Continental and/or marine areas of the national territory, expressly recognized and declared as such, including their categories and zoning, to conserve biological diversity and other associated values of cultural, landscape and scientific interest, as well as for their contribution to the sustainable development of the country. Protected Natural Areas constitute the patrimony of the nation. Its natural condition must be maintained in perpetuity, allowing the regulated use of the area and the exploitation of resources, or determining the restriction of direct uses. (authors' own translation, Congreso de la República del Peru 1997. Law 26834, Art. 1)

This definition follows international recommendations and clarifies how conservation is to be understood by the Peruvian state and for whom it is protected. This legal definition encompasses three critical aspects:

- Wilderness value—for ecological and cultural contributions, and development potential
- State authority—to decide about these lands for the benefits of the country
- Resource-use restrictions—with a long-time framework (perpetuity) for these locations and any modification can only be done by a law approved by the National Congress.

Peruvian National Protected Areas are of interest in this study not only as sites where conservation and their legal arrangements take place, but also with respect to the political process in which they are created. When a national protected area is established, the state declares a lasting commitment that this area's mandate will prioritize biological conservation over alternative land uses, such as highways or road construction, agriculture activities, development of cities, and mining or hydrocarbon activities (Solano, 2020). Peru's environmental institutional terms of reference have been particularly influenced by a network of forestry engineers at the National Agrarian University of La Molina whose primary concern is the science-based protection of ecosystems, not human–environment systems that would include Indigenous peoples (Orihuela, 2020a). Thus, creating a protected area in Peru gravitates around scientific definitions in search of pristine and potential values for the country —particularly as defined "wildlife" protection within a specific ecosystem.

Forests in Peru cover almost 60 % of the country, equivalent of one and half the size of California (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática and Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre 2021) with 94.6 % of them located in the Amazon. While deforestation, informal or illicit uses of the forest soars in these large regions, the Peruvian government has shifted towards the centre due to its international environmental commitments and expansion of protected areas (Castillo et al., 2021). Protected areas help the national government (re)appropriate and control local areas, mobilized by arguments that they are of national interest. These processed may even lead to displacement of the local community or affect land titles (West et al., 2006), as observed in Manu National Park in Peru (Shepard & Izquierdo, 2003).

Manu National Park was created in the 1970s, near the Camisea region. Using proclaimed ideals of a "conquest of Peru by Peruvians" (Shepard et al., 2010, p. 273), the Peruvian government banned all human activities in the park and established guidelines that formally defined what would be considered "traditional" practices allowed in the park. The park evicted Machiguenga Indigenous peoples and forced them to move upstream, where they then settled in today's Camisea area (Shepard & Izquierdo, 2003).

Generally, the Peruvian national system of protected areas has incorporated diverse forms of governance and participation of Indigenous communities, but the definition of what participation means for Indigenous communities varies. Indigenous communities may participate through management committees or administration contracts, depending on the type of protected area. Neither model, however, gives them any decision-making authority over resources and protected areas.

Management committees are only vehicles for dialogue, to build consensus and knowledge for plans made by the state (Ley N° 26834. Ley de Áreas Naturales Protegidas, 1997; Solano, 2020). They typically include NGOs, local communities and organizations, business representatives, and municipal, regional, or national authorities, among others. Administration contracts allow civil society or Indigenous communities to implement specific management activities, but only if they narrowly align with the protected areas' governance plans and strategies[3]. With both of these local participation models, the state maintains full authority throughout the process: from terms of reference to final authority, supervision of compliance, and approval of compatible activities inside or adjacent to protected areas.

Permitted activities inside the protected area or in the surrounding buffer areas depend on formal land-use zones or the overall protected area category. Mining or hydrocarbon extraction are allowed if deemed compatible, or if their extractive permit was issued prior to the creation of the protected area, as is the case in Camisea. This status has triggered conflicts and negotiations, whenever the Camisea project proposed further exploration or changes in their operations.

4.2. The 'Sustainability' Case for Gas Extraction in Camisea

Camisea is the largest gas operation in Peru, representing the country's most significant energy producer and source of related economic royalties (OECD, 2016). More than a third of the national electricity production depends on Camisea (COES-SINAC 2019), and its gas production significantly reduces national emissions for electricity production (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL) & Organización de Cooperación y Desarrollo Económicos (OCDE), 2016). The ecologist and former Chairman of the World Bank's Inspection Panel, Gonzalo Castro de la Mata, declared that "since it began operations in 2004, the gas field has generated more than 40 billion dollars in royalties and taxes. In addition, Peru has stopped emitting 80 million tons of CO_2" (La Republica, 2021).

What makes Camisea distinctive is its roadless approach: Gas extraction operates in the middle of pristine rainforest, with a minimum of extraction facilities and infrastructure surrounding it. This approach, combined with the economic power of its energy production, has led to vast and continuous momentum, and foreign companies and international financial institutions have capitalized on Camisea's prominent narratives. Camisea has remained in force as a sustainable extraction

[3] DS 038-2001 AG Aprueban El Reglamento de La Ley de Áreas Naturales Protegidas, 2001; DS 007-2011 MINAM. Modifica El Reglamento de La Ley de Áreas Naturales Protegidas, Aprobado Por Decreto Supremo N° 038-2001- AG, En Lo Referido a Los Contratos de Administración, 2011

example, throughout Peru's fundamental environmental and political changes over the past decades.

Camisea's gas reservoirs were discovered in 1984 by Royal Dutch Shell, and in the 1990s, the company envisioned innovative environmental practices given the considerable scrutiny by international and local communities. Shell's model deployed a comprehensive strategy of engaging with influential environmental institutions like the Smithsonian Institution, which could carry out biological diversity assessments and advise the company. However, with intense local, national, and international tensions related to Camisea, Shell left the country in the early 2000s, and the project instead launched into production in 2004 with Argentinian Pluspetrol. Peruvian legislation and institutional arrangements repeatedly adapted to stakeholder demands from Camisea and beyond, including the creation of the Peruvian Ministry of Environment in 2008 (Bebbington & Humphreys Bebbington, 2009; Peirano, 2011).

The launch of Camisea in the 2000s boosted intense activism from transnational environmental and Indigenous grassroots movements, which all capitalized on the biological value of the Amazon Forest as described by the Smithsonian and other NGOs. Nonetheless, the development of Camisea in the new millennium led to mixed reactions and distrust between Peruvian institutions, NGOs, and local Indigenous communities that declared support for the extraction project (Pratt, 2007). After several months of negotiations between the government, international financial institutions, and Indigenous organizations and communities, a coalition of environmental advocacy groups and Indigenous communities agreed to a broader strategy, one with a central rationale to support the project and the development of the country, but with the condition of better environmental and social standards (Ross, 2009).

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved the credit for Camisea, but with an environmental and social commitment letter that stated the need to strengthen the Peruvian environmental governance system. The IDB granted a USD 5 million loan to the Peruvian government to implement these commitments (Corral et al., 2016). Camisea set a precedent, where financial institutions met with the government and other stakeholders for an extended period before reaching an investment decision; these actors also mobilized public opinion about national environmental standards for hydrocarbon projects in Peru. Sawyer and Gomez (2008) remark that Camisea illustrates the prominent role of international financial institutions in shaping extraction contracts and environmental narratives concerning the project. While some researchers point out that this case may hinder the progress of resource extraction investments, others called it a "green seal" because of the environmental and social standards it established for the project (Pratt, 2007;

Ross, 2009; Sawyer & Gomez, 2008; Urteaga-Crovetto, 2014; Vences, 2006). Soria (2005) remarks that ambiguous environmental narratives have characterized the socio-environmental struggles around Camisea as requests for compliance with international environmental standards, which exceed the domestic legal requirements.

This constructed narrative of "sustainable extraction" in Camisea, however, confronts an overwhelming reality—one in which local communities in Camisea persist in precarious living conditions. To this day, many local communities in Camisea lack healthcare system, inadequate access to clean water, permanent electricity, and technology services such as internet. However, they also have consistently protested their treatment by the state, even, or especially, during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis (Watson & Davidsen, 2021). Their persistent and strategic political actions, aimed at better environmental standards, forest protection, and livelihood security, have led to their inclusion in various land-use decision-making initiatives; they are also taking part in the negotiations and governance of two protected areas created alongside the Camisea project.

5. Conservation Utilitarianism in Camisea: Indigenous Tactics at The Protected Areas and Extractive Frontier

5.1. Indigenous–environmental Alliances for Communal Reserves and a National Sanctuary

Two new protected areas in the Lower Urubamba arose from Camisea's highly contentious launch period that was influenced by long-standing dominant rhetorics of the area as 'remote' and 'highly valuable' biodiversity, as well as by uncertain political negotiations over the national environmental standards that the Camisea project would be required to apply.

An influential *National Geographic* article in 1964 had revealed the *Cordillera de Vilcabamba* forests as unknown lands of great scientific value for biology and conservation, described as: "Rumors of ruins, Inca gold, Indian taboos and sacrificial lakes in the sky shrouded it in mystery. No scientists had ever examined its plant and animal life. This would be one of our objectives" (Baekeland & Gimbel, 1964, p. 268). Displaying the exuberant wildlife of the area was an international milestone. Ten years later, the Catholic Franciscan missions in San Ramon Vicariate promoted the creation of the protection areas, a means to slow down the progress of agricultural colonial settlements (Asociacion Cutivireni (ACPC) et al., 2004).

After the 1984 discovery of Camisea gas reservoirs, in 1988 the government created and set aside the large Apurímac Reserved Zone[4] as a restricted forest; this action gave them more time to define the type of conservation area needed and to develop biological scientific studies. In the 1990s, the biological studies of the area resumed with the support of the international NGO Conservation International (CI), and the Peruvian NGOs CEDIA and ACPC (Association for the Conservation of the Cutivireni Patrimony), through the implementation of the Rapid Assessment Program in 1997 and 1998 (Asociacion Cutivireni (ACPC) et al., 2004).These NGO-led studies were developed in the 1990s in parallel with Shell's new gas exploration projects in Camisea, and the biodiversity assessments in their blocks that they conducted in concert with the Smithsonian Institution. The Smithsonian Institution Monitoring and Assessment of Biodiversity Program Assessment produced a report, financed by Shell, which stated the following:

> The editors of this report fully endorse the proposal put forward by CI-Peru, ACPC, and CEDIA to establish two communal reserves and a national park within the Cordillera de Vilcabamba. The biological data presented here will contribute to formulating management plans for the sustainable use and conservation of this unique area. (Alonso et al., 2001, p. 26).

After Shell left the country in the early 2000s, the subsequent renewed negotiations among the government, the new business operator Pluspetrol, and international financial institutions regarding Camisea gas operations echoed this call for two communal reserves and one national park. Since the planned gas project critically depended on the investment of international financial institutions, which considered environmental performance and compliance key concerns and conditions, access to credit to continue developing Camisea operations hinged on the creation of four new protected areas in what was originally the extension of the Apurímac Reserved Zone: the Ashaninka Communal Reserve in Junin; the Otishi National Park, with the almost 90 % of its extension in Junin; the Machiguenga Communal Reserve in Cusco; and, in 2004, the Megantoni National Sanctuary in Cusco (Figure 2). This fulfilled one of the 21 primary conditions for Camisea's credit approval and gave the green light for the launch of its gas extraction operations (Gamboa Balbín et al., 2008).

This analysis focuses on the protected areas and affects communities located in Cusco that have a direct relationship with the influential Camisea hydrocarbon blocks. This influence descends from their strategic geographical location, but also from contentious Indigenous territorial tactics that have occurred in this area.

[4] Reserve zone created by Supreme Resolution of the Agriculture Ministry RS Nº 0186-88-AG/DGFF

These are aimed at reconquering territories and creating frontiers that block the advancement of colonization or *colonos* migrant settlements into these territories (Chirif et al., 1991). Of particular interest for this analysis is how the creation of these protected areas was not top-down, state-imposed, or demanded by external international financial institutions; in fact, the idea was conceived and promoted by a local initiative of Indigenous communities and NGOs working together in a strategic alliance to support environmental conservation and Indigenous guardianship interests (interviews with NGOs and local Indigenous Federations, 2018).

As mentioned above, the original idea for protected areas in Camisea emerged in a 1988 proposal; however, their conceptualization involves not only local (like CEDIA and ACPC) and international NGOs (like CI), but also consultations with local Indigenous organizations. Further, the idea was nourished by the (a) threat of hydrocarbon development in the area, (b) the growing Peruvian environmental institutionalization during the 1990s, (c) the consolidation of Indigenous land-titling processes and overlapping disputes with protected areas, and (d) Indigenous demands for participation and consent as part of the ILO 169 convention, ratified by Peru in 1994 (Chirif et al., 1991; Plant & Hvalkof, 2001).

From the early 1990s on, the Indigenous local organizations COMARU (Machiguenga Council of the Urubamba River) and local communities persistently promoted their proposal to conserve this area. They managed to get recognition, working with other Indigenous communities, national allies, and Indigenous Amazonian federation partners (such as AIDESEP - Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Amazon, and CONAP - Confederation of Amazonian Nationalities of Peru); their calls were well timed given the onset of looming hydrocarbon extraction, expanding agriculture, and illegal logging (Chirif & Hierro, 2007). During Camisea's long exploration stage in the 1990s, Western scientific studies and biodiversity reports published by international conservation NGOs like the World Wildlife Fund echoed and amplified the local Indigenous calls for environmental protection. These efforts highlighted Camisea's significant wildlife diversity and the positive relationship between Indigenous communities and the forest.

This perspective was quite different to the approach used in creating Manu National Park, when Indigenous groups were displaced (as described above). In contrast, the Indigenous peoples of Camisea and organizations clearly emphasized their roles as local guardians and decision-makers, substantiating their role in creating protected areas and protecting the forest, together with NGO allies. One NGO representative explained this difference:

> In 2001, we demarcated the complex of protected natural areas in the reserved zone of Apurímac.…As an NGO, we have worked for decades with local commu-

> nities and proposed that the reserved area should be a communal reserve, but the state proposed two communal reserves and a national park to improve the situation and apply for a biosphere reserve. The Smithsonian report also supported that. So, we entered into consultation with the communities with the support of international funds. In those years, unlike Manu, workshops were held not only with the state and NGOs, but also accompanied by [some in] CONAP and AIDESEP in 2002 and 2003 for the reserves. Thus, the Indigenous organizations help to lead the process and engage with the communities in recognition of their interest and key role in managing the resources for their future. (Authors translation, interview with NGO representative, 2018)

As a result, fighting for protected areas during the negotiated emergence of the Camisea project created a strong joint public narrative that linked, on the one hand, local Indigenous agendas to participate and present themselves as the original custodians, with environmental organizations' conservation wilderness values, on the other hand. This alliance in service of creating protected areas promoted the role of communities as pivotal to local forest conservation. It also established a collective framework that enabled initial coordination with other local communities and Indigenous federations, followed by engagement with external agents, such as NGOs, and different jurisdictional levels of the state.

The 2003 Matsigenka Communal Reserve had clearly articulated objectives that related their livelihoods to those of neighbouring Indigenous communities, all to be achieved by conserving the biodiversity of their forests (Servicio Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas [SERNANP], 2012). When the national government established the Megantoni National Sanctuary in the Vilcambaba Mountains in 2004, it similarly acknowledged a dual objective—to protect both the biological and cultural intangible values and threatened spiritual value to the water canyon area of Pongo de Mainique, a local Indigenous sacred site between the Andes and the Amazon (SERNANP, 2007).

The Megantoni National Sanctuary also galvanized the Indigenous land-titled process in Camisea. The forest of the Lower Urubamba, despite being fully land-titled, is highly fragmented and communities are unevenly affected by the extraction. Surrounded by protected areas, more than 20 Indigenous communities no longer have more forest to expand; therefore, these protected areas not only become a source of resources for their survival but also a space for consultation amongst themselves and as part of the fight against external threats.

5.2. Indigenous Protected Area Authority vis-à-vis Extractivism and the State

On paper, the new protected areas and hydrocarbon blocks had been announced as socially parallel to each other. The de facto analysis shows, however, that these

objectives remained embedded in a system that limits local participation and decision-making authority. This system privileges extractivism and scientific ecological knowledge over Indigenous rights and local knowledge systems. Interviews with leaders, corporations, and governmental officials suggested that while many view the creation of protected areas as an important victory of environmental and Indigenous campaigns, although they have evolved in a manner that replicates unequal frameworks of participation and knowledge.

While the institutional and legal systems of extraction and conservation have a long history in Peru, Indigenous territorial rights and participatory frameworks have only emerged recently and progressed slowly alongside newer international agreements and enacted domestic laws. The resulting protected areas' scientific and legal frameworks do not necessarily incorporate or understand Indigenous interests and rights fully; furthermore, they considerably affect Indigenous communities' access to state and resource benefits.

Camisea's newly created Machiguenga Communal Reserve is managed under an administrative contract between the national authority of the protected areas and the association of local communities called ECA-MAENI. The ECA-MAENI grouped 14 local Indigenous communities, 3 Indigenous federations and a group of migrant settlement (Patino et al., 2015). In contrast, the Megantoni Sanctuary did not have a local administrative committee because of its legal category – sanctuaries are typically managed directly under national protected areas authority. However, both the Machiguenga Communal Reserve and the Megantoni Sanctuary shared a Unified Management Committee which allows representatives for local Indigenous organizations, the national authority of parks, local and regional environmental authorities, as well as an appointed representative for the national institution that is responsible for promoting hydrocarbon exploration.

In short, the state has control over the resources in the protected areas. Indigenous people have the legal right to be informed and consulted, but decision-making remains with professionals in the centralist, distant government, as this individual explained:

> Who approves or does not approve activities is the SERNANP in Lima. They have carried out this policy of saying who can be a part of the communal reserve, but the extractive companies participate and have their operations there. (Authors' translation; Indigenous organization interview, 2018)

In some zones, local Indigenous communities can directly use the resources of those territories, but in others, forest conservation rules restrict their traditional access and limit access strictly to the state. Two respondents spelled out how this works:

> The people who live there [Lower Urubamba] are pragmatic. They want to know, "Can I hunt? When can I hunt? Why not all year?" Also, there is the other issue of the competing authorities and interests. Sometimes communities and organizations are allies of conservation. However, they are also in dispute because the Indigenous movement and its participation and territorial demands are not included within the conservationist stream. Before the creation of a protected area, their main concern is the land-titling of their communities: "Before any forest conservation strategy, is how the strategy will contribute to their territorial rights recognition." (Author's translation; interview with NGO representative, 2019)

> In the end, there is no political position concerning the Indigenous people (in Camisea). There are institutions, commissions, plans, but the implementation of social inclusion is very slow. (Authors' translation; interview with national government representative, 2019).

Having their lands titled or being part of the management committee of a protected area determines who controls the territory's access and benefits. This factor participates in the mistrust between the state and the local communities, who still hope that the benefits of the extraction collected by the state percolate out to their territories. Based on past betrayals and ineffective governance, many Indigenous communities also consider private companies to be potentially more beneficial than the state, as this individual clarifies:

> In other regions of the Amazon, they have refused to create [protected areas], because of these circumstances. They want to manage their own resources. So, it is a management issue. For example, we are willing to participate in private forest initiatives because we already know that these international funds will go directly to our communities, not to the state. (Authors' translation; Indigenous organization interview, 2018).

As such, the local Indigenous population continues to see the promise of conserving their land simultaneously jeopardized and enabled by the Camisea hydrocarbon extraction on their lands. What is particularly striking in this context is how the participatory mechanisms of the region's protected areas require and expect Indigenous communities to reach a consensus with the hydrocarbon companies. Peruvian legal regulations give these extractive companies the right to participate in the decision-making and planning because they preceded the establishment of the parks. Given Camisea's sustainable extractivism model, they have an especially strong voice in the plans and strategies of the region's protected areas. One regional official described various decision-making roles in these terms:

> We [the provincial government] participate in the governance of the Machiguenga communal reserve and the Megantoni Sanctuary.…In the committee, companies are more active. Also, the most dynamic is the OEFA [Agency for Environmental Assessment and Enforcement], which has more strength because it has opened an office here in Quillabamba. The objective is for companies to participate in public spaces, not only to insert money. (Authors' translation; subnational authority interview, 2018)

Furthermore, the sustainable extraction model affirms companies' ongoing access to central and permanent participation among governmental institutions and local communities since they have their own particular environmental demands to discuss. This has thus formed a multilateral political fabric of different governmental institutions, Indigenous people, extractive companies, NGOs, and colonial migrant settlements that all participate in the governance of the protected areas. Camisea's protected areas may seem to be co-managed by the local Indigenous people, but in reality, it is not a bilateral constellation between them and the state. Instead, within the legal design of the management committee, Indigenous communities are just one actor among many that are expected to achieve a consensus on land and resource use.

In practice, local Indigenous peoples navigate and resist within a complex political state apparatus, which is better prepared and designed to promote the commodification of nature than to include diverse Indigenous knowledge and perspectives about the territories. As well, given the multiple actors who participate when discussions occur, divergent Indigenous agendas are diluted. As this individual explained, the state aims to use the forest to manufacture economic development:

> [The state] is creating protected areas. I want to protect the forest, but they tell us how to do it when there is a reserve. It is restricted from Indigenous farming but not from mining and hydrocarbons. [So,] the state engages in two different discourses depending on the actor. [But] we have the knowledge to take care of the rivers and the forest. (Authors' translation; Indigenous communities' interview, 2018)

5.3. Protected Areas in Camisea: Authoritative Knowledge and Participatory Conditions

The creation of Camisea's protected areas elevated the state authority in orchestrating agreements within extractive landscapes. Further, these areas highlight new moral questions regarding divergent values about sustainable extraction that shape understandings of nature and environmental risk. In recent decades, the popular mantra has been to develop stronger state institutions and engage in dialogue with

governments, corporations, and communities towards sustainable extraction. However, strong conceptualizations of sustainability as a commodification of nature inform this goal; in Camisea this is realized as a strategic territorial giveaway to manufacture economic development from the forest, as this official detailed:

> [As a regional government] we have to get entrepreneurs to talk about sustainable development and seek actions in which the entrepreneur also wins. Companies show us their important biodiversity studies, but this information is not useful if they don't say how we can create value and wealth. Why do I need to know where and when a bird nests? (Authors' translation; subnational authority interview, 2018)

Overall, traditional knowledge and methods of forest management are now coordinated through the patronage of Western conservation, shaped by scientific values that back the creation and governance of protected areas. About this, one of the interviewees at the environmental ministry stated the following:

> The Pongo [Mainique water gap] can be discussed for the environmental aspects, but not for the social and cultural aspects. The cultural and the environmental are not integrated when you create a protected natural area. The creation of it is done by only taking into account biological diversity…the core, the priority factor, is the environmental dimension. The social and cultural dimensions are not as relevant or understood for protected natural areas. (Author's translation; national state authority interview, 2019)

Clearly, the entangled and conflicted roles of conservation and extraction in Camisea, under the banner of sustainable extraction have triggered internal rifts and political divides. Assumptions that conservation would automatically bring greater well-being to Indigenous communities failed to recognize more holistic dimensions of Indigenous communities regarding their territories and their rights to decide.

In fact, the controversy about definitions of environmental and cultural impacts in the protected areas erupted again in 2009, when a company attempted to get an environmental impact assessment approved for a gas pipeline that would pass through Megantoni National Sanctuary in an underground tunnel. Heated arguments followed: on one side were comments such as "the integrity of the sanctuary on the surface is not compromised," (from the project's environmental technicians); on the other side (from Indigenous community members), the opposing aim was to maintain the integrity of spiritual sites in the area. The Indigenous view was that not doing so would mean "defining for us [environmental technicians] where your god is located so the impact can be measure or mitigate" (Interviews with government and Indigenous representatives, 2018). This episode is one of many examples

in this study that reveal clashes in ways of knowing between Indigenous communities and hegemonic Western science, with the latter persistently at the heart of the state and external business interests. Nevertheless, Indigenous federations and their allies in international organizations exerted pressure on various fronts so that in the end, the pipeline was rejected, argued with clear reference to the environmental legal framework and the international environmental commitments of the project.

The participation of Indigenous communities and organizations in such debates beyond Camisea has remained subject to scientific evidence, as Indigenous perspectives of their original territories and practices are not recognized as relevant within Western "scientific biological knowledge." According to the interviews, Indigenous communities continue to be framed as people who need to be educated on conserving and better using the forest resource, for their own development. For example, Indigenous people are said to have the skills to navigate the Amazon, but a strong perception persists that they need to be trained to understand conservation, biological diversity, and pollution, because that "they do not know." (Interviews with local government, 2018). As one Indigenous person noted, "I am a volunteer because I like to learn more and lead. When I studied at school, nobody taught conservation. Now they do" (Authors' translation; Indigenous communities' interview, 2018).

Thus, local Indigenous peoples become labourers of conservation, such as volunteer park rangers, albeit not the experts. During the period of the field visits, the researcher encountered increasingly more, and younger, Indigenous volunteer park rangers, who were more frequently trained through the lens of Western values, complemented by their life-long local knowledge. One volunteer commented on this:

> We volunteer park rangers are born here. The biologist trains us, we take the data, we deliver it, and the expert makes the report in Quillabamba.…We know how to walk the river, open the trail, handle a canoe, coordinate with other communities, and train our brothers in environmental education. (Author's translation; Indigenous communities' interview 2018)

These new cohorts are motivated and highly concerned with the conservation of the forest, now based on Western scientific values, although they expressed that they also aim to not lose their own local views:

> Discrimination occurs at the policy level. Making investments that take us indigenous people out of the countryside or the forest. This is a system that does not stitch without a thread. The goal is to control us, and to recognize the Judeo-Christian vision that makes us believe that we have the resources and nature. This way of acting is not only of the extractive companies, it is in everyone, the

> State. It's how I teach you to take care of nature. What we ask is that learning be meaningful for us, include us. It should be from and by us, useful for our lives at our community, so that we can live together. (Author's translation; Indigenous communities' interview 2018)

However, local respondents clearly pointed out that overall, protected areas are considered a significant opportunity for them to gain traction on their land, make resource and benefit demands, and advance their participation in Camisea's extraction. Despite all the problems, actors from all perspectives seem to emphasize the opportunities presented by the strong presence of a company, with its direct funding and influence, and how this has prompted the state to pay more attention to negotiations in the region. As one person said, "We can be hired by the hydrocarbon companies to support biological monitoring, and they pay us; otherwise, we go to the affected areas as park rangers, and we are not paid" (Authors' translation, Indigenous communities' interview, 2018). A government representative expanded on this aspect:

> The environmental technical aspects are the heart, and professionals are not prepared to deal with other knowledge systems or social aspects.... At least, there are resources and money for these [protected areas], in contrast to others [territorialities] where there is not even the political will to allocate a budget or act, such as for Indigenous communities. (Authors' translation; national state authority interview, 2019)

Given this lack of funding, the idea of Camisea's benefit to the region is presented as enabling the power of scientific knowledge: it is offered through environmental training that provides communities with discursive elements to have a voice at the negotiating table, especially as they become involved in the supervision of the extraction.

This overview gives an idea of the marginalization of Indigenous knowledge in Camisea, but it also reveals that protected areas there reflect a process of integration or negotiation with this way of knowing, in the face of an external dominant knowledge system. During fieldwork, a recurrent experience was of Indigenous communities' leaders showing pictures and agreements of environmental impact compensations, while remarking on the need for environmental education as a key element—to learn from the system to better contest it. As park rangers and management committee members, Camisea's local Indigenous people pursue access to information and influence about how sustainable resource extraction is conducted in their regions. To do so, they have gained key positions to translate and challenge global and national discourses to their local reality, and to get involved in the fragmented environmental architecture that defines what is sustainable in Camisea.

6. Discussion: Politicizing Protected Areas and Sustainable Gas Extraction in The Amazon

This study supports an understanding of Indigenous agency in extractivism that extends beyond merely that which is sanctioned within territorial blocks and their extractive political-economy arrangements. Rather, it illustrates the multifaceted strategies that local community actors use to contest various nested hierarchical and authoritative knowledge systems and political spaces for participation connected with the 'sustainable' extraction, which themselves explain Indigenous multidimensional marginalization.

It is apparent that even with new resources and new political spaces, similar issues persist such as uneven hierarchies of knowledge, limited forms of Indigenous participation in decision making over their territories connected to certain nature values. For example, for local communities the Megantoni Sanctuary and the Machiguenga Communal Reserve are ambiguous—they restrict their access to resources but also create other stable spaces of participation such as the unified management committee or the administrative association ECA-MAENI, which are distinct from the kinds of public hearings linked to the environmental impact assessments associated with the Camisea project.

As political spaces (Massey, 2009; Peluso & Vandergeest, 2020), i.e., space and forests are constructed through relational power dynamics between refusal and acceptance, protected areas in Camisea influence who can speak in the name of nature and how it gets defined; they have also transformed geographically disconnected spaces into the focal point of debates about rights, who benefits from conservation, and the green state authority. They border and order the local territory, to restrict access to certain activities. Moreover, because of the underground oil field reservoirs, these politicized spaces elevate the importance of the forest with the promise of participation, consensus, and co-management. However, Indigenous participation in national protected areas, as with extraction, is largely limited to being told of the relevant data, which is generated by outsiders and not necessary including their perspective and concerns over nature.

Local communities' inclusion in the Peruvian protected areas framework may be progressing, but it still occurs under the marginalization of their knowledge system, racialized conservation narratives, and prevalent financial development approaches. Creating protected areas is apparently controversial, given the presence of the oilfields, but both elements reflect a similar central mechanism: neoliberal market values about what constitutes the common good and the value of these territories, which are treated as distinct from each other.

In the short-term, this practice of supporting the establishing of protected areas seems to provide international networks and allies to vocalize Indigenous demands in the governmental territorial planning mechanism and reposition themselves among the national state apparatus and the foreign companies. At the same time, protected areas in Camisea forced local communities to think about the forest—but not the forest as they originally identified it proclaimed—an act that reframed them as neoliberal agents who were not a "hindrance for the national development." (García, 2007). Nevertheless, in the long-term, Indigenous people subordinated their voice and resource-use decisions to the environmental state and its institutions. The reconstruction of their social and environmental justice claims keeps them trapped in multidimensional inequality that has diminished their knowledge, perspectives, social organizations, and capacity for autonomous decision-making in their lands.

Although the creation of protected areas in Camisea was an initiative promoted by Indigenous communities to recognize their role in conservation, their Indigenous knowledge system and values remain marginally acknowledged or actually used in decision-making. In other words, Indigenous participation depends on the imposition of a knowledge system that excludes their own; they are thus engaged in a constant search to define nature's value.

Protected areas in Camisea might represent a commitment to biodiversity conservation, but they do not reflect agreement about who or what it serves. This definition is reconfigured by suppressing some aspects and reinforcing others through authoritative knowledge. Scientific knowledge influences the power relationships across the private sector, the state, and Indigenous communities with the argument of preserving the "pristine and wild" forest—while extracting gas. The so-called sustainable extraction moves forward by keeping the forest pristine and maintaining the functionality of the adjacent or juxtaposed protected ecosystem; however, the technical assessments that purport this capacity are financed by the oil extraction companies. The conservation utilitarianism approach, linked to the idea of protected areas, can be a tool to facilitate gas extraction and neglect the specific context in which these areas have initially been promoted.

Overall, protected areas in Camisea might limit the material advancement of the extraction, but they can also reinforce the discursive progress of the extraction. The environmental and extractive Peruvian governance logic, which gravitates towards technocratic market solutions of win–win sustainability, can neutralize Indigenous claims but not depoliticize them. Instead, they position Indigenous peoples in between the duality of being subjected to conservation and the counterproduction of the new indigenous environmental leadership.

7. Conclusion

In Camisea, the two protected areas represent the efforts of local Indigenous communities to advance their rights within the contradictory Peruvian politics. Indigenous peoples present themselves as environmental political entrepreneurs to advance their benefit sharing and resource access demands, not just as mere victims of imposed protected areas. To avoid being deemed a hindrance to development, and motivated by the idea of protected areas, local communities' appropriate Western environmental knowledge to assume a new identity and social element. They claim to be the traditional ecological experts, environmental managers who can contract with the state: they can be the volunteer park rangers who report to the national authority and the trained biodiversity monitors able to supervise the extraction in the protected buffer areas. Through these actions, they challenge the idea that they cannot "manage" their forest to make "sustainable" development decisions that serve their shared nation.

Although Indigenous peoples became allies of the Peruvian conservation efforts, they are one of many influential stakeholders in this strategy, along with the extractive companies and their conservation apparatus. In the context of sustainable gas extraction, protected areas might offer an alternate environmental participatory space to defend Indigenous territorial rights and livelihoods, in contrast to other audit and control environmental institutions, such as the Environmental Assessment and Control Agency (OEFA in Spanish) or the National Service for Environmental Certification of Sustainable Investments of Peru (SENACE in Spanish) that have less sustained participatory spaces for the local communities that are affected by the extractions. Local Indigenous peoples may not be the leading voice of their traditional home, but they keep fighting for their full recognition in a greener neoliberalism and 'sustainable gas production" in Peru.

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