Childhood and Neo-Extractive Development:

Shipibo Children's Shifting Livelihoods

and Social Protection in the Peruvian Amazonia

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Contents

Abstract

The social and economic inclusion of Indigenous children in Amazonia, who are overrepresented in poverty indexes, is key for the achievement of Peru's development goals. However, the notion of child well-being that guides social protection may conflict with Indigenous values. This thesis is a case study of children enrolled in social protection programmes in a Shipibo village in Peruvian Amazonia. It aims to understand how children experience State intervention in a village that has been enduring scarcity caused by river contamination and changes in flood patterns. The research was carried out in two stages: firstly, through participant observation and interviews over a period of 7 months. Secondly, through remote and collaborative fieldwork during the COVID-19 pandemic, using various qualitative methods including draw-and-tell, collective mapping, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups with a mixed-gender sample of 48 children (mostly aged 9 to 13) and 11 parents. I complemented this data with document analysis of guidelines for programmes Juntos (a conditional cash-transfer), Vaso de Leche and Qali Warma (which provide school meals), along with Indigenous organisations' alternative propositions of well-being. Findings indicate that children have conflicting aspirations due to their combined experience of social protection mechanisms and socio-environmental changes. While children's definitions of a good life share commonalities with those of adults, such as an appreciation for the territory and its socio-ecological networks, children tend to individualise experiences of ill-being. Consequently, children propose simplistic solutions to problems such as harsher floods, land invasions and labour migration. I argue that the individualisation of ill-being is a consequence of a depoliticised formal education and the separation of children from decision-making spaces. The thesis supports claims that definitions of well-being vary with age (Crivello et al., 2008; Jones & Sumner, 2011) and emphasises the importance of considering political and ecological changes when analysing children's aspirations.

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Acknowledgements

A PhD is, paradoxically, an extremely lonely endeavour and the product of a network of knowledge and care exchange. This became even more evident when attempting to write a thesis in a foreign country during a pandemic that took the lives of loved ones in my home country. If I managed to complete this journey, it is because of the unyielding support of friends and mentors.

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Acronyms

AIDESEP	Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest
ARIAP	Association of Indigenous Roots in the Peruvian Amazonia
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CSSP	Child-sensitive social protection
DREU	Ucayali's Regional Direction of Education
EIB	Intercultural Bilingual Education
EIBAMAZ	Amazonian Intercultural Bilingual Education
ESCALE	Statistics of Education Quality
FECONAU	Federation of Native Communities of river Ucayali and its Tributaries
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INEI	National Institute of Statistics and Informatics
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
MIDIS	Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion
MINEDU	Ministry of Education
PNAIA	National Plan of Action for Childhood and Adolescence
PRONAA	National Nutrition Programme
RAISG	Amazonian Network of Georeferenced Socio-environmental Information
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SISFOH	Household Targeting System
UGEL	Local Unity of Education Management
UNCRC	United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDRIP	United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNICEF	United Nations' Children's Fund
VDL	Glass of Milk (*Vaso de Leche,* in Spanish*)* programme

Note on language and translation

Ethnographies about the Shipibo predominantly use the alphabet of the first Spanish-Shipibo dictionary, published by US missionaries in 1993. However, this thesis opts for the new spelling proposed by the Peruvian Amazonia's Association of Indigenous Roots (ARIAP). The orthographic consequences are fourfold:

c becomes *k (conibo* is *konibo)*

hue becomes *w* (*huetsa* is *wetsa*)

que becomes *k* (*baque* is *bake*)

ẅh becomes x (*ani ẅheati* is *ani xeati*)

For readers unfamiliar with Shipibo language, the suffix -*shoko* is added as a diminutive or to indicate tenderness, much like the use of -*ito* in Spanish. The suffix -*bo* forms a plural (e.g: *bake* = child*; bakebo* = children).

Translations are mostly my own, although my knowledge of Shipibo was only possible due to the remarkable didactics of teacher Eli Sánchez (Pakan Meni). The exceptions are the participatory exercises, mostly present in Chapter 6. These were either translated by Gésica Pérez (Yantawi), when in drawings, or by Danny Sánchez (Panshin Jabe), when transcribed from audio interviews.

My interlocutors often shifted between Shipibo and Spanish. Shipibo language has also incorporated elements of Amazonian dialect and Quechua (an Andean Indigenous language, notably spoken by the Incas). To represent the multicultural nature of my interlocutors' speech, the ensuing glossary will combine all languages. Each word is followed by an indication of its origins in parenthesis, as follows:

Shipibo (Ship) Spanish (Span) Amazonian dialect (Amaz) Quechua (Que)

Glossary

ani xeati (Ship)	'the big drinking', a ceremony representing the transition to adulthood, celebrated during girls' puberty
axeti (Ship)	to learn by getting accustomed to something
ayahuasca (Que)	hallucinogenic beverage made by brewing the vines of *Banisteriopsis caapi* with the leaves of *Psychotria viridis*.
binshin(Ship)	baby
bakeshoko (Ship)	toddler/small child
bake (Ship)	child
chacra (Span)	food garden
chullachaki (Que)	spirit that protects animals by tricking humans into getting lost
cutipa (Amaz)	spiritual affliction caused by animals or plants
ibo (Ship)	the owners of plants
ipo (Ship)	Amazonian catfish (*Pseudorinelepis genibarbis*)
jenetian (Ship)	flood season
kené (Ship)	drawing or pattern; also used as a reference to Shipibo embroidery
mestizo (Span)	mixed-race Settler
nawa (Ship)	foreigner (not Shipibo)
onan (Ship)	wisdom, often provided by interaction with *oni* (ayahuasca)
onanya (Ship)	wise person, capable of visiting spiritual worlds and healing or inflicting ailments; 'wizards' according to Evangelicals and *mestizos*
pishtaco (Que)	White man with electric guns who invades villages and steals Indigenous people's organs
poi (Ship)	opposite-gender sibling or cousin
raomis (Ship)	medical doctor that uses plant medicine

ranon (Ship)	young man
ronderos (Span)	patrol men
shonta (Ship)	young woman
terrucos (Span)	terrorists
waste (Ship)	Known as pipiri, in Spanish, the medicines are made of domesticated sedges (*Cyperus spp*) and used to enhance skill and mould character.
wetsa (Ship)	same-gender sibling or cousin
yoshin (Ship)	spirits that generally predate humans; ‘demons’ per Evangelicals

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Aims

This thesis deals with Shipibo children's experiences of childhood in rural Amazonia amid the growth of neo-extractive development projects in Peru. Following Gudynas (2009), I define neo-extractivism as a combination of redistributive social policies with extractive activities, which serve to build consensus around the benefits of exploiting natural resources. This thesis adopts a childhood lens to reflect on the effects of the neoliberal political economy of childhood on children's localised experiences (Hart & Boyden, 2018; Wells, 2016) and examine the impact of child agency on social and ecological change (James & Prout, 2005; Katz, 2004). The research uses a combination of participant observation, draw-and-tell interviews, and collaborative focus groups to investigate children's daily lives and their imaginings of well-being, and how children's experiences and aspirations differ from those of their parents. It also explores document analysis to reflect on how changes engendered by Settler-colonial politics affect the current context of Indigenous peoples in Peruvian Amazonia.

Peruvian Amazonia is a privileged location to observe the centrality of childhood in development projects intervening in Indigenous territories. The national narrative of child development mobilises large apparatuses of social protection, through which Amazonian children's lives are governed: schools have created a division between educated and non-educated generations; nutrition programmes Vaso de Leche ('Glass of Milk', in Spanish) and Qali Warma ('vigorous child', in Quechua) distribute meals and food parcels to school children; and the conditional cash transfer Juntos ('Together', in Spanish) offers mothers a small allowance if their children have good school attendance. The rules of access to social protection transform the schooling of children into an immediate livelihood strategy for families in conditions of scarcity, and immerses children in a system that exclusively associates well-being with economic inclusion.

Meanwhile, the same government that alleviates poverty coerces native communities to accept the expansion of oil allotments and logging activities that generate food scarcity. 'Progress' in Amazonia is seldom separated from interest in its natural resources. But while these two aspects of Peru's governance seem segmented – one is 'social', the other is 'environmental' – extractive development is a unified economic proposition. Anthropological literature is filled with examples of how extraction and environmental depletion directly impact the livelihoods of Indigenous peoples (Aikman, 2017; Bravo Díaz, 2021; Cepek, 2018). Adding

to this literature, this research investigates the pervasive effects of Amazonia's rapid cultural, social, and environmental changes on the lives and aspirations of Shipibo children.

The choice of a Shipibo (as the Shipibo-Konibo people is popularly known) village for this case study has to do with this people's compelling trajectory of cultural resistance. They are the second largest Indigenous nation in Peruvian Amazonia, with a population of 35,000 people according to the national census – out of which 60% are under the age of 24 years old (INEI, 2017b).[1] While increased urbanisation and evangelisation threaten the continuity of traditional practices (Capredon, 2021; Espinosa, 2009b), there is growing international interest in Shipibo knowledge, especially via the commodification of the hallucinogenic brew ayahuasca (Brabec de Mori, 2014; Slaghenauffi, 2019). Children grow up in an environment in which nature is a vital part of social life and elders' traditional knowledge is greatly valued by foreigners. However, extractive interests instil a pervasive fear of invasion and dispossession, and social programmes engender mixed feelings of dependency on and distrust of the State. In such a context, child well-being cannot be easily separated from the collective or the environment and begets reflections about the scale of childhood geographies (Ansell, 2009). To fully understand Shipibo children's lives it is necessary to move beyond the traditionally 'childish' spheres of school and family.

This thesis is guided by the over-arching research question: how do Shipibo children make sense of their lives and well-being amid development projects in Peruvian Amazonia? The aims of this research are twofold: firstly, to understand how children's values of well-being are formed in a context of intense sociocultural, economic, and environmental changes. Secondly, to contest the separation between social and environmental development projects, and particularly the separation of child well-being from broader political decisions that directly affect children's livelihoods. The thesis will argue that social programmes that target Indigenous children may be superficially aligned with the global narrative of children's rights, but child governance will continue to reproduce Settler-colonial power imbalances if it fails to dialogue with Indigenous conceptions of well-being. And this would mean expanding the domain of childhood to reflect on the importance of territory.

[1] This population is likely considerably higher than the State estimated, given the fraught definitions of Indigeneity in Peru (see Chapter 1). Fear of discrimination may prevent people from self-identifying as Shipibo, and migration to urban centres lead many families to opt for Spanish as their mother tongue (Espinosa, 2009b).

This thesis contributes to a theoretical reflection on the international political economy of childhood and child well-being in Childhood and Development studies literature, by showing how the macro (political, social, and environmental circumstances) are just as fundamental to children's well-being as the micro-spheres of the village, the school and the family. It will also add to Amazonianist and Latin American area studies, by highlighting the importance of integrating children in socio-political processes that affect Indigenous peoples, particularly through an integration of a political ecology framework in childhood research.

1.2. Justification

This section offers the rationale behind the puzzle that guided this research through a critical inquiry into the contradictions of governmental interest in Indigenous children. It will start by presenting the global definition of Indigeneity and its local variations in Peru. Then it will discuss the condition of Indigenous children in relation to normative childhood in Latin America, and the root causes of precarious childhoods in Indigenous Amazonia.

1.2.1. Who is Indigenous in Peru?

The definition of Indigeneity is a disputed topic in Latin America, and difficult to grasp without an understanding of the colonial process of *mestizaje* (mixing of races) that took place in the continent. As argued by Barth (1969), ethnic groups are produced by their contact with others, and re-defined as surrounding groups (and the relationship between them) change. The Indigenous peoples of the Americas are diverse, speak different languages, have different social rules and self-denominations, and even inhabit different territories. However, upon the arrival of European Settlers, they were equally ascribed the subhuman category of 'Indians'[2] based on their brown skin colour and were dispossessed of their ancestral land. The colonial division that privileged the Settler and exploited native societies was the origin of racialised socio-economic divides that persist to date in the Americas (Coulthard, 2014) and worldwide (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

In Latin America, an important part of the Settler-European project of colonisation were the politics of *mestizaje*. Settling Spaniards were mostly men who travelled without their families and who were stimulated to colonise the Americas by making children with native

[2] While this term is highly pejorative, as it dehumanised and racialised Indigenous peoples, I use it in this section to express the opposition between colonial eugenics and current identity movements.

women. This racialised nation-building ideology is illustrated by the *cuadro de castas* (caste paintings), ordered by the Peruvian viceroy (see Figure 1). Mixed-race children, referred to as *mestizos*, were not legitimate Spanish heirs nor full citizens, but quickly became the majority in the continent. It is estimated that after only three decades of colonisation 60% of children in Peru were *mestizos*, most of which were abandoned by their fathers (Ares Queija, 2007).[3] A hybridisation of society was a means to subdue resistance to Settler occupation by gradually increasing the numbers of White people (Drinot, 2006). Since Settler States were essentially White supremacist, with Spaniards and their legitimate heirs concentrating all political power and right to land, *mestizos* were keener to self-identify as White than as Indigenous. Indigenous peoples also opted to self-identify with the ambiguous categories of *mestizos* or *campesinos* (rural workers). The growing hybridity of the colonies' population strengthened the nation-building ideology that it was possible to gradually erase Indigeneity to implement a fully-Christian and obedient colonial society (de la Cadena, 2005).

Figure 1 – 'Spaniard and Highland Indian woman produce the mestizo' (Lima, 1770)

Source: Cristobal Lozano

[3] It is worth noting that European Settlers also enslaved Africans who were forcibly brought to the Americas and were part of this racial mixing, albeit to a much smaller scale in Peru. Black slaves were close to White Settlers in the perception of native Americans, as they were employed in capture expeditions and killings of Indigenous peoples. The animosity between different ethnicities was a crucial part of the White Settler colonial project, as it made a union of colonised subjects unlikely. See Ares Queija (2000).

While the colonial Eugenics left lasting traces in Latin American societies, social stratification by skin colour grew increasingly imprecise with *mestizaje*. As racial categories became more nuanced, it was cultural traits that served as a marker of Indigeneity. In Peru, people who spoke an Indigenous language or dressed in traditional garments were negatively associated with underdevelopment and backwardness. Many Indigenous peoples opted to suppress expressions of their cultural origins in the public space, despite maintaining some traditions in private spaces (de la Cadena, 2000).

An Indigenous identity would only be incorporated into the nation-building discourse of the elite during the process of independence, in the 19th century. However, the glorification of Peru's Inca past only reiterated that *mestizaje* was the present and future of Latin America (Méndez G., 1996). This same narrative would be reproduced by the Indigenist movements of the early 20th century, which defended the social and economic inclusion of marginalised Indigenous peoples as a means to achieve a cohesive sense of national identity (Drinot, 2006).[4] Even then, the core element of *mestizo* allyship to Indigenous peoples was the defence of bilingual education for the achievement of a fully Spanish-speaking national population (García, 2005). This is exemplified in the writings of José María Arguedas, a *mestizo* anthropologist and one of the main idealisers of bilingual education:

> All men in the Highlands that want to *superarse* [to overcome oneself] and progress must learn Spanish because in politics, business, culture and teaching, everything is given and made in Spanish. It has been 500 years of Spanish fighting against Quechua with all these advantages (…) I believe Quechua as a sole language would slow the evolution of the *mestizo* and Indian peoples. Because the *mestizo* and Indian peoples must be able to reach the level of cultured peoples in the domain of science and superior modes of expression; a language with the same resources as the most cultured peoples is indispensable. (Arguedas, 2011, pp. 89–90)[5]

The definition of Indigeneity by cultural traits meant that discrimination was stronger in Amazonia than in the Andes. As this thesis will discuss in chapter 2, Amazonia only had an equivalent offer of bilingual education decades after schooling in the Andes. Upon its occupation, land rights were even offered to Andean *campesinos* but never to the native population of the forest. That is because Amazonian peoples were much more distant from European-inspired ideas of civilisation than the descendants of the Incas, and thus viewed as

[4] I discuss this further in chapter 2, with particular attention to the context of Amazonia.
[5] My own translation. Arguedas uses the term Indian in the context of the early to mid-20th century when there was little criticism over the use of racial slurs.

being more backward than Andean peoples (Méndez, 1996).[6] These nuanced forms of discrimination were also incorporated by settled Amazonian natives, who may refute the identification as Indigenous as a derogatory category associated with their past 'uncivilised' nomadism. For instance, a settled and Spanish-speaking Indigenous village may genuinely see themselves as having mixed blood in comparison to nomadic groups that still live in isolation in the forest (Gow, 1991).

The charged meanings of Indigeneity in Peru pose a challenge for the measurement of the Indigenous population. According to the latest national census, only one-quarter of the national population would be Indigenous (INEI, 2017b), but this percentage is likely a gross underestimation due to the two criteria used to define ethnicity: having a native language as one's mother tongue or self-identifying as Indigenous.[7] That form of assessment fails to consider that fear of discrimination may prevent people from self-identifying as Indigenous preferring less derogatory and more ambiguous categories, such as *mestizos* or *campesinos.* Moreover, the combination of a rural exodus with the prestige of Spanish in bilingual education may hinder the transmission of native languages. Then what does Indigeneity mean?

In local politics, Indigenousness can be translated into various self-denominations. For instance, Pano-speaking peoples of Amazonia might self-identify under the name that was given to them by their neighbours (the one generally used by the State), as *jonikon* or 'the real people' when referring to themselves among kin, or even as 'Indigenous' vis-à-vis the State (see Keifenheim, 1990). That implies not only a fluidity of self-identification, but also a clear distinction between who is Shipibo, who belongs to another Indigenous people, and who is not Indigenous. Indigeneity among different peoples is often validated by a process of mutual recognition between individuals who may not share a language but have in common certain cosmological aspects that make possible a distinction between 'Indigenous peoples' and 'Westerners'. Namely, a world vision that is embedded in one's territory, particularly in the relationship between human and other-than-human actors, and a shared identity as historically dispossessed subjects of rights who resisted colonial domination. Different from the dualistic perception of nature and culture of the Western world (in which humans are viewed as the only

[6] Chapter 2 also discusses how Amazonian lands were given away to *mestizo* and Andean settlers in the 1940s, again under the argument that native Amazonians were uncivilised.

[7] These criteria were still an advance in relation to previous years. Former attempts to measure the national Indigenous population (which only took place in 1993 and 2007) counted as Indigenous exclusively the people who still lived in rural areas. This was despite decades of a well-known urban exodus among Indigenous peoples. See Espinosa (2009).

cultured subjects), Indigenous peoples see 'nature' as a social network in which human people are only one of many equally potent actors (Descola, 2013; Viveiros de Castro, 1998). This ontology influences Indigenous peoples' languages, social organisation and even subsistence strategies. Essentially, it is the primacy of this agentic natural environment that distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other rural collectives in Latin America, such as *mestizo* and Black peasants.

But a territorial definition has been gaining increasing importance at a global scale (de La Cadena, 2010; Whyte, 2018). A focus on native peoples' occupation of the territory before the arrival of foreign Settlers indicates that they were the original owners of what is now appropriated land – this is what de La Cadena & Starn (2007:398) call 'prior-ity'. This 'prior-ity' is favoured over and contrasted with the present occupation of land by non-Indigenous people, which is converted into cultural and political priority based on the premise of a *terra nullius* (the idea that colonial land was empty and was 'discovered' by Europeans). A territorial notion of indigeneity grants hundreds of geographically and culturally distant peoples a shared identity as subjects of rights that existed before and resisted the imposition of Settler States, hence strengthening isolated struggles for social justice by situating them in a global pattern of colonialism (de la Cadena & Starn, 2007; Smith, 2012). It also allows the maintenance of ethnic identification even in cases of migration or cultural transformation, as both displacement and the eagerness to fit in the mainstream culture are expected consequences of Settler-colonial dispossession (see Fanon, 2001).

The territorial definition of Indigeneity was officialised in two key international documents: the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, hereby C169 (ILO, 1989), and the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (United Nations, 2007). Both recognise Indigenous populations as peoples with political rights, inclusively that of self-determination in relation to development projects. These entitlements were important landmarks in the Indigenous struggle for social justice, as they ultimately made visible the persistent link between Indigeneity and social and economic exclusion in many former colonies (e.g. Hall & Patrinos, 2012).

Thereafter, countries with large Indigenous populations, such as Peru, designed new policies and social programmes that attempted to address that historical exclusion (Cortina, 2017; Radcliffe, 2018). And given the timely coincidence of this interest with the emergence of childhood as a key political category in the development agenda, many of these programmes

received a child focus (see Vásquez H., 2020). This thesis was inspired by the moral puzzle of State intervention among Indigenous peoples in Latin America: if Indigenous social and economic marginalisation is a reproduction of the neglectful strategies of colonial social stratification, this must certainly be addressed. However, State intervention can also take the form of symbolic violence if it again pushes acculturation. This is of particular interest considering the rise of universal development programmes targeting children in recent decades and a history of child-centred interventions that aimed to 'de-Indigenise' Indigenous children.

1.2.2. The State of Indigenous children in Latin America

The United Nations published the Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereby UNCRC) in the same year of publication of ILO's C169. The UNCRC endorsed State and International intervention for the 'best interest of the child' (Art. 3) (United Nations, 1989), and assumed the existence of a universal childhood that should be protected at all costs. While the convention was a landmark as a global commitment to address social injustice towards children, it also represented the consolidation of a moral imperative for State intervention in Indigenous territories. This was particularly dangerous in contexts where Settler States were represented by landowners with a direct interest in Indigenous dispossession. In such contexts, State intervention in the name of the child could be a strategy to undermine Indigenous people's rights to self-determination through the imposition of a Settler narrative of child well-being (Segato, 2013).

Notwithstanding, the continuous State neglect of Indigenous children would also reproduce the colonial Sovereign power that envisioned Indigenous subjects as unworthy of full citizenship (Liebel, 2020). In Latin America, child welfare has historically focused on urbanisation and street dwelling, given that social assistance was concentrated in urban contexts (Hecht, 2002). Until the UNCRC there was little interest in the welfare of Indigenous children. The inconsistent treatment of peoples by States and other institutions was often justified on the basis of respect for cultural differences, but this argument also served to maintain Settler exploitation of Indigenous child labour in various forms of illegal and hazardous employment (Rodríguez Jiménez & Manarelli, 2007). In Peru, the absence of the State in regions densely populated by Indigenous peoples meant that 90% of Indigenous children lacked a birth certificate and were virtually invisible to the national government in 1994 (Montoya, 1995). Two important international agendas increased attention to Indigenous

children: the growth of Indigenous movements (discussed in the previous section) and the Millennium Development Goals.

The United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF) stressed that the social and economic inclusion of Indigenous children was crucial to eradicate poverty and achieve universal primary school education (Miller, 2003). That is because, according to UNICEF, two decades after the UNCRC 88% of Indigenous children remained living in poverty in Latin America and did not have adequate housing – defined as a shelter with walls, a roof and a floor (ECLAC & UNICEF, 2012). Furthermore, there were significant gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in access to education, with only 22% of Indigenous children in Amazonia finishing school (UNICEF & INEI, 2010). Research indicated that even in contexts in which education and social protection were made available for Indigenous children, they faced added challenges to remain in school (Ames, 2012). They could also have negative experiences with social programmes (Ricaud Oneto, 2019; Streuli, 2010) due to the social cost of discrimination and forced acculturation.

Given how Indigenous people's interaction with Settler government authorities is often experienced as deprecation, some anthropologists found it important to reinstate an entitlement of the UNCRC that is often overlooked by the global development agenda: the right to cultural identity (Carneiro da Cunha, 1995). Consequently, South American anthropology started to pay more attention to Indigenous child-rearing practices to challenge the existence of an increasingly authoritative idea of a universal 'good childhood'. A large body of research looks at traditional forms of cultural transmission through observation of children's play and work in rural villages, understanding childhood as the crucial moment in which the cultural identity of a people is apprehended and consolidated (Nunes, 2002; da Silva et al., 2002). This ethnological literature was helpful to debunk a universal description of child well-being. However, historical anthropologists and political scientists critiqued the search for 'traditional' Indigenous childhoods for lacking reflection on the transformations that cultures underwent throughout globalisation (Carneiro da Cunha, 1995; Balagopalan, 2002, p.22). A politically contextualised historicisation of childhood, while present in sociological accounts of children in urban areas, was seldom found in literature about Indigenous children. An exemplary exception is Belaunde's (2007) analysis of Amazonian perceptions of childhood before and after Settler occupation. She argued that high fertility rates might be a collective strategy of cultural survival in light of ravaging epidemics and that the currently observable pattern of

female-headed households stems from the normalisation of child abandonment by *mestizo* men (for the latter, see also Ares Queija, 2007).

But experiences of childhood are still being radically transformed by globalisation. As the proliferation of formal education reached distant Indigenous communities, anthropologists noticed the manifestation of widening generational gaps among school students. For instance, boarding schools in Guyana that were located far from Indigenous villages engendered severe spiritual ill-being amongst Indigenous adolescents, to the point of causing a physical sickness manifested as seizures (Stafford-Walter, 2018). The arrival of schools in a hunter-gatherer Indigenous context in Ecuador also provoked radical social transformations that went from the hyper-valorisation of student identity to a gradual loss of hunting skills (Rival, 2000). In both cases, it was noticeable that schooling meant a rupture with previous family dynamics, as children were now separated from adults. The school was a catalyst of identity changes in the entire village despite affecting mostly childhood experiences. The imposition of Western education also impacted Indigenous students' sense of identity and belonging (Szulc, 2015), particularly where State-funded education provoked a stronger identification with the Settler State (Ames & Padawer, 2015; García Bonet, 2017; García, 2005). For some researchers, the alternative to school-induced acculturation was the creation of an intercultural education that could ensure children's access to schooling while also preserving traditional knowledge (Aikman, 1999). Nonetheless, even after this intercultural pedagogy was implemented the existing power imbalance between Settler and Indigenous cultures still favoured the teaching of the dominant culture (Trapnell & Zavala, 2013).[8]

Reflecting on Indigenous children's education was extremely valuable in the context of the Millennium Development Goals and offered a counterpoint to the panacea of education for social inclusion. A similar reflection was put forth by literature on Indigenous child development that aimed to challenge the cross-cultural validity of the idea of children as innately dependent and vulnerable (Anderson, 2016; Leavy & Szulc, 2021; Walker, 2012). In this case, researchers looked at how parenting practices affected children's character formation, albeit their definition of parenting often included extended kin. These studies offer a counternarrative of Indigenous child rearing as practices that produce more autonomous and resilient children and are therefore considered beneficial for child development (Mezzenzana, 2020; Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009).

[8] I discuss intercultural bilingual education in more detail in chapter 4.

These two main bodies of literature, focused on formal education and traditional child rearing, show how interest in Indigenous children remains restricted to traditionally 'childish' spaces, such as the school and the family. While challenging the existence of a universal 'best interest of the child', these studies tend to reinforce the idea that the lives of children take place at a micro-scale that is not as affected by political and economic macrostructures. Existential threats to Indigenous peoples, such as environmental depletion and shifting politics, only receive a generational lens via the ambiguous category of youth (Espinosa, 2012; Virtanen, 2012). This age group may include older adolescents and young adults but excludes most children from the process of consideration of structural problems that also affect their lives. While this may reflect age-based hierarchies in Indigenous politics, it is worth stressing that this generational order seems much stronger in decision-making spaces than in other aspects of social life, especially considering how tenuous is the division between adults' and children's worlds when it comes to subsistence and household work (Montoya, 1995; Punch, 2002; Sinervo, 2013).

Few exceptions in the literature present Indigenous children as actors of social change inside their communities, such as Peluso's (2015a) reflection of Ese Eja children's instrumentality in Bolivian Amazonia. Morelli (2017) notices a child-led process of social transformation inside Matses society (Northern Peruvian Amazonia) but reads children's aspirations for a Westernised mode of living as an 'affective attachment' (ibid., p.137) to Modernity. In contrast, Szulc (2015) is reflective of the heterogeneity of Mapuche childhood experiences in Argentina and acknowledges that children's sense of identity is altered by national and local political and economic dynamics. This thesis intends to strengthen the latter analysis by paying attention, particularly, to how child-centred State interventions are connected to neo-extractive interests in Amazonia, and how ensuing socio-political, economic, and environmental transformations promote the emergence of new ideas of child well-being in an Indigenous context.

Childhood studies can greatly enrich the understanding of child-centred social transformation processes, particularly when considering the recent increase in child-centred social programmes in Amazonia. A historicisation of childhood can also be useful to unsettle culturalist justifications of generational orders through which children are kept separate from socio-political power. The following section details how a series of concepts taken from childhood studies will be used in this thesis.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

To understand how a globalised social construct of childhood is imported to Amazonia and transforms social dynamics inside a Shipibo rural village, this thesis needed to engage with five bodies of literature. These are: childhood, child development, children in development, child well-being and living well, and political ecology and children's geographies. Understanding the social construct of childhood is central to scrutinising the moral imperative of State intervention after the UNCRC, but also to understand how children came to be discursively positioned in spaces that are separate from adult life. A critical appraisal of child development through cross-cultural studies can then contest the idea of universal standards for a good childhood while also considering what defines childhood as a stage of human development. The conceptualisation of children in development will explain how the argument around childhood is linked to the promise of national economic growth in the development narrative, and how this argument sustains the governmentality of children. The following section on child well-being will question the oversimplistic association of quality of life with economic inclusion. Finally, I will present the frameworks of political ecology and children's geographies to reflect on the potential impacts of neo-extractivism on child well-being.

1.3.1. Childhood

In the context of the 21st century, most of the globalised ideal of what childhood is (or should be) has a parallel in one of the articles of the UNCRC: children are people under the age of 18 (Art 1) who still depend on other people's care (Art 3), go to school (Art 28), and have the right to play (Art. 31) instead of engaging in intensive work (Art 32). This description of childhood is not only present in this international convention but is also reproduced by several States in National Codes of the Child and Adolescent and in attempts to measure, evaluate and resolve the conditions of children who lack this normative experience of childhood (Liebel, 2017). Notwithstanding, literature on the genealogy of this political category argues that the globalised social construct of childhood is situated in a recent political, economic and historical context of the global North in which children came to matter as either future workers or present citizens (Corsaro, 2018; Qvortrup, 2009; Wells, 2009).

The emergence of modern childhood can be traced back to 15th-century Europe, when elite families assimilated notions of privacy and individuality in the division of social life, leading to a separation between the world of adults and that of children (Ariès, 1962). A

widespread governmental concern with childhood (or, more accurately, with child-rearing practices) arose with Enlightenment. European States started to perceive children as blank slates on which correct moral values and appropriate behaviour could be written with adult-led discipline. The goals of teaching would vary depending on what children were expected to become: appropriate child rearing for the bourgeoisie meant access to literacy and numeracy, and hence some formal education; meanwhile working-class children were raised to be part of the manual workforce during the industrial revolution (Cunningham, 2021). A popular adult sentiment of protection towards children would only arise much later, when basic education became paramount for economic growth in industrialised societies, and consumer culture – boosted by the rise of the media – found value in passive consumers just as much as in active labourers (Stephens, 1995). At the beginning of the 20th century, children in the global North were becoming 'economically worthless but emotionally priceless' (Zelizer, 1985, p.14), although class divisions in experiences of childhood remained present.

The sociology of childhood has argued that children were historically treated as 'becomings' rather than as full 'beings' (Qvortrup, 1994). Academic interest in childhood was often focused on the role of new generations as the future workforce or as a threat to the social order (e.g. Parsons & Bales, 1956) which would ultimately justify the need for Social Work to control and correct deviant children (Donzelot, 1980; Wells, 2016). Critical of this functionalist paradigm, Bourdieu (1977) theorised that much of human behaviour was forged during childhood by the observation and reproduction of social norms and conducts. Bourdieu argued that a community of practices influenced people's tendency to act in a certain way, in an often-unconscious disposition that he called *habitus*. Later, Bourdieu & Passeron (1990) elaborated that children from different classes receive distinct treatments from social institutions which ultimately leads to a reproduction of inequalities in society. Albeit these theories successfully debunked the idea that poor children were innately dangerous, they still positioned the child as a passive subject of indoctrination. This perspective underestimated children's capacities to adapt, contest and interpretively reproduce social norms (Corsaro, 2003; Morelli, 2017; Toren, 2007).

Moreover, the experiences of children across the world are multiple and mutable, and largely dependent on social ideas of adequate social behaviour. Boyden (2015) argues that modern strategies of child protection are filled with concerns of pollution as if adult behaviour was inherently harmful to children's innocence – and this interpretation of childhood is embedded in the UNCRC. But anthropological studies have long shown that childhood in

various contexts is not necessarily detached from the adult worlds, as children's habits of observing and copying their parents and older siblings serve as practice for the incorporation of crucial life skills (Lancy, 2015b; Mead, 1930; Mezzenzana, 2020). LeVine and New (2008) also signal that ideas of child development and age divisions can vary greatly among different cultures, and serve to define the normative experiences of childhood in each context.

Childhood research has questioned the universality of most defining paradigms in the global notion of childhood, such as age and generation (Ansell, 2014; Huijsmans et al, 2014; Punch, 2019), schooling and work (Lancy, 2015a; Nieuwenhuys, 2003; Punch, 2003) and kinship (Kuznesof, 2005; Montgomery, 2001). However, this strong emphasis on the diversity of childhood experiences may fail to acknowledge the different political constructions of childhoods in the global South and the global North, and therefore risk condoning the exploitation of some children based on a culturalist argument (Balagopalan, 2018).

The existing multiplicity of childhoods is also a product of an elastic international concern with the world's children.[9] Archival research has shown how subaltern childhoods were intentionally produced as different to those in European contexts both in regards to perceptions of sexual maturity (Tambe, 2019) and work/school rights (Balagopalan, 2019a). This can be exemplified by ILO's Minimum Age Convention (c138) in 1919, whose text excluded all work outside the industrial sector and virtually allowed for the maintenance of exploitative child labour in the extractive-based economies of the global South (Nieuwenhuys, 2007). Moreover, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), an agency created to support European victims of the Second World War, only turned its attention to children in the global South after the success of decolonisation movements in Africa and Asia. This was a fortuitous moment for the emergence of a moral imperative that could justify the maintenance of dependency and interference between former Empires and colonies (Sinervo & Cheney, 2019).

Much of the critique regarding the ensuing children's rights regime focuses on how a subaltern relationship of dependency was maintained through International Development as if the global North remained the responsible adult guiding the childish States towards their development potential (Burman, 1994; Pupavac, 2001; Valentin & Meinert, 2009). The strong moral imperative of promoting child well-being served to justify international intervention in newly-independent States in the form of aid when much of the unequal distribution of resources was in fact a product of centuries of colonisation (Liebel, 2020; Rabello de Castro, 2020; Wells,

[9] I discuss the role of children in development in section 1.3.4.

2011). Furthermore, a different critique of the UNCRC reflects on its potential as catalyser of neoliberal subjectivities, given how it promotes a view of child governance in which the child is presented as an agentic individual despite their livelihood choices being constrained by social and economic macrostructures (Wells, 2016). This detached view of childhood overlooks long-lasting structures of production of inequalities and promotes simplistic remedial solutions to complex social problems affecting children's lives (Boyden, 2015).

Although the literature on the history of childhoods in colonial settings tends to focus on Asian and African contexts, as exemplified above, similar patterns of child governance can be found in South America. States adopted different policies for White and non-White children, being lenient with the employment of Indigenous and Black children based on culturalist arguments (Liebel, 2020; Rodríguez Jiménez & Manarelli, 2007). Furthermore, the same hierarchisation between Whites, *mestizo* and Indigenous or Black subjects existed in regard to children's entitlements vis-à-vis the State and society, with education being a privilege of a White minority until the 20th century (Ares Queija, 2007; Premo, 2005). Akin to the racialisation of poor children that happens at a global level (Hopkins and Sriprakash, 2016), in Latin America Indigenous and Black children were the ones historically portrayed as in need of State intervention (Hecht, 2002; Segato, 2013; Szulc et al., 2016). Nonetheless, as previously argued (see section 1.2.2), most of the existing scholarship on Amazonian childhoods still fails to foreground children's present experiences of childhood in a post-colonial context of intense State intervention targeting children.

Childhood studies literature has demarcated the effects of the emergence of the global child in various contexts (Fay, 2021; Katz, 2004; Montgomery, 2001) and critiqued the Eurocentric values of the UNCRC (Burman, 1996; Liebel, 2017; Wells, 2016). However, there are fewer studies analysing how the burgeoning of child-centred State interventions has been impacting children's experiences of childhood in Latin America (for an exception, see Taft, 2019). This is despite the widespread recognition of children's agentic capacities and growing academic interest in children's role in cultural and socio-political change (Morelli, 2017; Sinervo, 2013). The lack of a historicised approach to children's experiences in Amazonia risks reproducing a narrative of marginalisation of Indigenous childhoods based on Settler standards, or deterministic portraits of Indigenous childhoods that place children as passive recipients of cultural transmission (Rabello de Castro, 2019).

This thesis aims to contribute to an understanding of how the globalised social construct of childhood affects the experiences of Shipibo children in Peruvian Amazonia. It contends that childhood is a structural site produced by children (James & Prout, 2005) but also that an international political economy of childhood affects how children experience their lives and relationships with others (Wells, 2011, 2016). To fully sketch the interconnections between the global and the local in children's lives, the next sections will detail the construction of a universal narrative of child development and how this influences the prominence of children in development projects, to finally reflect on the effect of this on child well-being.

1.3.2. Child development

Child development became a topic of academic interest when Freud's (2002[1901]) theories of trauma linked early childhood experiences to adult life, in a logic that justified the study of childhood as a site of production of adult character and behaviour patterns. This deterministic model of thinking dominated much of the multi-disciplinary research on childhood until the late 20th century (Corsaro, 2018). Most literature devoted attention to understanding how a child's natural and social environment promoted cultural transmission and affected the formation of individual character (LeVine, 2001; Whiting & Whiting, 1975). Another common tendency was ethnographies of Indigenous peoples that aimed to describe how developmental milestones and the behaviour of children varied with cultural values (Abelove, 1978; Mead, 1930; Walker, 2012). In this type of research, the child appears mostly as a passive subject of intergenerational cultural transmission, reproducing the values passed down by older people.

This passive perception of child development would start to vanish after research exposed children's agentic capacities. Piaget's (2011[1952]) study of age-based child cognition was a seminal influence on this, as it made evident children's evolving capacities to understand and communicate knowledge. This thought was further advanced by Vygotsky (1978), who observed how children construct knowledge through social practice, and how peer interactions offer a space for children to test and apprehend social norms. Expanding from this, Bronfenbrenner (1979) paid attention to children's real social environments, criticising a tradition in Psychology of observing child development through artificial tests and away from children's everyday contexts. He gave special importance to children's most intimate environments or 'micro-systems', such as the family and immediate peer groups at school,

arguing that these were the places where children developed the interactions that most influenced their lives.

Bronfenbrenner's interest in the nuclear family draws from a previous notion of child development, known as attachment theory. Bowlby's (1958) revolutionary thesis argued that a dyadic and responsive relationship between infants and their primary caregiver – an expression frequently interchanged with 'mother' in his work – was foundational for a child's healthy emotional development and had long-lasting consequences in a child's life. While the format of this dyadic relationship was later questioned, allowing for substitutes for the mother figure as a primary emotional bond (Keller, 2013), the main stance on the existence of foundational relationships in human emotional development has been cross-culturally validated (Rogoff, 2003). However, Western understandings of the family still define which are the crucial relationships for healthy child development (Keller, 2018), despite evidence suggesting that attachment can be experienced differently across cultures (Keller & Otto, 2014). A perception of the nuclear family as an isolated social space is perpetuated in Bronfenbreener's (1979) definition of micro-systems.

Notwithstanding, Bronfenbrenner's theory goes beyond this to reflect on the intersection of micro-, meso-, macro- and exosystems in conforming to what he calls the ecology of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner argues that each of these spaces has a different level of impact on child development, but they are all ultimately important for an analysis of how children make sense of and perform in the world. For instance, a family crisis can have consequences for children's behaviour at school, therefore justifying the category of 'mesosystem' as an intersection of one micro-system with another. At a higher level, the circumstances that negatively affect children's caregivers, such as unemployment, can also indirectly influence children through their impact on their adult caregivers. A macro-system would refer to the broader political-economic and sociocultural norms that shape all other systems, and the chronosystem to natural or human-made changes that happen over time and as children grow up (see fig 2).

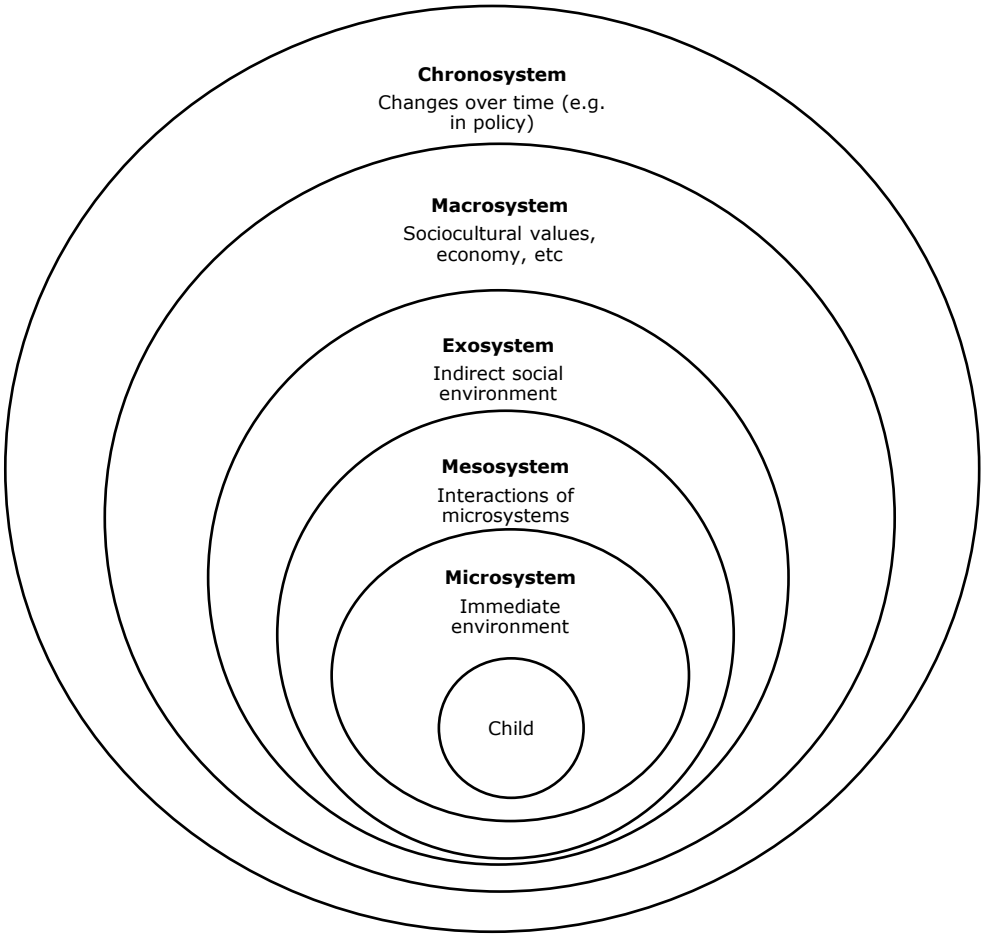

Figure 2 - Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory

Source: author's representation

Interestingly, Bronfenbrenner's model itself became part of the 'macrosystem' that affects the lives of children. Its hierarchical spatialisation of children's environments had a potent influence on the UNCRC and on the way that international child protection systems are operationalised: centring the family and school as childish spaces, and gradually expanding to allow local, regional and international intervention to ensure the best interest of the child (Fay, 2021; Hart, 2012). While cross-cultural research has underpinned the validity of micro-systems as the main environment where one's character is shaped throughout the life cycle (Anderson, 2016; Rogoff, 2003), assumptions about what these microsystems look like (e.g. family, school, playground and church, as per Bronfenbrenner's example) are disputed.

Fundamental to the normative socio-ecology of human development is the idea that children gradually evolve from the constricted space of family and school life to the wider

places of adulthood. It is inherent to such a theory that there is a separation between adult and child spaces, and that childhoods are fixed in nuclear families and childish spaces. Anthropologists have contested this idea by showing that in many cultures children are not as visibly separated from the adult world (Mezzenzana, 2020; Punch, 2003) nor are they fixed to one household (Anderson, 2013; Leinaweaver, 2008). Adult views of childhood directly affect children's daily lives, and hence produce a variety of developmental trajectories between cultures, and also between boys and girls in the same context (Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009; Rogoff, 2003). Moreover, this globalised spatialisation of child development overlooks the agency of other elements that are considered formative of character in Indigenous contexts, such as spirituality and the natural environment (Ullrich, 2019). I will return to this point again in section 1.3.4.

The tacit ethnocentrism in child development studies is expressed in the idea that there is a universal developmental trajectory that all children should follow (Burman, 1996, 2008). The ideal trajectory is based on the living standards of middle-class families in the global North and expressed in the concepts used to measure child development across cultures, such as 'child development potential', 'exposure to risk' and 'stimulating home environments' (Boyden, Dercon, & Singh, 2015). This is likely a result of the predominance of child-centred studies in European and US contexts, both in terms of data collection and researcher positionality (Rabello de Castro, 2019; Nieuwenhuys, 2010), as exemplified by the references in this section. Moreover, an excess of attention to children's microsystems perpetuates the belief that the 'risk' to their development potential is mostly located in the social norms shared by their nuclear family. This argument underpins the alleged superiority of Western child-rearing practices and serves to justify intervention in minority contexts (Punch, 2003; Rabello de Castro, 2020).

Much of the attention to child development in the global South has focused on the lasting consequences that scarcity can have on children's development potential, given how a lack of opportunities, nourishment and support networks can affect one's life trajectory (Ansell, 2016a; Bourdillon & Boyden, 2014). Nonetheless, child-centred research tends to overlook how broader political and environmental factors that ultimately affect children's lives are intertwined in the same national development projects that intend to rescue vulnerable children (Burman, 2008). The adult-dominated macrosystem of the political economy continues to be treated as distant from children's realities and is seldom approached in child-centred research (Hart & Boyden, 2018) even though globalised ideas of childhood, defined by the UNCRC,

mobilise large apparatuses of State intervention. This gap in the literature was a central incentive for this research.

1.3.3 Children in Development

As discussed earlier in this chapter, childhood started to attract particular attention in the international development agenda at the turn of the century. Studies had shown that child poverty was more common and more relational than adult poverty, as children depended more on their parents or other caregivers to fulfil their basic needs (Sumner, 2010). Moreover, nutritional scarcity and lack of opportunities were shown to have lasting consequences for child development, situating childhood as a crucial period for actions attempting to eradicate global poverty (Jones & Sumner, 2011; Ansell, 2016a). Such research helped to sustain the argument that investments in childhood were crucial to achieve national economic growth, as child-centred interventions could interrupt a cycle of social reproduction of poverty and improve a country's human resources in the long term (Heckman, 2000b; Vásquez H., 2020). This rationale conflated child development with national economic development and became a potent justification for interventions in the name of the child (Burman, 2008).

The rise of child-centred development initiatives was also prompted by the moral imperative of the UNCRC. In theory, the convention intended to reform the child-saving narrative of previous child protection programmes, in which children were simply passive recipients of aid (e.g. Burman, 1994), to propose a rights-based approach to child-centred programming. The convention defined that a child is physically and mentally immature and needs special protection, thus establishing that it should be a priority for States and other stakeholders to act on behalf of children (United Nations, 1989, Art. 3). But the definition of childhood that is used to guide the construction of a child's 'best interests' standardised a particular social construct of childhood based on Western and middle-class family values, as discussed in section 1.3.1. Given how this ideal of childhood became a legitimate ground to request intervention (United Nations, 1989, Art. 4), the UNCRC helped to promote the globalisation of a new generational order in which children became pre-eminent subjects of development interventions (Pupavac, 2001). The global childhood also became a symbol of statehood and civility: measurable evidence that a developing State was complying with the international development agenda and deserving of foreign investments (Wells, 2016).

The ubiquity, uniformity and scale of child-centred State interventions reached unprecedented levels after the UNCRC. The convention propelled the growth of an earlier project of universal schooling, along with programmes of child-sensitive social protection for the most vulnerable families (Rossel, 2013; Vásquez H., 2020). These interventions engendered significant changes in local childhoods while promoting globalisation, insofar that these two processes deserve to be studied in conjunction (e.g. Cole & Durham, 2007). The prominence of children in social protection has had varied repercussions in local contexts, but with some notable global patterns radically altering children's experiences of childhood around the world (see Aitken et al., 2009; Klocker & Ansell, 2016). The emergence of a global childhood shaped the conditionalities of popular schemes of cash transfers to incentivise school attendance (Camfield, 2014; Porter & Dornan, 2010; Streuli, 2012). Hence schooling children became a livelihood strategy for families in precarious contexts (Pires, 2014). The expansion of years of schooling from primary to secondary school also affected the duration and outcomes of youth transitions to adulthood and placed great responsibility on young people for economic progress (Camfield, 2011; Crivello, 2011). As children grew distant from adult routines, generational gaps widened (Ansell, 2014; Huijsmans et al., 2014) and children and adolescents became important catalysers of globalisation (e.g. Morelli, 2017; Virtanen, 2009).

But schooling and child-centred social protection are not the only development interventions that affect childhood. In fact, most of the policies that affect the lives of children (for instance, those regarding housing, nutrition and health) may be harmful precisely because they lack a child-sensitive lens (Qvortrup, 2014). Examples of this are several in the literature. Katz's (2004) study of children growing up amid an agrarian development project in Sudan illustrates how changes in a child's daily spaces and activities provoked a drastic generational gap, with children losing certain skillsets to incorporate others. Horton et al. (2021) also compiled case studies throughout the world to elucidate how economic crises and neoliberal governments affect the livelihood opportunities that young people have (see also Crivello & Boyden, 2014; Aufseeser, 2021). These examples show that the place of childhood in development tends to be restricted to education and social protection projects. Macrosystemic shifts in the economy and politics equally interfere with children's livelihoods and aspirations, even though they remain perceived as 'adult subjects' (Huijsmans et al., 2014).

Earlier in this chapter, I presented how children came to be central to projects of social development due to their potential as future human resources (see Burman, 2008). The relevancy of childhood to social development plans suggests that children's lives and

aspirations have a political and economic value to the State. Development researchers are aware of this and thus have been paying attention to how macro-structures also interfere in social reproduction by moulding children's individual experiences and aspirations (Huijsmans, Ansell, & Froerer, 2020; Kraftl, 2013). Adopting a childhood lens to think about regional development can contribute to an understanding that young people's lives are not free from economic and political pressures imposed upon adults (Ansell, 2014; Huijsmans et al., 2014; Punch, 2019). It also makes evident that imagined futures and development promises are important factors influencing young people's life decisions (Aufseeser, 2021; Crivello, 2015), and thus justifies the inclusion of an outcome-oriented inquiry in childhood research (see Qvortrup, 2009).

This thesis will consider that development-related changes affect children's routines and aspirations, and reflect on the relevancy of childhood for development plans in Amazonia. This inquiry calls for an understanding of the notion of child well-being that guides interventions on behalf of children, and the principles of *buen vivir* (living well) promoted by Indigenous organisations in Amazonia. The following section offers a review of these concepts.

1.3.4. Child well-being

The definition of child well-being is crucial to the moral legitimacy of child-centred interventions (Wells, 2016). This is noticeable in articles of the UNCRC that establish the ground for State and NGO action for the 'best interest of the child', (United Nations, 1989, Art. 3), which implies the existence of a universal 'adequate standard of living for a child's development' (ibid., Art 27). Initiatives that intend to promote child well-being often move past the minimum for survival – e.g. immunisation, nutrition and infant health – to encompass overall improvements in children's quality of life – e.g. educational opportunities and mental health (Ben-Arieh, 2008). However, the definition of well-being is vague, as the concept serves as an umbrella term for multiple indicators that vary from nutritional status to self-esteem, and are conflated with research on quality of life, health and even capabilities (Camfield et al., 2009). This is likely due to the origins of well-being as a key development indicator.

Well-being first gained prominence in the 1990s when the United Nations Development Program started to promote the Human Development Index (HDI) in a move to attract policymakers' attention to human well-being. The HDI was calculated by combining indicators of life expectancy, average years of schooling, and per capita gross national income, therefore

marking an advance on previous indicators that were based mostly on material conditions, such as the standard of living index. The importance of quality of life is also promoted in Sen's capabilities approach, in which the wellness of individuals is considered a crucial goal of human development (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993). Although these notions of human development are an improvement on traditional indicators (e.g. gross domestic product, or GDP, per capita) which were exclusively focused on economic conditions, the challenges of assessing individual quality of life in its subjective aspects meant that well-being studies remained strongly focused on measurable conditions of living (Camfield et al., 2009).

Measurements of well-being present a division between subjective and objective elements, although these two aspects can be mutually dependent – for instance, if psychological issues cause physical distress, or social ill-being causes depression (Camfield, Streuli, & Woodhead, 2010). The association of objectivity with measurable factors tends to privilege externally observable conditions over less visible aspects of welfare, which are considered less reliable indicators. Anthropological research has been very critical of this, as such studies tend to simply impose concepts devised in wealthy contexts of the global North upon minority cultures that may have other definitions of happiness (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2008).

Research on quality of life is generally comprised of three dimensions: material, subjective and relational (Sumner, 2010). This refers, respectively, to material conditions that sustain a certain standard of living (including environmental factors), social norms and cultural values of what well-being means, and personal and social connections that not only bring fulfilment but also increase social capital. But there is considerable elasticity in people's definitions of a good life. For instance, some Indigenous organisations have proposed that living well (*buen vivir*, in Spanish) entails eating and living as customary; in a safe, sustainable and peaceful traditional territory; with good health and access to emergency services; and having an empowering education that allows the people to be well-represented and protected at a political level (Espinosa, 2014). In such contexts, individual capital accumulation might be directly against people's values of a good life (Bravo Díaz, 2021; Sarmiento Barletti, 2015a), especially if it comes with the cost of resource depletion. That is why Santos-Granero (2015) links Amazonian ideas of well-being to the concept of public wealth, emphasising the importance of human-nature relations and social conviviality for living well (see section 1.3.5).

These definitions seem equally valid for definitions of child well-being, as expressed by Ullrich's (2019) Indigenous connectedness framework. The framework is based on a review

of Social Work literature on Indigenous children's well-being in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Unlike Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, Ullrich (2019) does not foresee a hierarchy between family, community, and broader macro-structures. Rather, each of these pillars of well-being is dependent on the other, and environmental connectedness appears as important as family and community connectedness. Ullrich's description is equally meaningful in Amazonian contexts, given how the environment is also intertwined with human well-being. Likewise, the Shipibo promote well-being in close dialogue with plants, whose agentic forces can help improve human capacities (Tournon & Silva, 1988), heal from spiritual and physical ailments (Dev, 2020), and manipulate human emotions (Hammerschmidt, 2019). This explains how social and environmental wellness are experienced as deeply interdependent (Santos-Granero, 2019, see also chapter 2).

However, as argued in section 1.2.2, children's ideas of well-being are absent from most literature on Indigenous notions of living well. In recent years, Indigenous organisations have strived to develop 'life plans' presenting their ideas of well-being as an alternative to the development narrative promoted by the State (Espinosa, 2014). While their methodologies may include drawing sessions with children through 'exercises in the school or other childish spaces' (AIDESEP & CONAP, 2016, p.43), the resulting documents so far have not included any reflections on this data. Even UNICEF (2012a, 2012b) reports aimed at describing childhood transitions according to different Indigenous cosmologies adopted a similar focus on elders as authorities of knowledge.[10] This is problematic given that research contrasting younger and older adults' perspectives of living well already emphasised the existence of significant differences in people's aspirations (Rodriguez, 2017).

The lack of a childhood lens suggests that children's perspectives of a good life would necessarily equate to that of elders when child-centred research has shown in several studies that this is seldom the case (Camfield, 2010; Jones & Sumner, 2011). Children's priorities can vary greatly from that of adults. For instance, children are much more dependent on others than adults – although their degree of dependency varies with age - to satisfy both their material needs of housing and sustenance, and their subjective ideas and aspirations (Camfield et al., 2010). This dependency might induce children to place a different weight on social norms and relationality. These social components of children's lives are also essential to understand how

[10] UNICEF reports were made in partnership with 17 research assistants, who visited a total of 18 native communities: 6 Ashaninka, 8 Shipibo and 4 Yine villages. Research participants were mainly elders and chiefs of each native community.

interpretive reproduction plays a role in children's conceptions of wellness (Corsaro, 2014; Huijsmans et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the adult gaze on child well-being tends to focus on outcomes, as these support the comparative assessment of children's condition at a global scale and the systematic monitoring of children's rights (Ben-Arieh, 2008). For instance, measures of child well-being are commonly associated with indicators of schooling, nutrition and growth (Ames & Rojas, 2010). Another common tendency is to assess child ill-being through indexes of domestic violence, child labour and poverty, albeit the lack of such indicators does not necessarily indicate that children are having a good life (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014). The predominance of interest in quantifiable definitions of well-being oversimplifies what quality of life can mean for children, and fails to capture subjective definitions of living well (Camfield et al., 2010).

In recent decades, research that prioritises adult views on child well-being has been challenged by studies that integrate the voices of children and make evident how different adult and child perceptions of well-being can be (Ben-Arieh, 2005; Camfield & Tafere, 2009; Rojas & Cussianovich, 2013). Childhood Studies has been central to this criticism, as it has argued that the outcome-oriented focus of most of the literature leads to a dismissal of children's present experiences of childhood (James & Prout, 2005; Qvortrup, 1994). To claim a focus on childhood, research on child well-being would have to pay attention to children's peer interaction and subcultures as formative environments of social norms and aspirations (Corsaro, 2014). This would also support a focus on more positive aspects of children's lives, instead of reinforcing a deficit view of poverty in the global South (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014).

But the integration of children's perspectives about their lives brings various challenges. Children's research contributions are often disregarded as delusional or fantastic when researchers struggle to validate or make sense of children's perceptions of the world (von Benzon, 2015). Moreover, children's notions of well-being will emerge at the intersection of individual agency and societal expectations, as their livelihood choices reflect the level of knowledge that children have of their (and of others') circumstances (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014). An excessive focus on what children say may overlook the fact that children's voices are produced in a context where their access to knowledge is mediated by older people and supervised or guided by adults (Abebe, 2019; Spyrou, 2018). A direct inquiry into children's perspectives may not be very fruitful, but the usefulness of creative methods will vary depending on children's age and the context, along with the researchers' abilities to elicit

conversations from children's creative contributions (Crivello et al., 2008). While asking children about their well-being expands potential insights into subjective experiences, it may also take outcome thinking to another extreme: a hedonistic focus on immediately rewarding experiences (Barnes & Wright, 2012).

Childhood researchers argue that child well-being is located in a difficult in-betweenness of past and future. Qvortrup (2014) presents these co-existing temporalities as 'well-being' and 'well-becoming'. A classic example of this is the conundrum of the child who spends the day playing instead of doing schoolwork: they might be enjoying their childhood, but will they have a good adulthood? A child-centred approach to child well-being would have to prioritise children's present lives over their well-becoming, while still acknowledging that these two temporalities are deeply interconnected, and children might not be fully aware of the outcomes of their actions. To address this potential bias, Camfield et al. (2010) have identified that a combination of methods might be the best approach for a comparative study of children's well-being. Similarly, Ben-Arieh et al. (2014) consider that research must integrate children's perspectives of well-being with a critical analysis of their context and the perceptions and assessments of other relevant social agents, such as parents, teachers and social workers.

This thesis follows this 'new' paradigm of child well-being research by adopting a child-centred methodology that is grounded in a contextual and comparative analysis of children's and adults' ideas of living well. Therefore it contributes to a new perspective on child well-being in Latin America, as most of the literature on Indigenous perspectives of child well-being has privileged an adult gaze on children's lives over children's insights (Farah & Tejerina, 2013; UNICEF, 2012a, 2012b; Walker, 2012), with some notable exceptions (Ames, 2013; Anderson, 2013; Ullrich, 2019). But more importantly, it contributes to unsettling the definitions of child well-being by investigating how the best interests of the child can vary with the context in which they grow up. Given the importance of human-nature relations for Indigenous conceptions of living well, the concept of political ecology was crucial to broaden the analysis of Shipibo children's experiences of well-being in a neo-extractive context.

1.3.5. Political ecology and children's geographies

Political ecology (PE) is a helpful framework to explore the links between Shipibo children's livelihoods and national political decisions affecting Amazonia. This field of inquiry emerged at the intersection of human geography, ecological anthropology and political

economy to reflect on 'the ensemble of forces linking together social change, environment and development' (Escobar, 1999, p.15). By interweaving these frameworks, PE addressed the lack of environmental considerations in political economy, and the absence of reflection on power in environmental studies (Leff, 2015). Despite its various strands, PE scholars share a common assumption that people's livelihoods and the ecosystem are intricately connected, and politics affect both society and nature (Robbins, 2011).

PE literature argues that environmental politics' social and economic consequences are unequally distributed and tend to follow pre-existing patterns of inequality (Bailey & Bryant, 1997; Bullard et al., 2003). This implies that the trade-offs of extraction or contamination are disproportionately felt by those who are already socially marginalised, such as children (Stephens, 1996). Authors situated inside this framework tend to be sceptical of redistributive promises, given how ecological costs reinforce rather than resolve socioeconomic disparities (Benjaminsen, 2015; Gudynas, 2016). Moreover, a PE lens is helpful to think critically about development propositions that perceive natural resources exclusively as a commodity, considering that societies can give additional meanings and uses to nature (Alimonda, 2011; Escobar, 2014). These premises are key to analysing the impact of Amazonia's development projects on Shipibo children's lives.

The colonisation of Peruvian Amazonia is intimately related to economic interests in the rainforest's resources. Various extractive cycles affected patterns of human dispersion in the region, gradually marginalising Indigenous peoples (Barclay, 1991) and pushing Settler colonial occupation of the rainforest (Little, 2001). Conflicts with the State because of resource extraction are also what ignited the political organisation of Indigenous peoples (Bebbington & Scurrah, 2013). However, the extractive political economy in the region is so powerful that it affects Indigenous people's use of land and resources even inside their territories (Hvalkof, 2006). More recently, State presence inside Indigenous territories has grown with particular attention to childhood, as I will discuss in chapter 2. However, PE literature on the contradicting effects of neo-extractivism in Amazonia lacks an active engagement with childhood, beyond quick mentions of children as vulnerable subjects in ethnographies about resource contamination (see Guzmán-Gallegos, 2019, p.63).

The lack of a childhood lens in PE literature is also noticeable in other contexts. Children appear more often as passive subjects of environmental justice claims, complementing an argument that adult environmental politics affects childhood (Satterthwaite,

1996; Stephens, 1996). These studies argue that ecological costs have more severe consequences for children, often highlighting the permanent effects of lead contamination on child development (Bullard & Wright, 1993; Whitehead & Buchanan, 2019) or linking child labour to the extractives (Chambi Mayta, 2017; Dammert, 2008). However, as summarised by Tanner (2010), these approaches share a representation of children as victims who require adult action and do not take into account how children experience and make sense of environmental change and land disputes.

Research on PE from within childhood studies is equally rare. The subfield of children's geographies is concerned with children's relationships with a place (Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Klocker & Ansell, 2016) and nature (Hadfield-Hill & Zara, 2019a, 2019b), and some studies have even looked at the impact of climate crises on children's aspirations (Jonsson et al., 2012; Tanner, 2010). However, as argued by Shillington & Murnaghan (2016, p.1019), there is a crucial difference between PE and children's geographies: the PE framework foregrounds the agency of nature, while children's geographies is concerned with the agency of children. Child-centred studies and their choice of methods (e.g. photovoice) tend to reiterate an analysis of childhood as limited to their immediate environments (e.g. the school and the playground). Thus, children's geographies often overlooks macrostructures that shape children's relationships with their places (Ansell, 2009). A notable exception is Katz' (2004) study of an agrarian project in Sudan, which pays attention to how shifting modes of agricultural production and local environmental degradation affect rural children's lives.

The potential benefit of bridging children's geographies with PE is the possibility of including children's perspectives in political discussions about the environment (Hart, 2008), while also acknowledging how environmental politics impact children's lives (Stephens, 1996). This thesis will contribute to this discussion by bringing together the political and socio-ecological aspects that are affecting children's livelihoods in a Shipibo village. As I will explain in chapter 2, in the context of neo-extractivism in the Peruvian Amazonia, Shipibo children's lives are intervened upon by social protection against the backdrop of severe environmental issues. To unpack the contradicting effects that national development plans have on Shipibo children, attention to how the social and environmental aspects of policies are linked becomes paramount. Thus, I will draw on the political ecology framework to analyse how neo-extractive policies influence children's aspirations.

1.4. Main findings

This thesis analyses children's experiences and ideas of well-being in a rural Shipibo village that has been experiencing rapid changes due to the expansion of child-centred social protection and extractive development projects. I combine participant observation, draw-and-tell interviews, document analysis and focus groups to understand how children's experiences are clashing with elders' expectations, and how social and environmental changes stemming from development projects impact children's ideas of well-being. The case study is illustrative of the impact of global childhood on small-scale societies and particularly of how the governance of children can contribute to maintaining a Settler-colonial order. The research is of special relevancy to Latin American studies, given the particularities of its neo-extractive policies for local Indigenous peoples, but it can also contribute to studies of childhood in minority contexts elsewhere.

Child-centred development interventions have pervasive effects on children's lived experiences – and ultimately, even on adult livelihoods. The thesis will start by discussing how community-based experiences of childhood contrast with practices inside the classroom. I will argue that school education goes beyond curricular activities to incorporate programmes aiming to promote sociocultural change during childhood. Qali Warma (school meals) and Juntos (a conditional cash transfer) envision the child as separate from their society and place a strong emphasis on individual economic inclusion as a narrative of development. This liberal mentality places the responsibility for child development on individual choices, overlooking the impact of political and economic macrostructures on young people's lives.

These interventions result in considerable contrasts in adults' and children's definitions of what is a good life. These divergencies stem from different perceptions of the root causes of social, environmental, and economic problems in the village, with adults perceiving issues to be more political than children do. However, like adults, children are concerned with resource depletion and violence that risks their permanency in the native community. They consider these to be the main threats to their well-being and invent solutions to solve such problems. Based on comparisons between children's depictions of bad and good lives, this thesis will argue that individual child well-being is intricately connected to territorial issues, and even presented as such by children. However, due to a lack of exposition to alternative development paths, children envision the adoption of *mestizo* livelihood strategies as an unavoidable future. These findings highlight the importance of drawing on political ecology to reflect on child

well-being in Indigenous contexts, given how Shipibo children's livelihoods are deeply impacted by neo-extractivism.

1.5. Thesis structure

This thesis is organised into seven chapters: this introduction, a context chapter, the methodology, three empirical chapters and a conclusion. This introduction has given an overview of the research aims and justification for this study. It has also presented the relevant literature that supported the development of this research and the theoretical framework that will support data analysis. The key concepts explored in the ensuing chapters are childhood (the normative understanding of what children should experience), child development (the idea that there are universal standards for children's emotional and cognitive development), children in development (how the previous concepts were appropriated and operationalised by governments and international actors), child well-being (epitomised by the moral call to defend children's best interest in UNCRC's Art. 3) and political ecology (defined as the analysis of the political and economic implications of human-nature interdependency). Chapter 2 will offer a contextual background for this case study, reflecting on the history of childhood as a moral imperative for State intervention in Amazonia, and presenting the social, economic, and environmental changes faced by the Shipibo people in recent decades. Chapter 3 explains the research design and justifies the choice of methodology before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the ethical issues that arose at each stage of the research process. The next three chapters present empirical data in an ethnographic style. Chapter 4 begins by focusing on children's routines and social networks in the village and how these contrast with discipline inside the school environment. Chapter 5 offers an analysis of policies and implementation of social protection and reflects on how monitoring adds to the education that children receive inside the school. Chapter 6 presents similarities and differences in children's and parents' ideas of a good life and analyses how children's aspirations ensue from their lived experiences of their territory. Finally, the conclusion (chapter 7) summarises the key findings and potential contributions of this thesis to the literature on Childhood and Development Studies, along with its possible repercussions in social policy.

2. Contextual Background

2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the rationale behind the presentation of Indigenous children as a social development problem in Latin America. Building from this, the current chapter will offer a contextual background of my research site. This chapter is divided into two larger sections: the first part presents a history of childhood as a political and economic argument for Settler intervention in Peruvian Amazonia, drawing from examples from the early missionary boarding schools to today's State-funded social protection. It also connects the growth of extractive interest in the rainforest to the growth of social protection programmes in Indigenous territories, and the ambiguous consequences of this for social development. The second part will present the research context, with attention to how the shifting geography of Ucayali is affecting the Shipibo economy, and the cosmological aspects that frame Shipibo people's understanding of cultural and environmental change.

2.2. The political ecology of childhood in Amazonia

2.2.1. Settling childhood in Indigenous territories

Historically, States' perspectives on Amazonian peoples oscillated between invisibility (*terra nullius*) and symbolic violence. The latter approach related to a Settler colonial assumption that Indigenous peoples lived in a 'primitive' stage of human evolution, as discussed in Chapter 1. In Peru, there was also a marked differentiation between peoples from the Andes and peoples from *la selva* (the 'jungle'), as commonly expressed in the popular geographical division of the country. Given how Amazonian peoples seemed to lack a hierarchical government and had an economy based on minimal labour, they were assumed to be hostile to authority and incapable of the organised social structure that granted the status of civilisation to the Incas (Méndez G., 1996). European explorers often interpreted this anti-State condition (Clastres, 2013) as a sign of 'savagery'. This ethnocentric perception of native Amazonians had many parallels with the ideas of childhood of that period. In colonial times, Indigenous peoples were often infantilised to justify their domination, just as children's primitive stage of development was associated with 'savagery' through their lack of civilised manners (Dean, 2002; Liebel, 2020).

The Enlightenment's notion of children as *tabula rasa* – an empty book in which civilised values could be written – made education a key strategy of cultural and political domination in the colonies.[11] In several stages of Peru's national history, mandatory schooling was used to ease socio-political tension by guaranteeing the assimilation of the dominant Spanish culture by Indigenous peoples. Up until the 18th century, Indigenous leaders (known as *kurakas*) could send their sons to missionary schools, where they would be converted into good Christians and political allies. The benefit of property rights guaranteed their allyship, and a bilingual education formed *kurakas* as trusted emissaries of monarchical order among the predominantly Quechua-speaking majority (Premo, 2005).[12] However, this system ultimately failed when Indigenous leaders such as Túpac Amaru II and Inca Juan Santos Atahualpa, empowered by knowledge about alternative social orders, led insurrections against the Spaniards. After killing these *kurakas*, and to prevent new uprisings, the monarchy extinguished Indigenous aristocracy by seizing their properties and prohibiting the use of Quechua.

These Indigenous rebellions left a lasting terror among the minority European descendants, known as *criollos.* Even after Independence, when this demographic took power, a potential insurgency of the mixed-race and Indigenous majority was a constant threat to the sovereignty of the new country. To mould a *mestizo* Peruvian identity, the elites appropriated and glorified an Inca past, a strategy that also served to repress any possibility of an Indigenous future by labelling native cultures as archaic (Méndez, 1996). This mentality was used for centuries to justify systematic discrimination against Indigenous peoples. The stigma of backwardness – especially attached to hunter-gatherers – meant that Indigenous peoples were treated as less than humans, and this was particularly true for children who were expected to labour as adults (Liebel, 2020). To date, rumours of Western doctors that extract children's eyes (Portocarrerro, 2009), White people who eat babies (Belaunde, 2007) and rubber barons that kidnap children (Gray, 1997, p. 31) indicate that Settler-colonial rule was particularly cruel to Indigenous children.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Peru underwent a process of rapid industrialisation that demanded the transformation of human resources into a 'modern' labour force. The young

[11] For a comparison of this strategy of colonisation in the US and in Australia, see Jacobs (2009).
[12] Quechua, the language of the Incas, was taught to all future Indigenous leaders regardless of their ethnicity.

age of Latin American nations was then perceived as analogous to that of children, as both had the potential to trace an alternative future for civilisation in the New World (Nunes, 2011).

In the first decades of the 20th century, Latin American governments aimed to ameliorate national development by improving the productivity of citizens (Guy, 1998). Given that the value of children rested exclusively on their potential as future labourers (see chapter 1), it was paramount to establish the ground for social work institutions to identify and revert processes of character deviation during childhood (Nunes, 2011). Mandatory schooling was fundamental to this (Guy, 1998). Even for avant-garde intellectuals in Peru, the only solution for the 'Indian problem' in the Andean region was to slowly integrate these peoples into the modern nation through schooling (Drinot, 2006). However, the number and geographical distribution of schools hindered most children's access to formal education, while the prospects of schooling remained unclear to families whose household economy relied heavily on children's work (Kuznesof, 2005).

Meanwhile, in Amazonia another side of Peru's national development project was trapping Indigenous peoples in a form of bonded labour. The idea of modernisation was tied with industrialisation and therefore increased the demand for natural resources. The Peruvian Amazon Rubber Company, an enterprise funded with British capital and operating in the rainforest from 1890 to 1913, used bonded labour of adults and children for the extraction of latex, and physically punished the low productivity of its labourers (Hardenburg, 1912, p.209). This form of exploitation persisted in the region even after the rubber boom, through hereditary debts that could never be paid and a promise of death to those who tried to escape this system (see Chirif & Cornejo Chaparro, 2009). How could this be compatible with the incipient national ideas of childhood mobilised in the capital?

Drinot (2011) argues that a focus on industrialised labour essentially excluded racialised workers from citizenship, since Peru divided itself between *mestizo* urban centres and Indigenous rural villages. Moreover, the long distances that separated the rainforest from Lima and the informal economy that characterised the extractive industry in Amazonia, particularly before the beginning of urbanisation in the 1940s, meant that the afflictions of Indigenous labourers could be easily overlooked. Native Amazonians existed solely as bare life (Agamben, 1998) since their value to the State was situated precisely on their condition as a disposable labour force. It should be noted that the first ILO convention on child labour (C005), published in 1919, predominantly focused on children's work inside industries and

thus overlooked agrarian contexts of exploitative child labour. Conversely, missions often justified children's work as a means to inculcate discipline in otherwise 'uncivilised' children (Nieuwenhuys, 2007)

This only began to change in the 1930s, with the 'modernisation' of Amazonia. The State started to assert more control over the Amazonian population as the economic value of the region grew: a series of oil discoveries made Peru more attentive to this territory since it had lost parts of the forest to neighbouring countries during the rubber boom (Barclay, 1991). Moreover, Amazonia's alleged state of *terra nullius* was a solution to rising social tension in the country, as Andean peasants were demanding an agrarian reform. By offering free land titles for *mestizo* Settlers in the forest, the State simultaneously eased the masses and pleased landowners while consolidating its presence in disputed frontier territory. The integration of Amazonia also involved the creation of roads, since until then 'it was quicker to travel to London by steamer (three weeks) than by land to Lima (six weeks)' (Gray, 1997, p.74).

A series of protestant missions entered the forest soon after this, such as the English South American Mission (SAM), the Swiss Indian Mission (SIM), and the US Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). Among them, SIL was certainly the most prominent. Aiming to translate the Bible to Indigenous languages, SIL congregated families in sedentary villages by offering material goods for a lower price than other Settlers, along with unprecedented access to Spanish language lessons (Stoll, 1982; Barclay, 1991). SIL also brought a fleet of hydroplanes that could reach the farthest confines of the rainforest, offering commercial flights for government officials and oil companies to fund the costs of its missionary operations (Hvalkof & Aaby, 1981). The dependency of big stakeholders on SIL's services quickly granted the institution economic and political power in the occupation of Amazonia.

In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights propagated the idea that schooling was a child's innate right – an argument that was key to the worldwide diffusion of schools (Ansell, 2016b). [13] Latin American governments now heralded mandatory schooling as a long-term strategy towards social unity in an unequal society, the ideal formative space to develop productive discipline in children, and the means to mould the future of multi-ethnic nations (Nunes, 2011). However, most new States could not afford the costs of establishing schools on

[13] At a global scale, a political concern with children's famine raised after the second world war, as shattered families and economies threatened the lives of European children. This, together with the Cold War and the dispute for the Third World, led to the creation of UNICEF. See: Black (1996).

their own, and international cooperation became key to achieving these goals (Nieuwenhuys, 2007). The two-decade-long linguistic efforts of US missionaries offered the perfect cornerstone for Indigenous education in Amazonia. Therefore, in 1950 the Peruvian Ministry of Education granted SIL the task of establishing the first official programme of Indigenous education in the forest (Trudell, 1990).

The amicable arrival of missionaries was welcomed among the Shipibo, as it contrasted with the treatment received from extractive settlers. For instance, Hilario (2010, p.53), himself a Shipibo researcher, reports that '[the missionaries] accepted us and liked us even though we were *ina* [savages]'. The promise of bilingual education was also alluring. After decades of exploration and a steady rise of economic interest in the forest, speaking Spanish was viewed as fundamental for understanding agreements with Settlers and the State (Espinosa, 2012). Moreover, for the first time, young Shipibo men had the option of stable employment as schoolteachers. But SIL's short training would transform them into *de facto* missionaries, as academic lessons were restricted to basic literacy but heavily informed by Christian values (Chirif & García Hierro, 2007, p.163). An army of Shipibo teachers was formed in a space of just a few years and sent to form new missions around the forest (Morin, 1998).

Throughout Amazonia, countless peoples' territories and livelihoods began to be determined by children's access to education. Living in a fixed settlement with a school nourished a sentiment of Peruvian citizenship and shared civilisation (Gow, 1991), and school uniforms became a marker of distinction among different peoples (Rival, 1992). However, the main reason schooling missions were endorsed by the State was their capacity to reduce the area occupied by Indigenous populations, to the extent that they were also known as *reducciones* (Chirif & García Hierro, 2007). *Reducciones* essentially concentrated previously dispersed and seminomadic peoples in smaller fixed settlements, peacefully liberating land for economic exploitation while giving rise to cultural, economic, and even sanitary challenges (see also Elsass, 1992).

For instance, schooling effectively transformed the form of identification of schoolchildren to meet the State's need to control the population. Children were expected to present a name and surname to register, but this was an alien form of anthroponymy at the time (Espinosa, 2019). Lacking acceptable identification, many students offered the surname of their Settler bosses, resulting in frequent confusion of identity. This was only solved when *mestizo* teachers' gave their names to students, often standardising the surnames of entire villages (Montoya,

1990, p.21). These surnames are used to date among families and follow the patriarchal order of Spanish nomenclature: where the father's surname has higher importance.[14]

The patriarchal order also affected residence patterns and social organisation in Shipibo villages. For instance, settled families gradually lost matrilineal communal houses and men became empowered by male-exclusive social mobility. Christianisation also had a direct impact on fertility. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Shipibo had a low birth rate with at least three years of intergenerational space between siblings from the same mother, mostly due to polygyny and rules of post-partum celibacy. However, by 1960 they had one of the highest birth rates in the world (Belaunde, 2007). This population growth meant that game and fish became rarer, and cholera epidemics more common (Hern, 1992). To cope with frequent sanitary crises, SIL's training offered workshops about hygiene, leadership, and community management, which in practice made teachers into development agents. After the summer training in Pucallpa, these men returned to schools:

> taking pigs, turkeys, ducks, seeds and fruit tree plants, boat motors, shotguns, gramophones, electric torches, bicycles, clothes, medicines and, along with all this, a good batch of books, notebooks, pencils, and booklets… From now on, the bilingual teacher is (…) a 'symbol of an advancing civilisation' (Morote Best, 1957 in Stoll, 1982).

Teachers' abilities to read and write, speak Spanish, and control the spread of unknown diseases gave them more authority than traditional *kurakas* vis-à-vis the State (Morin, 1998). However, the presence of missionary teachers engendered a growing sense of inferiority and inadequacy among them, as Shipibo customs were systematically marginalised and policed by monitoring visits from SIL missionaries (ibid., p.396). Teachers' dissatisfaction with this governmentality prompted the creation of the first Shipibo union in the 1970s. It was this political activism that led to the organisation of the first Shipibo congress in that same year (Morin, 1992). For the first time in many decades, the entire population was congregated in the same village, giving a concrete dimension to Shipibo's potential political power.

[14] The Shipibo nowadays assign two names to each child. The 'Peruvian' name is *nawan jane* or foreign name (traditionally Hispanic but nowadays commonly English-sounding due to the influx of tourists), while the Shipibo name is *jonekon* or true name. The former is used in interactions with *mestizos* and the State, and the latter among family, inside the village or to assert ethnic identity in a form of resistance (Valenzuela Bismarck, 2018).

At an international level, the power of missionaries also began to be contested internationally in the 1970s, as anthropologists began to advocate for Indigenous peoples' rights to land titles and self-determination – that is, an autonomous government for their territory (García Hierro, Hvalkof, & Gray, 1998; Hvalkof & Aaby, 1981; Varese, 1974). Oil discoveries also sparked fear of an imperialistic endeavour of US oil companies, who were known to support the expansive work of US missionaries, and this led to the expulsion of SIL from several countries (Stoll, 1984). Because Peru had also started to import oil in 1964, it decided to invest in the subterranean exploration of the forest, which would become the country's main source of petrol one decade later (Barclay, 1991). This again demanded greater control over the territory and its peoples. All over the country, the State combined agrarian and educational reforms aiming to integrate Indigenous peoples as citizens (Trapnell & Zavala, 2013). Similarly, in Amazonia the Law of Native Communities (Peru, 1974) determined Indigenous peoples' land rights and the State's responsibility for the provision of schools.

While the law was a landmark of Indigenous Amazonian peoples' land rights, it had several limitations that impacted how the text was implemented. Firstly, the law granted rights to organised communities, and not to peoples. In other words, only sedentary settlements could request a land title, which in practice meant that people living among missionaries were the ones most benefitted by the law (see Gow, 1991, p.55). Subsequently, it privileged a segmentation into vicinities (the 'native community') instead of an ethnic identity (the Shipibo people). The law also stresses that Indigenous peoples' land rights are limited to a demarcated territory, while reaffirming that the remainder of the forest is State property and available for cattle farming, oil, and mining (Art. 30 and 31). Thus, it acted as a *de facto* dispossession of spaces beyond the borders of a native community (Espinosa, 2019).

Lastly, the State's change of treatment of Indigenous peoples was much more concerned with economic growth than cultural diversity. In the 1970s, the popular Dependency Theory, (see Galeano, 2012[1971]), argued that a country's condition of underdevelopment was sustained by a dependency on developed countries, and this inequality was perpetuated by the social stratification inside each country. The ensuing educational approach perceived Indigenous illiteracy as a sign of their social marginalisation. Hence, bilingual education was signalled as the means to end social exclusion by building a fully-Spanish speaking and yet Indigenous Peru (Arguedas, 2011).

2.2.2. Indigenous education and youth's intercultural instrumentality

The Settler occupation of Amazonia led to an exponential population growth. The city of Pucallpa, built in traditionally Shipibo territory, grew from a thousand residents in 1940 to 50,000 twenty years later, and 250,000 at the turn of the century (Morin, 1992, p.73). The Shipibo became a minority in their own land, representing less than 13% of the population in Ucayali as of 2017 (INEI, 2017b). This meant a significant loss of food resources, particularly due to commercial fishing and timber extraction, along with increased exposure to recurring epidemics (Belaunde, 2007; Dev, 2020). The situation of Amazonian urban centres was equally deteriorating. The rapid population growth was not followed by infrastructure investments, and cities lacked basic sanitation and services such as a river port and hospital. The social tension led to a massive protest known as Pucallpazo in 1978 (Morin, 1998). In a context of precarity and dispossession, teachers and students represented the frontline of a new form of organised Indigenous resistance.

Secondary schools were at this time concentrated in Pucallpa, and the search for education was a main driver of migration for Shipibo families that often ended up in poverty. Therefore, the protest had active participation of Shipibo students organised as the *Juventud Nativa Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Native Youth or JUNAR). Shipibo students not only occupied the urban picket lines but also served as emissaries that shared information about the protests with rural native communities (Morin, 1998, p.402). The Pucallpazo was successful in all its claims, and even led to the creation of a new state – what is today's Ucayali.

The positive outcomes of the protest not only reinforced the power of unions for the Shipibo, but also the instrumental role of school-educated youth. Thereafter, the Shipibo started to see value in the establishment of a more permanent and comprehensive political organisation. This was first done through tentative mobilisations in which again schoolchildren acted as emissaries, and later in dialogue with unionised teachers from neighbouring Indigenous peoples. In 1980, the Interethnic Association of Peruvian Amazonian Development (*Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana,* known as AIDESEP), was created to represent the shared grievances of all Indigenous peoples in Peru. Shortly after, AIDESEP members from Ucayali formed the Federation of Native Communities of Ucayali (*Federación de Comunidades Nativas de Ucayali* – FECONAU)[15] with a more localised focus (Espinosa,

[15] Appendix I present the current hierarchies between Indigenous organisations in Amazonia, from regional to international level.

2012). While the youth movement was somehow incorporated by these larger organisations, it remained active. Youth leaders were particularly concerned with the diffusion of news in the native language via radio (Espinosa, 1998) and the cultural change that was happening through children's formal education (Espinosa, 2012).[16]

Despite the many perceived benefits of bilingual education, schools still concentrated children inside an institution that did not exist for earlier generations. This had transformative impacts on experiences of childhood and broader processes of social change (Ansell, 2016b). Even after the Law of Native Communities, the educational material available in Shipibo was highly dependent on the work of missionary linguists (Trudell, 1990). Its pedagogy was guided by the same aims of SIL – that is, to introduce the dominant culture to Indigenous children in a non-conflictive way (Aikman, 1999, p. 20).[17]

The Shipibo were aware of the negative aspects of schooling and disliked the shedding of customs associated with the arrival of school-based governmentality. With AIDESEP, debates about education gained traction as Indigenous children were recognised to be at the epicentre of large-scale processes of cultural change. A study done by AIDESEP itself indicated the failure of the bilingual model of education, since children's fluency in Spanish was insufficient for them to achieve any social mobility (Trapnell, 2008). Students had low levels of literacy and numeracy, and an overall inability to complete their studies. More importantly, children were ashamed of self-identifying as Indigenous and of speaking their native languages (ibid.). This diagnosis made evident the strong consequences of Spanish-led education and the importance of developing curricula that valued traditional knowledge.

Throughout Amazonia, unionised Indigenous teachers became representatives of AIDESEP's concerns, campaigning for the development of an intercultural bilingual education (*Educación Intercultural Bilingüe*, known as EIB). The same concerns were then amplified by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and ILO's convention n. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in 1989. The latter document warranted the rights of Indigenous peoples at an international level, including the idea of culturally sensitive education as a core principle (Aikman, 1999; Gray, 1997). Despite all efforts, the Peruvian Ministry of

[16] In the 1980s, the surge of armed groups in Peru led the JNR to drop the term 'Revolutionary' and assume a new name: Organisation of Indigenous Youth in the Ucayali Region (*Organización de Jóvenes Indígenas de la Región Ucayali* known as OJIRU).

[17] To date, SIL remains active in the region, whilst tacitly, through alliances established with the first Evangelical communities and political leaderships (Capredon, 2021).

Education dismissed an educational reform for years, and only changed its posture after strong pressure from key international agencies such as the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and Oxfam (García, 2005; Zavala, 2007). The interest of development banks in Indigenous issues aimed to ease ethnic tension by including the previously excluded in the global market economy (Radcliffe, 2018). This would arguably prevent a potential disruption in the socioeconomic order of developing countries.

EIB was first guaranteed by the Peruvian government in 1988, but the principle of intercultural dialogue was implemented only superficially, without confronting the root causes of social asymmetry (Tubino & Zariquiey, 2005). In theory, EIB policies questioned the assumed neutrality of the school curriculum and demanded a rethinking of methods and forms of knowledge for Indigenous audiences. But in practice there were hardly any mechanisms to implement this. The task of converting indigenous knowledge to textbooks and combining them with Western ontology posed countless epistemological and practical challenges (see Llorente & Sacona, 2013). Moreover, EIB was an alien element in the 1990s reform of the Peruvian curriculum that stemmed from the World Conference Education for All.[18] Ironically, cultural diversity became a core principle of Peruvian education at the very moment that an idea of homogenisation of the global school curricula became central to national development.

The term 'interculturality' in itself gives a false impression of equality, when in fact the broader political and economic structure in which Indigenous students were inserted still valued one form of knowledge over the other (Aikman, 1999). This was expressed in the making of the EIB curriculum, when most Indigenous specialists chose to combine literacy, numeracy and religious knowledges, and therefore reproduced the previous form of schooling (Trapnell & Zavala, 2013, p.72). But EIB had other challenges. It put forth an outdated idea of culture as a set of traits that fixed peoples in ancient portraits of themselves (Trapnell, 2003). Students left school with a view of two entirely separate cultures – the modern and the Shipibo – and theirs was the only one frozen in time.

The essentialisation of Indigenous cultures through EIB brought two challenges: it harmed the self-esteem of students, by painting them as anachronic subjects (Carneiro da Cunha, 1995) and it disconnected their lived experiences from political and historical processes, blaming

[18] The conference was held in Thailand in 1990 and marked the definition of education as a key element of the international development agenda. At this event, the World Bank sketched the target to increase access to primary education globally that would set the ground for the MDGs and for a globalised model of schooling. See Ansell (2016b).

their growing reality of poverty on their cultural backwardness (Balagopalan, 2002, p. 22). This was instrumental to the passive acceptance of a development project that conflated Settler colonialism (via land appropriation and resource extraction) with progress. The different values attributed to Indigenous cultures vis-à-vis the Peruvian State kept Shipibo language at bay even inside the EIB project, as the only purpose of Indigenous languages was to support school learning for children and hence their productive inclusion in Peruvian society (Tubino & Zariquiey, 2007, p. 44).

The national project of inclusion via education reached its peak between 1980-2000, during the internal conflict between the Communist Party of Peru, popularly known as Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso)*, and the national armed forces.[19] The violent guerrilla movement aimed to achieve a communist revolution led by the people, inspired by a Maoist revolutionary ideology (Villasante Cervello, 2019). The harsh realities of Amazonia gained relevancy when the guerrillas expanded into the mountainous region of the rainforest, seducing various Indigenous settlements with promises of social justice, and forcibly co-opting Indigenous children in villages that resisted their advances (CVR, 2003; Villasante Cervello, 2019).

Nonetheless, the Shining Path's initial promise of a social revolution quickly became violent. The guerrilla organisation used terror tactics to expand its presence throughout Peru, predominantly in peasant and Indigenous villages. The State's response to the movement was equally brutal, leading to a conflict between *senderistas* (those who supported the Maoist group) and *ronderos* (patrolmen who formed clusters of local resistance against them). Because the Maoist guerrilla gained strength shortly after the implementation of the Law of Native Communities, many Indigenous villages in Amazonia were divided: on one side, there was the attractiveness of a promise of popular education for all and fairer land divisions; on the other, that would mean giving up on a land demarcation that had taken centuries to be granted by law (Villasante Cervello, 2019).

The promise of popular education was central to Shining Path's acceptance among the poorest fractions of the Peruvian population (García, 2005; Varese, 2006). Consequently, it also became central to policies aiming to contain the expansion of the guerrilla. When the authoritarian government of Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000) took power, it praised EIB for its

[19] The internal conflict had another party, known as the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (or MRTA by its Spanish acronym). This guerrilla, albeit also present in Amazonia, was not cited by my informants.

potential to integrate Indigenous children as good Peruvian citizens, and invested in the production of school materials and teacher training for native communities (Trapnell & Zavala, 2013). Nonetheless, Fujimori viewed Amazonia as a 'conglomerate of complementary industries' (Barrantes & Glave, 2014, p. 36) that could prospectively concentrate all processes of industrial production, from extraction to export manufacturing. The unexplored economic potential of Peru was again blamed on the lack of a disciplined workforce, a problem that was profoundly racialised (Drinot, 2011). In an eugenic attempt to contain the growth of poverty, Fujimori promoted the forced mass sterilisation of 272,000 Indigenous women, disguised as a family planning programme (Huamán, 2018; Vasquez del Aguila, 2014).[20] As I will argue further in chapter 6, where I discuss children's fear of a White man who disembowels Indigenous people, this policy left profound marks on the Shipibo people.

Following the fall of Fujimori, President Alejandro Toledo (2001-2006) looked at the inequalities that had powered the conflict of previous years (Barrantes & Glave, 2014). Aiming to address extreme poverty, his government created the conditional cash-transfer programme Juntos in 2005, which I will discuss in chapter 5. The political attention to social and economic inclusion was propitious for an international development project focusing on Intercultural bilingual education in Amazonia, known as EIBAMAZ (acronym for *Educación Intercultural Bilingüe para la Amazonia*). EIBAMAZ was funded between the government of Finland and UNICEF, and implemented in partnership with regional governments and Indigenous organisations between 2005 and 2009 (Sotz, 2010).[21] It combined linguistic and epistemological research to collaboratively develop a more culturally-sensitive EIB curriculum in Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru. The Peruvian part of the project was conducted among the Shipibo, Yine and Ashaninka and produced school materials that are still used today. It also consolidated UNICEF's relationships with Indigenous authorities in these territories (see UNICEF, 2012a).

[20] These numbers were taken from the Quipu Project. Available at: https://interactive.quipu-project.com/ (accessed on 15 July 2022).

[21] The Peruvian part of EIBAMAZ cost over 1 million US dollars to the Finnish government, 550,000 to UNICEF and 689,655 to the regional government of Ucayali (Sotz, 2010, p.183).

2.2.3. The compensatory State and children as human capital

As argued in chapter 1, the sudden attention to Indigenous children's well-being can be partially traced to the UNCRC and to international pressure aligned with the global development agenda. In Peru, such programmes also became an urgent matter in response to the political crisis and violence associated with extreme inequalities, as discussed in the section above. However, in the context of Amazonia, programmes were also well-timed to address the social dissatisfaction that stemmed from oil exploration in the region.

From the early 2000s, left-leaning governments in Latin America returned their attention to extraction of non-renewable resources due to a growing global demand for raw materials. The commercial exploration of mineral reserves was argued to be the route towards poverty reduction and national development (Loureiro, 2018; Lang, 2019). Unproductive territories rich in natural resources became the focus of extractive-led development and any opposition to this commodity consensus (Svampa, 2015) was dismissed as being anti-progress. Amazonia became the utmost example of this, as expressed by a newspaper article written by Peruvian president Alan García (2006-2011):

> There are millions of idle hectares of timber, other millions that communities have not cultivated nor will ever cultivate, in addition to hundreds of mineral deposits that cannot be exploited (…). Rivers that run down the mountains are a fortune that goes to the sea without producing electricity. There are also millions of workers who do not exist even though they labour, because their work does not give them social security or pensions, and they do not contribute what they could to multiply national savings. (García Perez, 2007, n.d.)

In 2007, the Congress granted special power for the president to smooth the implementation of a Trade Agreement between Peru and the United States, and the president passed 11 laws allowing the exploration of Amazonia without any consultation with Indigenous peoples (Svampa, 2013). This was a marker of the second oil boom in Amazonia, when 84% of the forest territory went under some oil or gas contract, and 88% of these terrains overlapped with native communities (Finer & Orta-Martínez, 2010). Figure 3 illustrates how prospective extractive terrains intersect with native communities in the Ucayali region as of March 2021.[22]

[22] Map created by the author combining data from the Amazon Geo-Referenced Socio-Environmental Information Network (RAISG, as per the acronym in Spanish) and GADM (Global Administrative Areas Database).

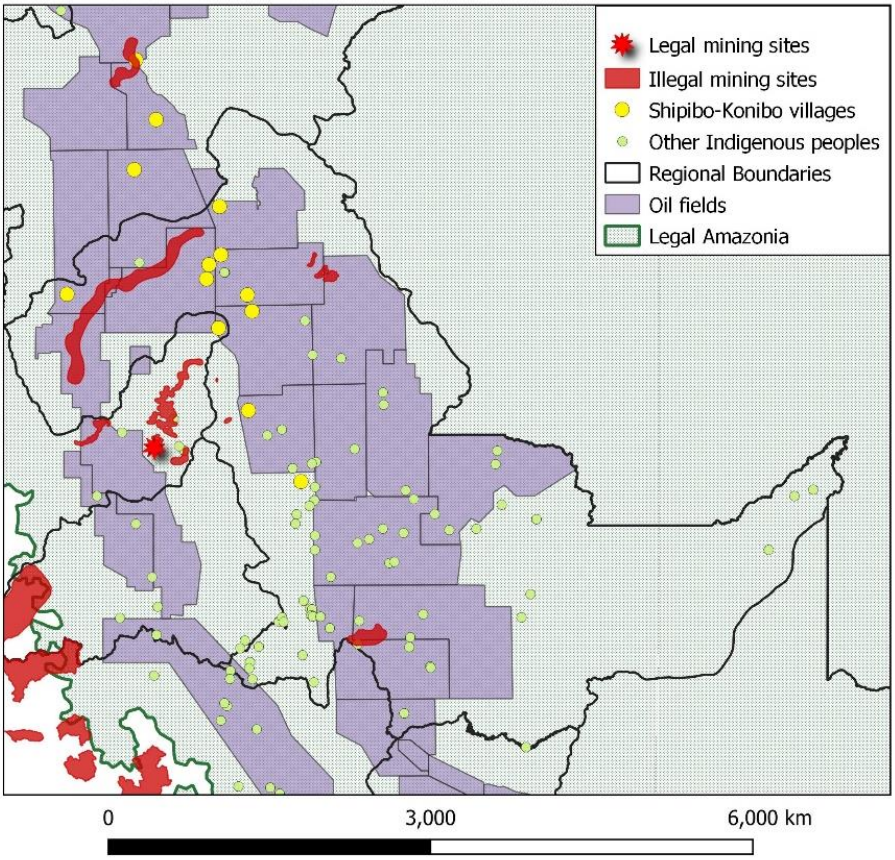

Figure 3 – Overlapping of extractive interests and Indigenous territories in Ucayali (Source: author's own)

Contrary to the State's narrative of social progress via extractive profit, Indigenous peoples experienced oil extraction as directly detrimental to their well-being (Merino, 2015). In regions affected by oil spills, such as the Achuar territory of Bagua in Northern Amazonia, food and water resources were contaminated by lead and cadmium which caused new illnesses in children (PUINAMUDT & Campanario, 2016). Despite families' urgent need for cash, access to the conditional cash-transfer programme Juntos was still patchy in the region.[23] People's dissatisfaction exploded into a massive protest in 2009, popularly known as Baguazo.

The protest was articulated by AIDESEP as a blockage of a highway linking the region of Bagua to the rest of the country. A military intervention to reopen the road without dialogue ended in violence, with dozens of deaths on both sides and over a hundred wounded protesters. The Baguazo protest was villainised by the national media (see Espinosa, 2009a), and

[23] I discuss social protection in more detail in chapter 5.

illustrated how the State's relationship with Indigenous peoples was still based on a sense of national sovereignty over Amazonian territories (Drinot, 2014). However, after this massacre, international pressure and national protests of solidarity forced the government to revoke the most controversial decrees and approve the Law of Prior Consultation (*Ley de Consulta Previa*) in 2011. This law determined that any political decision affecting the territory of demarcated native communities should obtain their consent prior to operation (Ilizarbe, 2019).

Another common trait of Latin America's neo-extractivism is the investment in social policy focused on the poorest, epitomised by famous programmes of conditional-cash transfers Bolsa Familia (Brazil) and Progresa (Mexico) (Loureiro, 2018). Social policies of poverty reduction reaffirmed the commodity consensus (Svampa, 2015) by establishing that profit from extractives would fund the economic inclusion of the masses, and were thus crucial for national development. This confirmed a pattern of State compensation (Gudynas, 2016), through which the impoverishment of sustainable livelihoods as a consequence of pollution and resource depletion was alleviated by increased access to the market economy and funding for social programmes.[24] In Amazonia, this culminated in a decree that universalised access to social protection for local Indigenous peoples in 2014 (see Figure 4).

[24] Nonetheless, throughout Latin America, the money invested in conditional cash-transfers represented roughly 1% of each national gross domestic product (Gudynas, 2016).

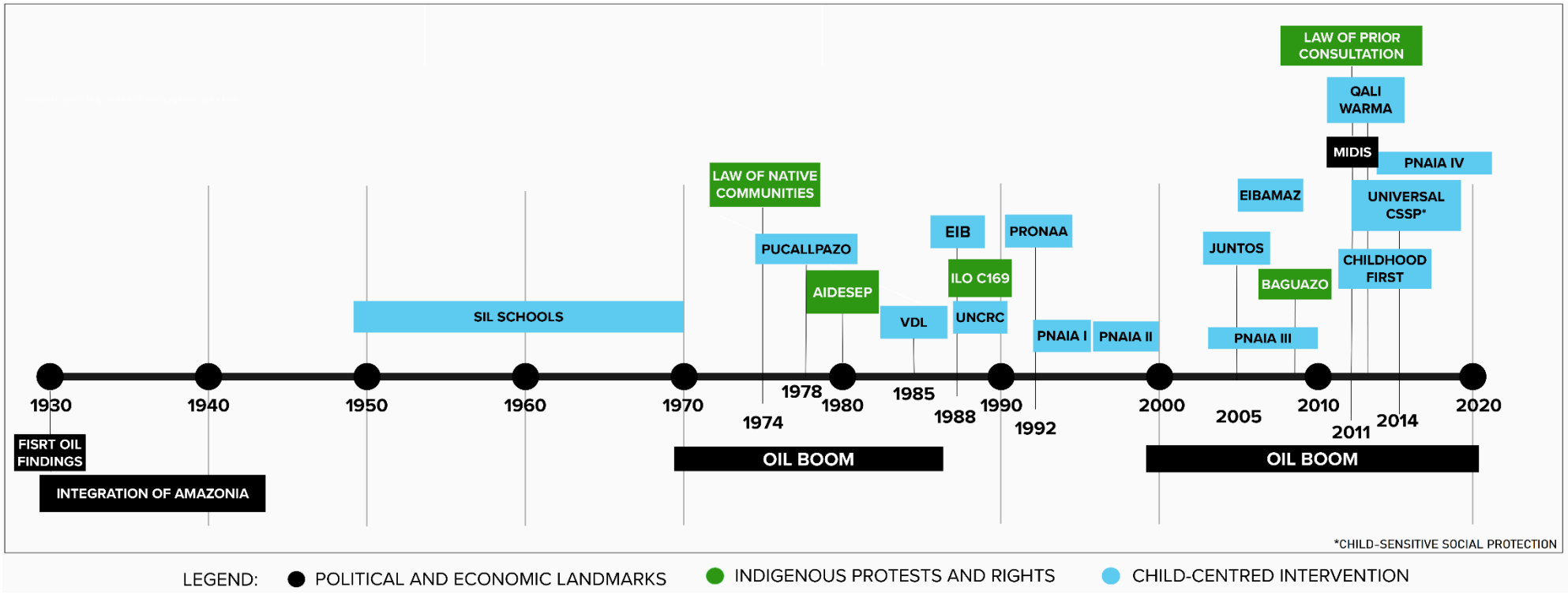

Figure 4 - Timeline of Amazonian development with attention to child-centred interventions

Source: author's own

The expansion of child-sensitive social protection in Amazonia marked a shift from sovereignty to governmentality in native communities' interactions with the State. However, it also positioned the child as the focus of government interventions, as most services that reach rural areas are designed for childhood.[25] This is epitomised by the National Plan of Action for Childhood and Adolescence (*Plan Nacional de Accion por la Infancia y la Adolecencia* or PNAIA), which defines the government's child-centred development targets in a given period. The first PNAIA was created with the national Code of Children and Adolescents (Law n. 27337) in 1992 to articulate Peru's commitment to the UNCRC through actionable goals based on national child indicators (see Figure 4). During my research, PNAIA was in its third version and set the plan of action for the period between 2012 and 2021 (Peruvian Government, 2012). Given how child indicators in rural areas and particularly in native communities lagged considerably behind that of other regions, as mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, improving Indigenous children's access to social services became paramount to equalise opportunities for children in Latin America (see Morlachetti, 2013).

Children's overrepresentation in regional poverty indexes despite the region's economic growth led to the development of a dense network of child-sensitive social protection (CSSP) (Rossel, 2013). It was also argued that CSSP could promote important social change by disrupting the intergenerational reproduction of poverty (Vásquez H., 2020). It was in this context that the Peruvian government created the nationwide school meals programme Qali Warma and the conditional cash-transfer Juntos, which I will analyse in chapter 5. However, at a time when the child's best interest became a core element of global social policy, a lack of critical reflection on the different meanings of childhood and child well-being risks reproducing a colonial moral imperative for State intervention in Indigenous territories (Nieuwenhuys, 2010).

Examples of the State's current understanding of childhood and child well-being are several. For instance, a 2012 report analysing the demographics of Indigenous Amazonia estimated that children up to the age of 14 comprised nearly 48% of the population in native communities, and this data was interpreted as a net drain rather than a resource (MINSA, 2012). However, this assumption contrasts with the perspective of many members of the Shipibo

[25] The Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) designed a social development plan that allegedly has a life course lens. However, there are more programmes focused on childhood than in any other age group. I discuss this further in chapter 5.

community.[26] As Peluso (2015a, p. 47) noted in relation to the Ese Eja, 'rather than the edict being that children are not considered complete persons until they reach adulthood, the tenet is that households are not complete households without children'. Moreover, the national Code of Children and Adolescents (Law n. 27337) situated that the well-being of children from ethnic minorities should only be prioritised when in agreement with dominant social norms. Article 7 expresses that:

> when dealing with children and adolescents that belong to ethnic groups or native or Indigenous communities, it shall be observed, apart from this Code and the current legislation, their customs, *whenever those are not contrary to the rules of public order*. (Government of Peru, 2000, p.6) [my emphasis]

If any doubt is left about the definition of proper child rearing, the code also dictates that children must know and respect the national values and symbols (Article 24) and that *patria potestad* (parental authority) is suspended if parents give role models and advice that corrupt children (Article 75). Therefore, the law sets a dangerous precedent for the implementation of child-centred interventions in Indigenous territories, as will be further discussed in chapter 5. The State's relationship with Indigenous children comes full of conditionalities (Manarelli et all, 2007) that push families to aquiesce to State rule, while government personnel are free to use their judgement to define the meaning of a child's moral corruption, as I will discuss in chapter 5.

My research was inspired by the complex meanings of State intervention on behalf of children in Settler colonial contexts, particularly considering that State absence can also be a form of violence. This section showed how child well-being was often a rationale pushing foreign interventions in the lives of Indigenous peoples in Ucayali, and therefore strengthened the justification of my case study. The following section will contextualise the realities of Shipibo native communities at the time of this research.

[26] As I will argue throughout this thesis, children are not only expected to contribute to household subsistence (see chapter 4) but also considered to be central to the continuity of culture (see chapter 5).

2.3. Research context

2.3.1. Geography and economy

The Shipibo people reside predominantly at the margins of the Ucayali River and its tributaries, where they have traditionally dwelled. Some small communities have also been formed in Madre de Dios and Loreto because of dispersion during the rubber boom (Figure 5). There are also non-demarcated Shipibo settlements in Lima and in the outskirts of the city of Pucallpa where some people have migrated in search of better education and job opportunities (see Espinosa, 2009b). However, the vast majority of the Shipibo population dwells in rural native communities. Although this kind of settlement was invented by the Peruvian State with the aid of foreign missionaries, as argued in previous sections of this chapter, it is now crucial to how the Shipibo and other Peruvian Amazonian peoples identify themselves (Gow, 1991; Slaghenauffi, 2019). Each native community was founded by a few families, and people in a village have complex kinship ties to each other and often to neighbouring villages as well.

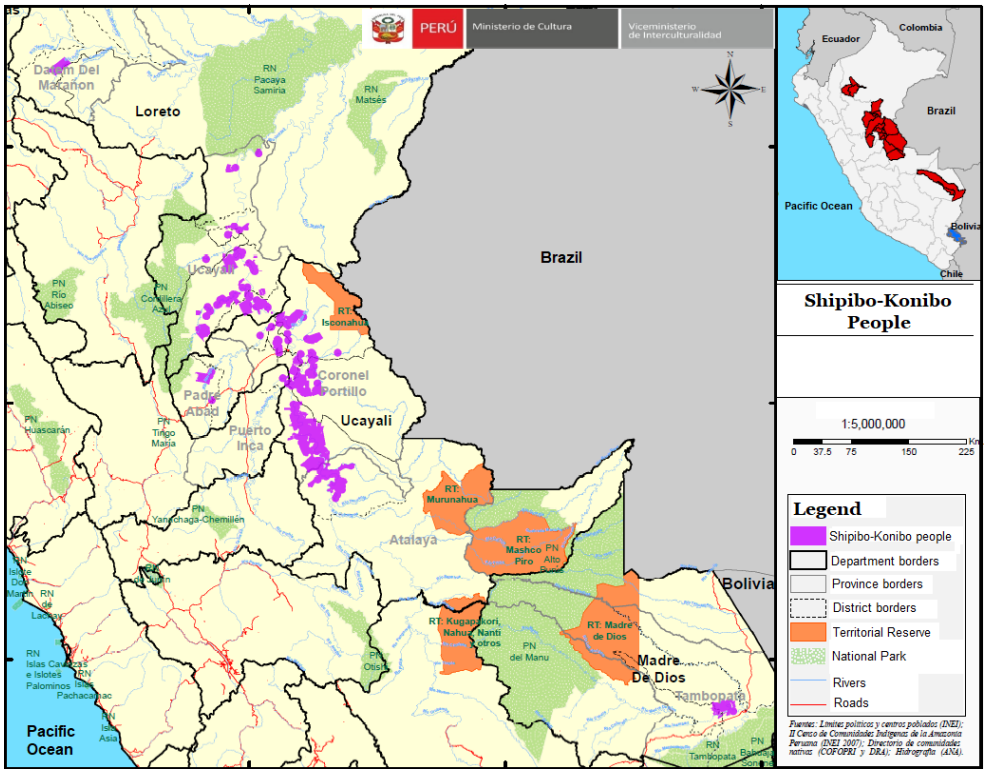

Figure 5 - Shipibo-Konibo native communities

Source: Peru's Database of Indigenous Peoples (BDPI), translated by the author.

Nowadays, roughly 90% of Shipibo native communities depend on water for locomotion (INEI, 2017a). The people's location along the Ucayali River and its tributaries is crucial to

their economy and social history. The Ucayali River is a massive headstream connecting the waters of the eastern Andes to the rainforest, and hence served as a key axis of communication with the rest of Peru and neighbouring Brazil since pre-Columbian times (Figure 6). It also exposed the Shipibo to more contact from missionaries and Settlers (Morin, 1998). The control of this vantage point allowed the Shipibo population to greatly surpass the population of the other 18 Indigenous nations in this region of the forest. It did so by incorporating other Pano-speaking groups that nowadays also identify as Shipibo-Konibo, namely the Konibo and Xetebo.[27]

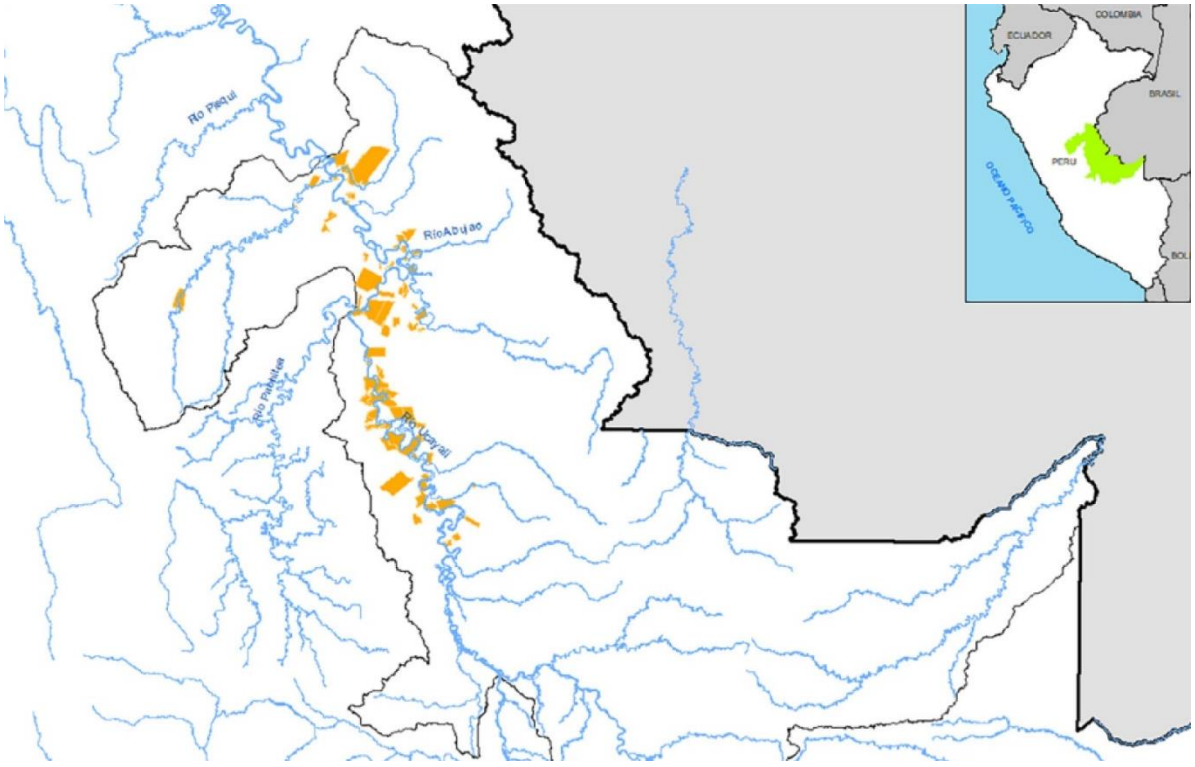

Figure 6 - Map of Amazon basin in Ucayali with location of Shipibo native communities

Source: Oyarce-Cruz et al. (2019)

The alluvial plains of Ucayali is a privileged location for the practice of slash-and-burn agriculture that permitted the formation of seminomadic settlements in earlier centuries (Morin, 1998). However, it is also a region prone to floods. Shipibo livelihoods are organised in relation to two main annual events: the dry and wet seasons. The river water level has an average of

[27] For a more detailed account of interethnic conflict in Ucayali, see Dev (2020) and Morin (1998).

seven-meter fluctuation between these two extremes, and seasonal transformations affect river navigability, agricultural production and the overall economy in the region (Ronchail et al., 2018).

Historically, Shipibo settlements would be built in higher grounds (*manan)* instead of floodplains (*tashba),* but the choice of settlement location reduced as people were pushed into floodplains by Settlers (Morin, 1998). Floodplains will have at least one annual flood inside their territory and be more susceptible to erosions of the riverbank, which is always moving and crumbling to the extent of sometimes demanding the relocation of a native community (Dev, 2020). Even in settlements more vulnerable to seasonal changes, the growth of the river used to be predictable (between the months of January and March) and extreme floods in which the water levels reached up to ten meters would only happen once each decade (Tournon, 2002). This allowed families to remain in the village during a flood for most years and prepare for the occurrence of a hazardous event that demanded their temporary relocation.

However, a study of floods in Western Amazonia (where Ucayali is located) in the period of 1985-2015 observed a growing trend of longer dry seasons with harsher and sudden floods in the rainy season, particularly marked by the extreme events of 2011 (Ronchail et al., 2018) (see *Figure 7*). This is related to the increased intensity of rainfall in the months of November and December that subsequently shortened the period of river growth. The new rainfall pattern is linked to warmer oceans (Wang et al., 2018) and atmospheric changes ensuing from deforestation (Espinoza et al., 2022). Climate projections indicate that the intensity and unpredictability of floods in Western Amazonia will only worsen in the next years (Duffy et al., 2015). This poses significant challenges to the sustainability of floodable native communities.

Figure 7 - Family in a flooded field in 2011
Source: Mai Joshin video to ask for help from government authorities

The architecture of villages is prepared to endure most floods. All houses, even the concrete buildings constructed by the government, are placed on stilts. Subsistence agriculture used to be equally adaptable to seasonal changes. Observing episodes of hazardous floods in 1984 and in 1994, Tournon (2002) noted that the soil of floodable villages did not produce much yuca, leading these native communities to a dependency on plantain. However, the latter crop is easily lost when flooded, along with the river fish that escapes into the forest. In preparation for a hazardous rainy season, floodable native communities would stock up on yuca flour and ferment game meat and fish (Tournon, 2002). People could also rely on higher ground native communities in case of scarcity, as their drier soil enabled a more abundant production of yuca (ibid.). However, climate change has been altering the onset, scale, and duration of floods. Changes in river seasonality affect the local economy and make the production of yuca unviable (see Langill & Abizaid, 2020). There is an overall tendency of replacement of more diverse foods for plantain in native communities, given that this crop grows faster in wet terrains (Slaghenhaufi, 2019) and sells easily in Pucallpa (Collado Panduro, 2021, p.68). This

poses a problem for the sustainability of lower ground native communities in harsher rainy seasons.

Moreover, floodable villages are now more likely to lose subsistence crops during the rainy season. Subsequently, people rely more heavily on alternative sources of income. While traditional Shipibo handicrafts and *ayahuasca* ceremonies can potentially contribute to a family's income[28], tourism in Amazonia is scarce during the rainy season. Hence, people often opt to migrate in search of waged job opportunities. In 2017, over 60% of Shipibo chiefs reported knowing people who had permanently emigrated from their village in that year (INEI, 2017a) but seasonal migration was not captured by this census. Recent studies of Shipibo livelihood strategies suggest that 75% of the population might migrate seasonally due to the floods and in search of temporary waged job opportunities (Collado Panduro, 2021)[29].

Rural job offers vary depending on resource demands, but the gold, logging and oil industries have had a stable presence in Ucayali for many decades (Barrantes & Glave, 2014, see also section above). In addition, illegal monocultures of coca have had an exponential growth in Ucayali, from 390 to 2,452 hectares between 2016 and 2020 (DEVIDA, 2021). Shipibo men in need of waged labour often look for opportunities in commercial plantations or logging, although they would prefer to have safer jobs in the cities which are not accessible due to their low level of formal education (Sherman et al., 2016). Consequently, families' growing economic dependency on cash pushes workers into an involvement with the very industries that impoverished their traditional livelihoods strategies (see also Arsel et al., 2019).

The economic development of Pucallpa, with its exponential population growth and increase in river traffic, had severe impacts on Shipibo livelihoods. A deteriorating sanitation situation altered the quality of the Ucayali River, as exemplified by the 1991-1992 cholera epidemic that I will discuss in more detail in chapter 6 (see also Cueto, 2000; Hern, 1991). More recently, a government report identified water contamination by lead and phosphorus along the Ucayali basin (National Authority of Water, 2018) [30]. This is related to the

[28] This may be truer to some households than to others. *Ayahuasca* ceremonies are hosted by just a few families in a village and profits are seldom shared. While the practice of *kené* embroidery is widespread among women, families without contact with tourists might struggle to make a sale. See Slaghenauffi (2019).

[29] The study was based on 34 interviews with different households in four Shipibo rural native communities. This sample represented roughly 24% of the total number of households.

[30] Ucayali's government parameters are: 0,0025 mg/L for lead (water had 10 times that amount), 0,05 mg/L for phosphorus (water had over 13 times that amount, and 22 times in regions closer to the city).

contamination of food resources and the subsequent appearance of skin rashes, digestive illnesses, and cognitive impairment in young children (PUINAMUDT & Campanario, 2016). Despite the poor water quality, the latest census of native communities indicates that 70% of Shipibo villages do not have a water well and only 4% had a bathroom with sanitation facilities (INEI, 2017a). Given how 40% toilets in native communities are pit latrines (ibid.), the foul odour of these facilities often pushes people to search for natural alternatives, such as bush areas behind buildings (Ames, 2021). This complicates further the issue of sanitation during floods.

In recent years, some development projects have aimed to address the lack of water access and sanitation in Amazonia. Since 2014, 15 floodable native communities received compost toilets and 27 received solar-powered water tanks from UNICEF Peru in partnership with the Spanish NGO Fundación Aquae.[31] Access to services varies widely among Shipibo native communities, with the level of infrastructure of a village generally predicted by its proximity to Pucallpa. Most riverine native communities have an entrance (the port) close to a river margin and grow inwards, with stores and State buildings located farther from the water (the centre). State buildings are easily identifiable by their cemented structure but these are rare. Moreover, while 80% of Shipibo native communities have schools, only 42% have a medical unit (INEI, 2017a). Electricity structure and phone lines are even rarer, reaching only 20% of native communities (INEI, 2017a).[32] The village where I based my work was part of this small percentage, although access to electricity depended on people's ability to buy petrol, and phone access was unreliable.

Another marked difference among Shipibo villages is the structure of their buildings. A quick Google search on Shipibo houses will display images from the early 2000s, when buildings were mostly covered with palm leaf and had open porches that remain characteristic in *ayahuasca* tourist centres. But nowadays most Shipibo houses meet the UNICEF and ECLAC (2012) definition of adequate housing, with fully enclosed wooden walls and corrugated iron roofs. The State has marked each house with an individual number to monitor the quantity of households per village and simplify the location of families. However, families

[31] Data from: Access on 25 May 2022.

[32] These numbers might have changed in the past two years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, long-lasting school closures pushed the government to create an online platform for primary school education, known as *Aprendo en Casa* (I learn from home). Consequently, Shipibo organisations have been requesting an improvement of internet access in native communities. See: https://aprendoencasa.pe Access on 4 August 2022.

tend to be highly dependent on each other, as I will discuss in chapter 4. Shipibo native communities have a pattern of matrilocal residence, with married daughters generally remaining in the same village and near their parents, while married sons are more likely to move out. Slaghenauffi (2019, p.38) notes that even where the Shipibo have moved to urban contexts, their neighbourhoods recreate similar kinship-based networks that end up replicating the social order of native communities. This is crucial to the cultural transmission of Shipibo cosmology, as I will detail in the next section.

2.3.2. Shipibo cosmology

The Shipibo refer to themselves as *noa jonikon*, which translates to 'we the real people' in most Panoan languages (Brabec de Mori, 2013).[33] In contrast, other people are *nawa* (foreigners), a suffix that is present in the official denomination of many Pano-speaking Indigenous peoples in Amazonia, such as the Kashinawa, Iskonawa and Sharanawa peoples. Similarly, the name 'Shipibo' was probably given to *noa jonikon* by their neighbours, who would refer to themselves as 'real people' and to other societies by a given moniker (Keifenheim, 1990). These changes in self-identification, pervasive in the region, suggest that identity is relational: a person can self-identify as *jonikon, nawa*, Shipibo or Peruvian, depending on their interlocutor and the context of conversation. However, the particularity in the Amazonian conception of personhood is that being a 'real person' is not a biological fact, but the result of an exchange of substances with kin (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 174). In other words, it is the practice of sharing food that nurtures relationships and common perspectives among humans (Costa, 2017). Following this logic, animals and plants can also be 'real people' among their own kin (Brabec de Mori, 2013).

Anthropologists have long argued that Amazonian societies cannot be understood simply by an analysis of social structures, given how the social order is based on the exchange of bodily substances (Seeger et al., 1979). While bloodlines can be interpreted as one example of these shared bodily substances, so is food – hence the importance of eating together (what anthropologists call commensality) to establish or reinforce kinship ties (Fausto & Costa, 2013; Vilaça, 2002). Much of Shipibo shamanism involves a diet that is used precisely to adopt the perspective of other-than-human beings or foreigners (Colpron, 2013). Likewise, Shipibo

[33] Pano is one of largest language families in Amazonia and it includes Shipibo language.

doctors often prescribe diets to foreigners that stabilise mental and physical illnesses by promoting an 'indigenisation' of bodily substances (Slaghenauffi, 2019, p.94). This chronic instability of bodies (Vilaça, 2005) also means that beings are susceptible to forest spirits, who can cause illness (known as *cutipa*), angst or bad luck in people who take too many resources or leave food to waste (Dev, 2020, p. 139).

To fully understand this permeability of human bodies, it is useful to look at Shipibo notions of *niwe* and *kaya*. *Kaya* is 'what makes us live' (Bertrand-Rousseau, 1986, p. 106), a vital energy that inhabits all living things and is particularly concentrated in certain human organs (Slaghenauffi, 2019). Meanwhile, *niwe* is the manifestation of this substance as an essence or 'wind' that can (and often does) affect others (Brabec de Mori, 2013; Illius, 1992; Slaghenauffi, 2019). Together, these two components of life can explain how all humans and other-than-humans are deeply interconnected through a shared life-giving substance:

> Everything seems to have an 'invisible double' for the Shipibo, be it a tree, a wild animal, a plant or a man, the world around us has a double nature. And each person knows perfectly well that they should consider this invisible world. (Bertrand-Rousseau, 1986, p.108 – my translation)

Colpron (2013) warns that the Shipibo perceive the whole world to be populated by a human-like creature named *ibo*, a term often translated as 'owner' or 'master' (Canayo, 2004). The owner of a plant will defend said being from actions that may harm it, and given that these masters are not confused with spirits – rather, they are endowed with human attributes – they grant plants and animals with social agency (Slaghenauffi, 2019, p.88), and the environment with social meaning (Descola, 2013).[34] The social agency of plants constitutes a crucial part of socialisation into Shipibo, as certain plants have the ability to regulate or alter entirely one's behaviour and skills (Slaghenauffi, 2019; Tournon & Silva, 1988). Plants' treatments will, consequently, be a fundamental component of adequate child rearing, as I will argue in chapter 4 (see also UNICEF, 2012b).

[34] The value of interconnectedness is also expressed in Shipibo material culture: the rope shape of *nishi*, a plant that is a core component of *ayahuasca*, alludes to the form of the primordial anaconda. But the same can be said about the forms of *kené*, the traditional Shipibo pattern, painted and embroidered by women in ceramics and textiles (Belaunde, 2012). The plant that allows women to dream of *kenés* was made of the ashes of an anaconda, and the very pattern of traditional drawings reproduces the interlinkages between all things (Belaunde, 2012; Valenzuela Bismarck & Rojas, 2004, p. 80).

The perception of the environment as a realm shared with equally powerful creatures incites the Shipibo to trace clear boundaries between their village and the forest, and treat the latter with fearful respect (Slaghenauffi, 2019, p.89). For instance, plant doctors must ask for permission of *ibo* to collect the ingredients for their medicines. Moreover, communities are filled with examples of humans and animals who changed form, especially before the arrival of Evangelical missionaries, when interspecies exchanges were more common. A strong *onanya* is still able to shift into other species when healing, and it is their knowledge of other plants' and animals' perspectives that enable a diagnosis and the curing of ailments (Brabec de Mori, 2012; Colpron, 2013).

This interconnected network is at the basis of Shipibo cosmology and determines much of everyday practices. For instance, it is believed that an anaconda (*ronin*) is the mother of the waters and provider of life, and her realm (*jene nete,* the water world) is populated with human-like spirits (*jene yoshin)* that can be either generous or treacherous, just like the anaconda herself (Belaunde, 2013). If people overfish or pollute the waters, the anaconda might get mad and move away, which makes the river dry or change shape. This communicates that the shared vital energy is scarce; because all beings compete for this resource, excessive predation is always punishable with aggression from another predator – be it a animal, plant or spirit (Santos-Granero, 2019).

The exchange of vitality between things is invisible to most people but can also be the cause of diseases. Harmful interchanges become visible to *onanyas* (spiritual healers)[35] through the consumption of ayahuasca (*óni*), which is also used to prescribe the cure for such ailments. Given that most people fear these visions and the arduous diets that make them possible, only a few *onanyas* per village can dialogue with other-than-human worlds and visualise interconnections between creatures. Thus, *onanyas* act as intermediaries between this world *(non nete)* and the other-than-human worlds and help other traditional medical practitioners – like *raomis* (plant doctor) and bone fixers – to identify the right treatment for an illness.[36]

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[35] I avoid using the word 'shaman' because my interlocutors perceived it as derogatory. This is both due to deceptive use in commercial *ayahuasca* ceremonies (Brabec de Mori, 2014) and because of phonetic similarities with the word 'Chama', a pejorative term imposed by *mestizos* on the Shipibo (Morin, 1998, p.143; Roe, 1982, p.96).

[36] This thesis does not focus on shamanic practices, although this has been a topic of growing interest in academia (e.g.: Labate & Cavnar, 2014), particularly with the rise of ayahuasca tourism and its socioeconomic impacts on Amazonian societies (Slaghenauffi, 2019; Brabec de Mori, 2014). It should be noted that while there is a differentiation between 'good' (*onanya)* and 'bad' (*yobe*) shamans,

This interconnected framework of living may be viewed simply as a different 'belief' by Westerners, given our own tendency to see the world as having one nature and multiple cultures. In contrast, the Shipibo see the world as having one culture – that of 'real people' – and multiple natures (Viveiros de Castro, 2014). This ontology has various repercussions in people's livelihoods, on what they consider well-being, and even in the structure of the rainforest. Archaeological evidence has shown that nature-based cultural practices, such as traditional burials and temporary arrangement of settlements, were responsible for the composition of Amazonia's fertile soil (Balée, 2013), and peoples' semi-nomadic social organisation contributed to the extension of the current forest structure (Palace et al., 2017). In sum, the complex social organisation of native Amazonian societies created the rainforest as we have come to know it.

The Amerindian political economy of life (Santos-Granero, 2019) is based on a notion of scarcity of vitality, a framework that is crucial to understand Shipibo relations with other peoples. To survive in a world of predation, it is necessary to learn the methods and incorporate the technological power from one's enemies. For instance, shamanic practices often incorporate external elements, such as electricity (Colpron, 2013) and guns (Brabec de Mori, 2017), and treatments tend to operate inside a duality. The *onanya* only has the power to give or take life – which is essentially a representation of the forest's power (Vilaça, 2016). In the history of many Indigenous peoples, the assimilation of inimical forces was interpreted as a willingness to become civilised (Lévi-Strauss, 2016; Viveiros de Castro, 2014). What I will argue in the following section is that this apparent open-mindedness is also a strategy of predation when foreign technological power becomes an asset for cultural and physical survival.

2.3.3. Syncretism and cultural change

The effects of transformation in Shipibo territories were not constricted to the space of native communities. Rather, interethnic contact, missionary advances and State presence also impacted cultural expressions in Amazonia. Gow (1993, 2003), who studied two Amazonian peoples who self-identify as *mestizos* despite being recognised as Indigenous by others

respectively those who cause harm and those who heal, the two practices are not easily separated as the act of healing is inherently predatory (see Brabec de Mori, 2014, p.13). In other words, someone's *onanya* might be someone else's *yobe*.

(namely, the Kokama and Yine peoples), showed that cultural change was a strategy to mingle with *mestizo* Settlers in a political and social context that is dominated by the latter. However, Gow also argued that these allegedly 'acculturated' peoples maintained distinctive practices and beliefs that could only be explained through Amazonian cosmologies. Adding to this, Santos-Granero (2009) claimed that Indigenous performances of *mestizoness* are not even permanent: instead, they are simply an openness to the Other.

The Amerindian openness to the other is an idea presented by Lévi-Strauss (2016) to express a pattern of Indigenous willingness to mimic and appropriate Settler cultural elements, originally described in colonial documents and traveller testimonies of the first invasions of the Americas. Taussig (2018) interprets this mimetic behaviour as an attempt to adopt the perspective of others – a theory sustained by recent ethnographic accounts among various Amazonian peoples (Killick, 2019; Vilaça, 2016). For instance, a comparison of pre- and post-Columbian ceramics can illustrate how cultural hybridisation reconciles ontological antagonisms. Walking through the Larco Museum in Lima, Dev (2020, p.43) noticed that pre-Columbian ceramics portraying a predator's domain over all beings (represented by a jaguar god in position of power over human figures), were substituted by images of humans carrying a dead jaguar after the arrival of Spaniards. Apart from the evident humanisation of power in these depictions, what is also at stake is the endurance of the predator-prey dynamic in understandings of the world order.

Many aspects of contemporary Shipibo customs can be traced back to interethnic exchange. The Shipibo had a history of trade and conflict with other Amerindian peoples long before the arrival of the first European travellers in Amazonia. Incan influences are noticeable in their language (e.g.: numbers above two that are counted in Quechua) and cosmology, with myths about an ambivalent Inca figure being used to admonish individuals about foreigners' potential greed and generosity (Calavia Sáez, 2000; Valenzuela Bismarck, 2018).[37] However, the frequency and form of interethnic contact would change greatly with the occupation of Amazonia, as argued earlier in this chapter. The essential art of embroidering *kené,* and the

[37] This is likely to have influenced the Shipibo's relationship with Europeans at the time of invasion. Upon the arrival of Franciscan missionaries, the Shipibo approached them to obtain iron tools yet systematically resisted religious conversion – which drove them to recurrent conflicts with the priests (Varese, 2006). When the independence of Peru led to the expulsion of Spanish missionaries in 1811, it left the Shipibo with material needs. This dependency was then exploited by extractive settlers who persuaded them to work as *peones* in exchange for cotton fabrics, machetes, and other items (Morin, 1998). See section 2.2.1.

elaborate skirt and blouse that elder women traditionally wear stem from 20th century contacts with missionaries, who provided the needles and taught women to embroider the patterns that they used to paint in textiles with natural dye (Dev, 2020).

Similarly, the habit of drinking *ayahuasca* - itself also a Quechua word – is probably a consequence of interethnic contact. Gow (1994) theorises that it was probably the close interethnic contact inside Catholic missions in the late 19th century that allowed ayahuasca to spread among different peoples while cultivating elements of Christianity. Although Morin (2015) notes that missionaries who visited Konibo villages in the 17th century had already described *ayahuasca* practices, and that the plant was likely part of pre-Columbian commerce between Andes and Amazonia, she also acknowledges that the Shipibo healing practices have been deeply influenced by Christianity.

The proximity to missionaries increased significantly after the arrival of SIL and several other protestant missions in the 1940s (see section 2.2.1). The consequences of this have been several in the social organisation and political dynamics of Shipibo villages, as discussed earlier in this chapter. However, it is also worth stressing the influence that SIL missionaries had over Indigenous peoples' schooling in Amazonia. Given that the education provided inside such institutions afforded few opportunities, apart from learning the Bible, many pupils later converted to Christianity. Capredon (2021) notes that in 2007 nearly 44% of the Shipibo population self-identified as members of an Evangelical church. Considering that the Evangelical religion had a growth of 25% in Peru since then (INEI, 2017b), it is likely that this percentage would be even higher today.

However, religious conversion is not necessarily akin to a shedding of customs. Literature on Amazonia has given substantial evidence that traditional practices can be syncretised with Western values – for instance, by describing forest spirits as 'demons' (Slaghenauffi, 2019) or offering shamanic apprenticeships to wealthy new age foreigners (ibid; Brabec de Mori, 2014) – and yet remain strongly perspectivist (see also Vilaça, 2016). A more statistical evidence of this co-existence of cultures can be found in the latest census of native communities, according to which 65% of the Shipibo population treats illness with a combination of medicinal plants and Western allopathy, and 13% uses exclusively traditional Shipibo treatments (INEI, 2017a).

The incorporation of foreign cultural elements without an abandonment of local traditions indicates that the Shipibo display an inconsistent performance of identity that is essentially Amazonian. People adopt different perspectives as it becomes necessary to resist against

harmful forces – which is the same perspectivist logic found in traditional shamanism (Brabec de Mori, 2017; Slaghenauffi, 2019). Nonetheless, this hybridism takes place in a context of unequal political power that Tubino & Zariquiey (2007, p.18) call 'cultural diglossia'. Given how the Peruvian State values the urban, literacy-based, and Spanish-speaking culture of *mestizos* over all others, interculturality implies an unequal social prestige at a political level. Unless people learn the ways considered legitimate by the State, they cannot occupy certain spaces. The imbalance caused by the overbearing power of Settler culture is illustrated by Shipibo EIB teacher Lener Guimaraes:

> The Shipibo do not have a magnet, they have two: the magnet that they have placed on our outside and the magnet inside ourselves. What happens is that sometimes the outside magnet is stronger than one's own, and sometimes there are the two (…) I think one has to understand oneself through this own magnet more than anything, to feel, live, think freely as Shipibo without alienating other people's ideas and thoughts. To feel good until the day you die. So we need this [internal magnet] to take care of everything that can come from outside; but we also need that other [external] magnet, but we don't need to put it in our centre. We need to put it, perhaps, at our side or perhaps in our hand (…) We need to reflect much more from our own spaces (Tubino & Zariquiey, 2007, p. 61)

The quote above presents the perils of hybridisation in a context where *mestizo* culture acts as a magnet decentring one's internal compass. According to Guimaraes, an ideal interculturality would have a controlled degree of mixing, allowing one to discern between what is external and what is one's essence. While this section has given plenty of evidence that hybridisation is a complex, reversible phenomenon, it is also worth noting that the argument of acculturation has been long used by Latin American States to deny rights to Indigenous peoples (Carneiro da Cunha, 1995). The Shipibo not only remained faithful to their beliefs, but adapted their healing practices to respond to the succession of epidemics and slave raids that disassembled a significant portion of the original native Amazonian societies (Colpron, 2013). However, they are also wary about pressures for Indigenous erasure (Espinosa, 2012). Proximity to *mestizo* ways-of-being is a conflicting possibility: on the one hand, it grants access to gatekept spaces; on the other, it threatens the maintenance of ethnic rights vis-à-vis the State.

In this context, what happens when *mestizo* culture, in the form of child-sensitive social protection (CSSP) implemented by the Peruvian State, reaches the core of a native community to feed and discipline Shipibo children? And does the definition of child well-being enacted through CSSP coincide with Shipibo values? These questions guided the empirical focus of this thesis.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter presented a contextual background to the ensuing case study, focusing on the history and contemporary context of the Shipibo people. Section 2.2 paid attention to how Amazonian childhoods were perceived by the Peruvian State in colonial times, and why this began to change in the 1950s. The literature suggests that the timing of State interest in Indigenous child well-being coincides with oil discoveries and an intent to establish a stronger governance of the national territory. There is also evidence that the focus on childhood had a transformative power to Shipibo political organisation, as it was through the education of youth that people became more engaged with regional politics. Nonetheless, education also presented an image of Indigenous cultures as static, whereas the national *mestizo* culture was portrayed as enabling progress. In section 2.2.3 I argued further that children's rights and child-sensitive social protection in Peru still has some parallels with colonial forms of intervention, as they reinforce the assimilation of national ideologies over the local culture.

The second part of this chapter offered an overview of Shipibo native communities nowadays. It started by discussing how Shipibo native communities are enduring environmental challenges that affect people's livelihood strategies, and therefore push towards cultural change. The following sub-section presented the cosmology that guides Shipibo people's interactions with other-than-humans in their own territory, with illustrative examples from local shamanic practices. Finally, the chapter ends by arguing that the Shipibo's close contacts with Western culture (represented by the *mestizos*) is as much a strength as a vulnerability given the close history of acculturated peoples that surrounds their territory. This sets the ground for my empirical analysis of how children grow up amid development projects in Ucayali.

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapters have introduced the theoretical framework and the context of this research. This chapter presents the methodology that have shaped this thesis. I will start by presenting the research design and discussing the philosophy that guided this research and shaped its methodology (3.2). In Section 3.3, I reflect on my positionality and research ethics in a context of significant power imbalances and cultural differences. I detail how consent was obtained at different levels, and how ethical issues shifted during the coronavirus pandemic. In section 3.4, I present the set of qualitative methods used in this project and explain why and how each method was used. A part of this section (3.4.4) is entirely dedicated to explaining the development and implementation of remote data collection, and the role of each research assistant in this. Lastly, in section 3.5 I describe how data was analysed.

3.2. Research Design

The methodology presented in this chapter is grounded in a relativist epistemological approach. Therefore, it approaches knowledge not as universal evidence, but as a social construction that greatly depends on researcher positionality, relationship with informants and the context and instruments of research (Sumner & Tribe, 2008). Social constructivism guided the research design towards a triangulation of methods that could provide multiple insights on the issues at stake, a careful reflexivity embedded in the research process and the inclusion of collaborative and participatory methods. Such research practices are particularly valuable to grasp the perspectives of children, and hence counter 'top-down production of evidence' (Jones & Sumner, 2011, p.26).

At all stages, this project was designed following international guidelines of research involving children (Graham et al., 2013), insofar as to consider if the research was really needed and could contribute to new knowledge that could benefit the participants. In chapter 1, I situated how the research problem was identified and developed into research questions. This chapter discusses further how these research questions led to different methods, and how this triangulation of methods helped me reach my research aim of understanding how Shipibo children's lived experiences and perspectives of well-being are affected by ecological and political economic transformations in Amazonia. Just as importantly, it discusses the ethical

concerns that were embedded and shifting in the research process, particularly due to the coronavirus pandemic. Because this thesis is interested in Shipibo children's experiences in a context of racialised land disputes, it demanded constant reflexiveness about embodied power imbalances, such as the age, gender and cultural differences between researcher and key interlocutors. This has been considered in the development of this methodology, and two principles guided my approach: the need to listen to children's voices and the risk of cultural equivocation (Viveiros de Castro, 2004), which relates to the inappropriate translation of apparently similar concepts in cross-cultural research. I will explain these principles in more detail below.

The importance of considering children's opinions about issues that concern them is a core premise of childhood studies. It stems from an acknowledgement that children's perspectives have historically been overlooked or silenced by researchers and practitioners in various ways (Qvortrup, 1994; Roberts, 2017).[38] The premise is based on the idea that children not only have the cognitive capacity to enunciate their will, but also the right to be heard (James & Prout, 2005). Given that children's peer groups produce innovative cultures (Corsaro, 2003), literature has pointed out their important role in the production of social change (Morelli, 2017; Tanner, 2010). What is, however, less acknowledged is the fact that children's utterances are produced and limited by a sociocultural context that must be taken into account to fully understand children's agentic capacities (Spyrou, 2018). In other words, children's voices cannot be fully comprehended without an understanding of the generational order in place. This gives a sense of how children are positioned within the society, and how they are perceived and treated by elders (Mayall & Zeiher, 2003; Punch, 2019). It is of equal importance to understand that children might not be the only interlocutors that have a say on childhood, and thus the relevancy of an ethnographic approach to understand power relationships and various cultural factors influencing children's experiences (Szulc, 2015).

The other principle that guides this study is an awareness that cultural equivocation is a common product of research among different cultures (Viveiros De Castro, 2004). The problem of studying Shipibo culture through concepts and theories formulated in Western contexts (e.g. childhood) is that direct comparisons could lead to a false translation of radically different ideas

[38] This was even more noticeable during the coronavirus pandemic. While children's lives were gravely affected by COVID-19, with access to schools and peers curtailed and an increase in child poverty and domestic violence (UNICEF, 2020), their opinions and well-being were seldom considered in large-scale political decisions that were affecting their lives (Spray & Hunleth, 2020).

(e.g. of child well-being). To remain conscious of my theoretical tensions, I sought inspiration in literature that questions the oversimplification of cultural relativism and of conceptual analogies that underpin the universalism of Western philosophy (e.g. Blaser, 2013; Viveiros de Castro, 2014). I also committed to taking my interlocutors seriously by interpreting their lived experiences and cosmologies literally, rather than figuratively (De La Cadena, 2010). Hence, this thesis required a certain adaptability of research questions and methods throughout participant observation and data analysis, giving space for new issues to gain relevancy organically and in dialogue with Shipibo knowledge. While this research was far from being fully participatory and collaborative, since it was moulded by a rigid temporality (Rosen, 2021) and theoretical framework, its methodological openness was strongly influenced by the work of Indigenous scholars (Smith, 2012; Wilson et al., 2019). Such an approach was particularly enriching after the interruption of my first fieldwork, when I redesigned methods to finish data collection remotely and working with Shipibo research assistants (see section 3.3.3).

Some methodological creativity is generally praised in research with children. The literature acknowledges the importance of flexibility in child-centred participatory research (e.g. Abebe, 2009; Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008), as methods have to be tested and adapted to fit the context and skills of each particular group of children. However, the more participatory stage of my fieldwork took place after disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic forced a change of research plan. Several challenges presented themselves to my project: this rural community had no phone or internet connection, there was a language barrier as my scarce knowledge of Shipibo rusted quickly without practice, and costs of research assistance and of ensuring health safety required me to limit the time of commissioned fieldwork to a minimum. Therefore, I developed my plan for remote data collection using the draw-and-tell method that had been successful during in-person fieldwork (de Carvalho, 2021).

Although this research was conducted in two parts, the resulting thesis is written as a single monograph. Therefore, I decided to use the same logic to structure this methodology. As with many projects conducted in the same historical moment, this thesis is a product of a patchwork ethnography (Günel, Varma, & Watanabe, 2020) that pieces together different periods and forms of fieldwork in the process of making thick description. I chose to write it in the ethnographic present to build a story that is cohesive to the readers despite the disruptions of the pandemic.

3.3. Positionality and research ethics

My identity impacted all stages of my data collection, although my positionality varied at different stages of this project. Being Brazilian, I originally intended to conduct this research in my home country but the election of right-wing president Jair Bolsonaro in 2018 – and his plan of repurposing Amazonia for agribusiness – made the prospect of prolonged fieldwork in this region unsafe. Subsequently, I looked for neighbouring areas where I could pursue the same project. From my first contact with UNICEF Peru and the Indigenous organisations in Ucayali, my Brazilian identity granted a sense of proximity and solidarity that was heightened whenever in discussions about the conservation of the forest, the rights of Indigenous peoples or inequalities of our region. This was potentially enhanced due to the political crisis in Brazil and the direct effects it had on Amazonia. However, my interlocutors' perception of me as an innocuous foreigner was aided by other aspects of my identity – namely, the fact that I was a *mestiza* (mixed-race woman) doing research on their children's well-being.

Gow (2003, p.64) has argued that Brazilian surnames are often associated with high social status in Peruvian Amazonia, given the transnational history of the rubber economy. This could have been particularly challenging among the Shipibo, who were enslaved by rubber barons and remain cheated by Brazilians in the commerce of ayahuasca (as exemplified by an overheard complaint 'the Brazilians sell the deer before hunting it'). Considering this, I often wondered how much my mixed-race descent influenced my proximity to my host family. Inside the logics of Pano-speaking peoples, who inhabited territories that were arbitrarily delimited as Peru, Brazil and Bolivia, *mestizos* are seen as a closer type of *nawa* (foreigner) than White people (Keifenheim, 1990, p. 92). The *mestizo* is an ambivalent figure, perceived as 'a mediator between the Indigenous and the White world and a defender of Indigenous peoples (…) but also represent the relationship of exploitation of the first Settlers' (Morin, 1998, p. 292).

Adults very early on referred to me as a *brasilera* (Brazilian) and treated me with more comradery than White tourists (*gringos)* and Peruvian *mestizos* who worked for the government. I received a similar treatment from my research assistants. For instance, Douglas mentioned at our first online meeting: 'I asked Danny [the translator, who introduced us] if you were from *gringoland* or from *Limaland,* but she said 'no, relax, she is from *Brasiland*'. Meanwhile, children grappled with the category that they wanted to ascribe to me. I did not look like White people, nor like any local Indigenous nation. I resembled Peruvian *mestizos*, but if I was also a foreigner maybe I was a *gringa*? The Brazilian identity settled this: it was

familiar, yet foreign, and Brazilians were also *mestizos*, as they knew well from their football heroes.[39]

The physical transformation that I underwent during fieldwork also symbolised the *mestizo* in-betweenness. I had arrived from England looking pale, but quickly regained a brown skin tone. The matriarch from my host family noticed this transformation, which seemed to correspond my acquisition of skills to dwell in the village and praised me: 'we can see that you are Shipibising yourself!'. Because I often wore trousers to avoid mosquito bites, my appearance in shorts was even more confusing: half brown, half pale. Milena, a 11-year-old girl, once told me: 'it's funny, if we look at you from a distance with your legs out, you almost look like a *gringa*, but your arms and your face are like mine'.

It is also probably due to my complexion that I was never mistaken for a tourist or assumed to be wealthy. In Amazonia, like in most of Latin America, race is a signifier of class, and White-looking people are socially read as part of a political and economic elite (de la Cadena, 2005). Hearing from other researchers in the area, most of whom were White, I realised that race played an important role in my relationships. North American and European researchers of both genders lived in accommodations for *ayahuasca* tourists, were served food and expected to contribute with substantial amounts of money – six times what I was asked to pay for rent. Whereas in every community I visited, I always shared the house and its chores with a family and was expected to share food and financial responsibilities in the same way. For instance, if I was the only woman in a house, men would simply sit around and wait for me to cook – it was an implied responsibility that I had to negotiate, as it made me late for school.

Yet I am fully aware of the gendered aspect of my interlocutors' expectations. It made me reflect on the invisible toll of fieldwork on women, particularly when compared to the experiences of a White man (Caplan et al., 1995). More importantly, gender implied a particular sort of risk – that of sexual violence. In the male-dominated offices of Pucallpa, any display of friendliness was read as a flirtatious invitation. Men would promptly ask if I was single, and if I made the mistake of answering the question a couple of times, I rapidly learned to evade it. When my interlocutors insisted, I pretended to be married, taking advantage of the hypocritical complementarity between *machista* and *marianista* thinking: while a single female is a mere object of desire (machismo), a married woman (and a mother) is the sacred virgin

[39] Children cheered for Flamengo, a high-ranking team from my hometown Rio de Janeiro in which the Peruvian striker Guerrero – himself a *mestizo* – had played for several years. Guerrero had also dated a Brazilian woman named Thaisa, and children pronounced my name like hers.

Mary. To cope with this, I searched for sorority in each of these spaces. While my female friends helped me develop safety strategies, stories of rape were alarmingly banal and made me wary of situations that I would perceive as harmless and yet were read as an opportunity for men that disregard female consent.

This certainly had an impact on my research. I refrained from interviewing flirtatious male informants and avoided being alone with men, which resulted in a lot more time spent with women than with men in the village. However, my female identity also came with privileges. Nobody ever questioned my reasons to be interested in children, as childcare was assumed to be a female instinct. I was also granted easy access to women's intimate lives, which, given the prevalent absence of fathers, was an important way of approaching children's family lives.

However, my age was a barrier to approach children in the beginning of fieldwork. It is a common anthropological trope to say that the ethnographer is perceived as akin to a child, and this is particularly true for those of us researching childhood. My female friends mocked me as one, as I had no knowledge of how to fish, how to kill a chicken or make fire. My food was often burned or raw, and I am pretty sure that it was this more than my claims of being late for school that convinced them to give me other chores. Conversely, my ineptitude could not place me farther from my school colleagues, as children were skilful. Five-year-olds paddled a canoe alone and came back with at least a basket of small fish to distribute to family. They could also open a coconut with a single movement of a machete. I lacked any useful abilities for survival and was too sensitive about killing animals, therefore I cannot claim that I have adopted the least-adult role (Mandell, 1988) – in fact, I was the perfect portrait of a useless urban grown-up. Children often mocked me for my character: too frail, too dependent and treating animals like human people.

Figure 8 – Schoolchildren examine half of a venomous snake after chopping its head

Attending the school as a student, and requesting to learn with and from children (Mayall, 2000) in their daily activities, was my main strategy to break this barrier. Like Corsaro (2003), my efforts to be part of children's shared cultures made me into an odd adult – while I definitely have the physical characteristics and social authority of a grown woman, in many ways I did not behave like one. 'Normal' adults would never share the same activities of children nor play with them. From a very young age, women become mothers, and started to share the obligations of other parents, instead of behaving as children's peers. The presence of friendly adults in the school was also rare. Those that visit that space are there to teach or discipline children; in contrast, I would sit in the small desks with students, and attempt to do the same activities – often asking them for help with my limited Shipibo.

Gender, nationality and the 'odd adult' status are aspects of my identity that lost importance during remote fieldwork, when a mixed-gendered team of Shipibo-speaking adults collected data on my behalf. Having a male research assistant allowed for the inclusion of more male interviewees, while a Shipibo-speaking woman could access sensitive information that I would never have obtained from children in Spanish. Nonetheless, there was a stronger power dynamic in place, as there was no time to build rapport. Activities were proposed as school tasks for child participants and were in fact perceived as educational by parents because they

provoked reflections on important aspects of community life. I am also aware that the division of labour was difficult for the female researcher, who felt burdened by administrative responsibilities, and ideally it would have been important to have had two female research assistants to share the load of gendered labour.[40]

While aspects of my identity seemed to fade during remote data collection, my affiliation to a British university was equally magnified and became a central marker of economic privilege. Although my budget was scarce and only allowed for a week of fieldwork, I was still in a position of hiring help, buying boat tickets and art supplies. The expenses with research equipment gave the unreal impression of an abundance of funds, and my limitations had to be candidly communicated to the research assistants and the community before the start of data collection.

Communication was key not only to express the limitations of my economic condition as student researcher, but also to ensure that I was not mistaken for a government worker or UNICEF staff. This is particularly challenging in prolonged fieldwork, as participants might have unrealistic expectations of what this relationship entails (see Crivello & Morrow, 2021). To solve this, I stressed my absolute lack of power at every stage of consent, making explicit that I could not promote changes in the community. I also manifested my willingness to make research relevant, in the sense that it could be used to express people's visions of child well-being.

As in all child-centred research, my main concern was with children's consent, and particularly the many subtle ways by which they may express willingness to end a conversation (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). However, before I could even talk to child participants, I first had to negotiate access through a series of gatekeepers, such as the chief of the native community, the parents, the school's headmaster and the teachers. This was done for both in-person and remote fieldwork. I detail the ethical issues of different phases of this research below.

3.3.1. Finding a host native community

As a lone female researcher, having a support network was crucial to my decision of where to pursue fieldwork. I contacted UNICEF Peru when I was still in England. They put me in contact with their local office in the city of Pucallpa for logistical support in exchange for a

[40] This was my original plan, but three potential research assistants had health issues at the time and could not commit to this work.

summary of my thesis' findings translated to Spanish at the end of my PhD.[41] In parallel, I also contacted Shipibo representatives at FECONAU, the Federation of Native Communities of Ucayali and regional branch of AIDESEP. They put me in contact with Shipibo teachers, some native communities and with other people and organisations working in the region. One of these key contacts was Caro. A strong-minded and feminist media-activist, she accompanied me in scoping visits to native communities where she had previously filmed and introduced me to other female researchers working in the area.

I never travelled alone in my first visit to a native community, and my companions were always women with previous experience in the village, who could introduce me to each village's chief. I had a preliminary list of 8 native communities, but many did not fit my criteria for this study.[42] I looked for a rural village where the church's presence had not repressed Shipibo culture, and with relatively easy access to Pucallpa in case of an emergency. Another concern was safety. All villages had territorial disputes with nearby extractive settlements, but in some cases the tension was too extreme and potentially violent. For instance, I avoided places with recurrent threats of aggression or where children were employed in exploitative conditions by extractive industries.[43] Lastly, an important factor in my decision was the first impressions that I had from potential host families as to their ability to act as gatekeepers to the rest of the community.

The native community where I based my research, which I will refer to as Mai Joshin[44], was located around 50km by boat from Pucallpa. The trip took from 2 to 5 hours depending on the type of boat, weather, and river's volume. The village was also on the route to Brazil, and less than 100km from the closest transnational border. This gave me some common ground at first, as my host family had relatives on the Brazilian side and people were interested in knowing about my country's politics regarding the rainforest. Nevertheless, the river stream that led to Brazil was known as a route for illegal activities, such as drug traffic, gold mining

[41] My connection to UNICEF did not interfere in my interactions with families, as I was not associated with the institution nor had any power. The data collected throughout my fieldwork was also exclusively mine, and I could choose the format and the level of detail of my reports.
[42] To safeguard anonymity, I will not disclose the names of these villages.
[43] AIDESEP was aware of these conditions and, where relevant and with my interlocutor's consent, I signalled the situation to UNICEF Peru.
[44] Mai Joshin (red land) was the original Shipibo name for their traditional territory, nowadays occupied by the city of Pucallpa. I use this pseudonym to protect the anonymity of my host native community and its inhabitants.

and logging. None of these activities seemed to affect life in the community, although they caused concern as I will discuss in chapter 6.

I was introduced to my host family by Caro, who was doing a short film project in Mai Joshin. We stayed with a kind-hearted family that had a good status in the community (the chief of Mai Joshin was the matriarch's cousin) and were receptive to my research project. At the end of my scoping visits, I contacted their eldest son and asked for permission to stay. We agreed on a monthly rent and on a weekly contribution of groceries that I would bring from Pucallpa. In exchange, the men would provide fish and game. However, the family's positive response was only a small step in my consent process. To stay in Mai Joshin, I had to request the chief's permission and the community's consent. The chief was pleased that I wanted to work with children, as sociocultural change was one of his greatest concerns, but explained that it was ultimately the community who needed to accept my proposal. Hence, we needed to organise an assembly.

3.3.2. Communal consent

Authorisation for this research relied mostly on verbal consent obtained during communal assemblies, given that most of my interlocutors were functionally illiterate. Both stages of fieldwork used the same strategy, as the process is akin to meetings regarding bigger political decisions.[45] The event was announced to the whole village through a speaker over a period of a few days to gather a relevant number of attendees. When the day arrived, the meeting took place at *jeman xobo* (communal house), one of the buildings built at the centre of the village. Although the building is not large enough to house the entire village it was packed with 80 people during the assembly that accepted my research proposal. This was roughly a quarter of the total population of at least 300 permanent residents (INEI, 2018).[46] During the meeting, female and male attendees were in approximately equal numbers despite women being visibly

[45] In theory, the democratic structure of native communities is protected by law since the recognition of these settlements. The role of chief is not permanent nor waged, and is observed closely and with much criticism by people in the native community (see Surrallés et al., 2016).

[46] My data reiterates the census' estimation, but the population fluctuated frequently and especially between the dry and wet seasons. The chief estimated the total number to be almost the double, but his projection included individuals that were frequent migrants or who moved to the city and still had close ties with the village. A population of over 600 people founded the community according to Peru's Database of Indigenous Peoples (BDPI). Available at: https://bdpi.cultura.gob.pe Access on 30 April 2022.

the majority of permanent residents in the village. Women sat at one side with toddlers (older children and adolescents did not attend the meeting, but spied on us from outside), while men sat on the opposite side and were considerably more verbal. This was not entirely surprising, as men are traditionally the ones in political and commercial roles throughout Amazonia (Surrallés et al., 2016).

The chief conducted the meeting in Shipibo, introducing my case and inviting me to speak, and Ronin sat beside me and helped me to understand what was being discussed. Then, I candidly described my research purposes in Spanish, and in the one feeble Shipibo sentence that I knew at the time: 'I want to learn with the children' (*eara bakebobetan axekasai*). The chief was encouraging after my statement. He emphasised the challenges of youth, and how important it was to look at this. The attendees nodded as he spoke, and men presented some dissatisfaction with children's education. Women, however, remained silent. One of the elderly residents, a defiant grandfather called Ismael, confronted me: 'you can learn from our children, but what are you teaching them in return?'. I addressed the question by asking what they would like me to teach them. After a brief argument in Shipibo, in which women became slightly more vocal, Ismael answered that I should teach them some Portuguese and talk to them exclusively in Spanish, as children leave the school with poor language skills and cannot find good jobs. 'This way they learn with you as well', he concluded.

In an ensuing debate, the assembly discussed the issue of tourism income and how it should be divided among the community. Ronin argued (in Shipibo) that I was a student and not a tourist, and therefore I should not be charged like a *gringa*. He also disclosed my contributions towards his family. The chief proposed, and I agreed, that I should contribute to communal expenses as did everybody else. This meant sporadically paying for communal petrol, which was used to provide electricity, and contributing to cover costs of health emergencies. A situation like this only happened once during my fieldwork, as I will describe later in the thesis, and even then, nobody asked me for a specific amount of money. If someone got badly ill, the condition was announced on the speaker and people chipped in freely to send them to Pucallpa. During the pandemic, I was contacted for help twice through my host family.

Although the communal assembly was favourable to my research, I was unhappy with women's silence, and I tried to get to know mothers in more intimate settings. I purposefully visited their houses when men were labouring and joined sewing sessions. Even then, for some time women mainly addressed my hosts, restricting conversations to Shipibo. Frustrated with my amateur embroidering skills, which often resulted in a sloppy entanglement of knots, I

would easily give up and play with toddlers. I believe this is how women grew fond of me, and gradually revealed a vaster vocabulary in Spanish. They joked about what they saw as a child-like character, but also appreciated my interest in the children (particularly if I helped them study). Because children liked me, mothers started to invite me over to their houses and share information about their lives in Spanish. By the time my fieldwork was interrupted, I could barely walk to school without stopping to chat with mothers along the way.

3.3.3. Gatekeepers and children's consent

While my research was quickly accepted by the community of Mai Joshin, the same was not true of the school's headmaster. His rule, it seemed, was entirely separate from the rest of the community, insofar that he was the first person who requested and read the paperwork that I carried with me. I promptly gave him a one-page summary of my project, a translation of University of East Anglia's ethical approval[47] and my contact card, but the paper he was looking for was rather specific: a letter from the Regional Unity of Education Management (*Unidad de Gestión Educativa Local*, known as UGEL). This was allegedly to make sure that the government was aware of my presence in the classroom, although his request for paperwork can also be read as an assertion of authority (Allard & Walker, 2016). I had the impression that the obstacle was posed to impede my project, as teachers (all of them middle-aged Shipibo men) were uncomfortable with my presence and one of them openly said that I was not welcome in his classroom.

Left with no alternative, I travelled to Pucallpa and asked for UNICEF's help with the paperwork. The journey to obtain this document would certainly have taken much longer without their support, as Pucallpa's offices are highly bureaucratic. This simple challenge required me to get the approval of DREU's director and wait until the offices processed my request, which could take months. Instead, I wrote a letter to UNICEF, and UNICEF wrote me a letter of support to notify urgency to the Director of DREU, who then issued a document that I should file and stamp to present to UGEL, and UGEL finally granted me a letter of acknowledgment. Thanks to UNICEF's support, the entire process only took me one day. UNICEF also provided me with a similar letter addressed to the teachers, stating that I did not

[47] Appendix II contains a copy of UEA's ethical approval for both stages of this research.

have the power to evaluate them and would not interfere in the classes, and urging them to support my research.

After reading all letters carefully, the headmaster had no option but to allow me inside his school. Teachers would thereafter refer to my role as a 'school intern' (*estagiaria de la escuela*), as my approach was somewhat like what they did in teacher training. In my first day at each classroom teachers explained my presence to students as that of an observer of lessons, and one even attempted to use my presence to threaten students into behaving nicely (in the 6-8 year age group). At that stage, children already knew who I was to some extent, given the communal assembly, but I also took advantage of school breaks to introduce myself properly to students. I also told them where to find me outside of the school, as they all knew where Ronin's family lived.

The process of getting access to children's lives was more complex. I was always equipped with coloured pencils and a drawing notebook, and used ludic activities as strategies to develop rapport (Atkinson, 2006; Morelli, 2017). Attending the school helped me to form initial bonds with children, as they could help me (and mock me) with Shipibo lessons, and we could draw and play together in a more diverse group. I could interact equally with girls and boys, whereas outside the classroom children played mostly in gendered groups. During this process, I was attentive to children's reactions and respected the level of disclosure that they, sometimes non-verbally, imposed. For instance, if a child avoided me or hid a drawing before I saw it, I promptly ceased the conversation. Children also knew that my Shipibo was compromised and chatted in their native language if they wanted to keep information private. As I started to learn the language, I always disclosed my limited understanding of these conversations. To my surprise, this was when they opted for speaking in full Spanish more often, and even explained words in Shipibo that they struggled to translate literally.

3.3.4. Research during the pandemic

In March 2020, when Peru announced the closure of its borders to all international travel and declared a state of emergency, I was hurriedly repatriated to England. My decision to leave the country at the time was fuelled by numerous anxieties in relation to the impeding and unforeseeable crisis. I knew that the precarious health services in Pucallpa already bore the weight of the dengue epidemic and panic buying could lead to chaos. I also did not want to

compete for medical attention with locals who rightfully deserved it if I had the privilege of relocating somewhere with a considerably higher number of hospital beds.

Although my repatriation was arguably an ethical response to an unprecedented health emergency, I was aware that my disappearing act reproduced exploitative patterns of research with Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2012). I took some comfort in thinking that the situation would soon be controlled, and I would be able to return, insofar that I had left half of my belongings in Ucayali. Nonetheless, international travel was restricted for many months and Ucayali would be devastated by COVID-19 for months. I grappled with the idea of risking fieldwork in-between outbreaks or changing research topics entirely. While the former option sounded irresponsible, the latter felt like cheating on people's consent: would I have been allowed in the community if I were to write about something other than childhood? And would it be ethical to dismiss months of data, albeit incomplete, and of conversations with children? Ultimately, is it ethical when researchers exit a fieldsite to avoid involvement with struggles affecting people with whom they spent months building trust (Wentworth & Kalsrap, 2020)?

Throughout this whirlwind, I had many reasons to believe that my research was still relevant and needed to include children. In the village, schools had been closed since the beginning of the floods in December and remained so for one more year. Throughout the world, children's lives were now more vulnerable, with the loss of family members, increased economic insecurities and heightened domestic violence (UNICEF, 2020). Yet children were absent from the news since they were not part of the risk group for this disease (Spray & Hunleth, 2020). The silence about childhood was also due to the ethical challenges of conducting research with children in a context of health hazards, but medical anthropology literature offered plenty of evidence that this could be done sensibly and safely (Bluebond-Langner, 1978; Briggs & Mantini-Briggs, 2016; Hunleth, 2019).[48]

Notwithstanding, there were several challenges to adapt research methods. Although workshops about fieldwork adaptation were abundant, they mostly relied on good internet access and more generous research grants (e.g. Marzi, 2021). An affordable alternative would need to be rapid and less dependent on technology. The resulting methodology (see section 3.4.4) was envisioned after lots of communication with local informants and a clear understanding of the situation in Ucayali. But research would need to be approved again by the

[48] Appendix II contains a copy of the ethical approval for this research.

community and ensure a safe participation for all children after Amazonia became the epicentre of the pandemic and infections remained greatly associated with international travel. This was particularly visible in the campaign '*Yo me quedo en mi comunidad' (*I stay in my community), organised in partnership between academics, Indigenous activists, and Amazonian grassroots organisations, and published in several Indigenous languages.[49]

Figure 9 – Frames from campaign 'I stay in my community'

Despite all efforts, Shipibo workers kept travelling to and from Pucallpa even at the peak of Peruvian lockdown since they had no other income source if not through government benefits or selling resources such as plantain. Indigenous organisations also travelled to and from communities, as they transported information about the virus and plants to treat the disease (see Goupil, 2020). It was after observing these dynamics that I decided to conduct fieldwork remotely, by hiring Shipibo-speaking research assistants who were involved in the COVID response.

[49] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/user/TVambulante/videos Access on 27 Sep 2022.

This alternative was only possible thanks to my established network in Peru at the time of my departure[50], and to the availability of Gésica Pérez (Yantawi), Danny Chávez (Panshin Jabe) and Douglas Tangoa (Isa Sina) to take part in this project. The three research assistants were familiar with technology and had previous research experience, albeit not with arts-based interviews (see section 3.4.4). While assistants have long been part of anthropological research (Middleton & Cons, 2014), they were seldom as vital as in this pandemic. I offered an online training, guidance and 24-hour support during fieldwork, however they collected data alone and unsupervised. This brought up issues of authorship and research power imbalances (Gupta, 2014), especially since I had budget limitations and a rigid deadline that restricted how much they could be invited to contribute. Ultimately, this thesis remained a lonely endeavour as I was the only one involved in the project from start to finish and responsible for its eventual flaws.

Nonetheless, this nearly-collaborative experience was a valuable opportunity to rethink colonial structures of research by allowing for more participation of interlocutors in the process of formulating research tools and translating data (e.g. Smith, 2012). Although this has been brilliantly done in recent years (e.g. Kopenawa & Albert, 2013), it demands an enhanced exercise of reflexivity to think of research as a product of a complex, unequal and yet collaborative process (Middleton & Pradhan, 2014), along with a much more generous funding to compensate research assistants' labour throughout the research process. While the level of collaboration in this thesis was limited by budgetary and time constraints, some of the data in this thesis (particularly in chapter 6) was only possible due to the diligent work of my research assistants, and particularly the long-time commitment of translator Danny Chávez.

The second round of fieldwork only started after COVID-19 outbreaks were under control and a particularly harsh flood season had passed in July 2021. Furthermore, unlike my previous research phase in Ucayali, this one was done during a health emergency and in a context where both children and family had to work extra hours to replant the crops lost to the floods. Therefore, the notion of reciprocity was entirely reframed, as severe economic impacts in families' livelihoods made a more concrete compensation urgent and necessary (Crivello & Favara, 2021). However, compensation is still seen as a taboo in the social sciences due to their

[50] I am particularly thankful to Prof. Oscar Espinosa, who generously put me in contact with Carolina Rodríguez Alzza, and to the latter who introduced me to her former research assistants. I am also thankful to the extra commitment of Danny Chávez, who led me to Douglas when my original research assistant had a family emergency.

coercive potential, and research relationships are expected to be based on amicable reciprocity and a genuine interest of research participants (Johnson & Searles, 2021).

To find a balance in this dilemma, compensation was always justified in relation to research needs. For instance, research assistants carried petrol for electricity in the community because they needed to charge their phones and computers. They also brought art supplies and face masks to be distributed to all children in primary school, but only those willing to be interviewed would be visited for individual conversations. All major research encounters, including the communal assembly, served healthy snacks and beverage for attendees, regardless of their answer to our requests. These steps aimed to make the process of research respectful and abiding to Shipibo traditions, in which sharing is a valued courtesy. Finally, because gift-giving happened independently from research activities, children were in no way pressured to participate.

3.4. Aim, Objectives and Methods

The triangulation of methods used in this thesis is directly related to the objectives of each research question. This project aims to understand how children's lived experiences and perspectives of well-being are affected by ecological and political economic transformations in Amazonia. To examine this, I produced three research questions that gradually help to answer the main puzzle. Each of these questions had different objectives and demanded distinct methods, as can be seen in *Table 1*. However, while the first two questions were answered mostly with participant observation, with the second question also including document analysis, the third question demanded a different approach. Below, I will proceed to explain each method separately.

Table 1 – Overview of Research Aims, Methods, and Stage of Fieldwork

Research Aim	**Understand how Shipibo children's lived experiences and perspectives of well-being are affected by ecological and political economic transformations in Amazonia**		
Research Questions	*How do Shipibo children experience childhood, and how are these experiences shaped by age and gender?* (chapter 4)	*How are current forms of child-sensitive social protection affecting the lives of children?* (chapter 5)	*How do children make sense of well-being amid the development of Amazonia?* (chapter 6)
Methods	Mostly participant observation, complemented with draw-and-tell.	Mostly participant observation and document analysis. Complemented with semi-structured interviews, draw-and-tell and one focus group.	Mostly collaborative mapping, semi-structured interviews and draw-and-tell. Complemented with participant observation.
Stage of fieldwork	In-person (July 2019-March 2020), later complemented with remote (July 2021)	In-person (July 2019-March 2020), later complemented with remote (July 2021)	Remote (July 2021), complemented with In-person (July 2019-March 2020)

3.4.1. Participant observation

Previous research has shown that ethnographic methods can be an effective means to obtain information on children's experience of childhood in the majority world (Hunleth, 2017; Katz, 2004; Morelli, 2017). This is even more true in research on complex and sensitive topics, when ethnography can shed light on less visible and intersecting factors that contribute to the existence of a problem – for instance, its use with working children (Nieuwenhuys, 1994; Punch, 1998) and child sexual exploitation (Montgomery, 2001).

Originally following Malinowskian ideals of fieldwork, I aimed to live in a Shipibo community for 12 months to grasp an emic view of childhood, by joining children's activities in the community and at school. While the duration of my fieldwork was nearly halved by the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, I still managed to spend 7 months in Ucayali. I divided my time between children, their families and the institutions that affected their lives, such as the local UNICEF office, the Regional Direction of Education (known as DREU) and local Indigenous organisations (e.g. ARIAP and FECONAU). The network that I was able to create in this period was essential for the success of my remote methodology, as it provided me with

the knowledge and support to find research assistants, obtain consent and plan activities complying with the local response to COVID-19.

Participant observation can be summarised as 'a production of knowledge by being and action' (Shah, 2017, p. 45). In practice, I joined my interlocutors in their activities to learn from their techniques and observed both routine and abnormal phenomena in their daily lives. To be present in the lives of children, I pursued a three-fold approach: I went to the school as a student during the morning, which helped me to access children from a closer angle than that of a teacher (Corsaro, 2003; Morrow, 1998). I visited families in the early afternoon to observe generational dynamics and knowledge transmission (Gaskins, 2003; Punch, 2001). Finally, I played with children after lunch to obtain a sense of their interpretive reproduction of social and cultural norms (Morelli, 2014). Although my plan was to work with children in late childhood (commonly defined as the ages between 9-11 years old), I was requested by the headmaster to circulate among different classrooms. The primary school had 73 students with ages from 6 to 16 years old. In practice, I spent more time where my presence was welcomed by the teacher, as others often invented reasons to keep me out of their classrooms. This meant that I spent more time with students in the 8-13 age range. While this influenced my data collection to some extent, children were seldom segregated by age outside the classroom, and I was able to increase the age range of my sample then.[51] Family life was profoundly marked by intergenerational relationships, particularly among young siblings and cousins of the same gender (see chapter 4).

Some skills were helpful assets during in-person fieldwork. While I was already fluent in Spanish, I also studied Shipibo with an experienced linguist from ARIAP. Despite my best efforts, my language skills remained rather limited because people would rather talk to me in Spanish (see section 3.4). My basic Shipibo knowledge limited interactions with the village elders, given that they did not speak much Spanish and were more reserved than younger generations. These conversations had to rely on a third party acting as translator, generally a child or younger adult. Nevertheless, having some knowledge of Shipibo language, along with the ability to understand the nuances of Ucayali's hybrid Spanish (Gow, 1991), enabled a wide range of relationships in the field. I could engage to some extent in conversations that were

[51] Appendix III details my sample at both stages of data collection.

initiated in Shipibo, demonstrate respect to elders and interest in local knowledge, habits that were always appreciated.

Another important skillset came from routine bodily techniques that illustrated people's relational dynamic with objects and the environment (Csordas, 1990). Some contributed considerably to my understanding of Shipibo livelihoods and cosmology. For instance, I devoted time to sew and paint *kené* (a traditional Shipibo drawing pattern) with women. As mentioned in chapter 2, *kené* is a gendered manifestation of Shipibo material culture and as such offered an opportunity for building rapport with mothers, who were initially quite restrained. But *kenés* also helped me to visualise the concept of 'interconnectedness', frequently present in my interlocutors' descriptions of wellbeing. In Figure 10, the lines that link the water, the sky and all beings materialise the mutual dependency and shared vital energy of all beings (Belaunde, 2012; Borea & Yahuarcani, 2020).

Figure 10 – Kené

Other bodily techniques were acquired more naturally, as necessary skills to thrive in the community. For instance, children taught me to only swim in certain parts of the river, not to annoy river dolphins and anacondas, and not to step into the mangrove's lake, which is

inhabited by piranhas and alligators. These routines were a valuable source of information about children's environmental knowledge (Ingold, 2000), as I will discuss in chapter 4.

The description of my first fieldwork by its overarching method (participant observation) may conceal the importance of other relevant modes of inquiry, particularly interviews (Hockey & Forsey, 2012). Whenever my curiosity was sparked, I posed open-ended and unstructured questions in impromptu informal interviews. The answers to these questions gained depth and length as I developed intimacy with my interlocutors, especially women and children. These informal interviews often happened during group activities, as in the sewing sessions with women or during group play with children. On fewer occasions, I also conducted semi-structured interviews in individual and group settings, as detailed below.

3.4.2. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups

When key informants were harder to reach, I scheduled meetings and planned semi-structured interviews for either individual or group contexts. This method was used on a few occasions: with FECONAU representatives, UNICEF staff, Shipibo teachers that work in Intercultural Pedagogy Support (a specific teaching evaluation unit for EIB schools), the EIB specialist in Pucallpa and the nurses in Mai Joshin. Although I aimed for a fair representation of gender, the high predominance of men in office-based work in Ucayali made it difficult to achieve this goal. In most cases, participants were sampled based on their role and experience. The exception was the focus group with Shipibo teachers.

The focus group was organised with the support of UNICEF staff and the EIB specialist in DREU. While the EIB specialist ultimately selected the informants, I asked her to invite an equal number of women and men who identified themselves as Shipibo and had experience working in rural Shipibo native communities. The focus group had a total of 6 women and 6 men and took place in the UNICEF office during a coffee break that I had organised to provide food and beverages to participants. This was done to follow a Shipibo etiquette of sharing food in retribution for one's generosity.

I presented the research and distributed consent forms to all participants, who had the right to withdraw at any time. While no one chose to leave, three participants remained mostly silent (two men and one woman), mainly acquiescing to what others said. I planned a series of

questions for this meeting, mostly focusing on the routines of their visits to native communities, the ethics of EIB teachers and their perception of Shipibo children and families. Women were particularly vocal about gender norms influencing the behaviour of male teachers, and all participants emphasised the struggles of Shipibo education in an increasingly more religious and economically precarious context. These inputs enrich, respectively, chapters 4 and 5.

3.4.3. Draw-and-tell[52]

Although the value of eliciting conversation through the production of images is well-argued in research with adults (Pink, 2013; Prosser, 1998), Mitchell (2006) warns against the assumption that drawings are essentially child-friendly. In fact, one has to be attentive to the cultural understandings of 'childhood' that we bring into research with children, as it affects how we listen to informants (Alldred, 2012). In my in-person fieldwork, I observed that drawing was in fact an enjoyable activity for children, and art led my research to unforeseen directions since drawings allowed children to go beyond the visible to explore fantastical and future possibilities (Morelli, 2015). Yet this was an activity mostly restricted to the classroom as coloured pencils and blank notebooks were luxury items. The activity attracted a large number of children to drawing sessions on my porch, which were the most fruitful for my research. At sunset, when boys returned from setting traps in the river and girls had finished all their household chores, they would come asking for my sketchbooks.

Arts-based methods are not novel to child-centred ethnographies, and have served as an insightful strategy to visualise children's perceptions about their lives (Hunleth, 2019; Toren, 2007). Artistic methods are an interesting approach to child-centred research because they avoid dependence on literacy (Thomson, 2008): children are often short of vocabulary and may have some difficulty in expressing themselves in written or spoken form. Drawings can also bridge the gap between languages, as shown by Morelli's (2015) research with Matses children in Northern Amazonia – this close precedent also motivated me to pursue the same approach. To enrich my data, I followed the techniques of previous research that explore children's drawings as evidence, and I always took note of children's creative processes and their context of creation (Crivello et al., 2008; Marshall, 2013; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2011).

[52] This section was previously published as the methodology for a journal article (see De Carvalho, 2021)

The porch was a more private setting than a crowded classroom, and children there were eager to work together. If an uninvited group approached the house, they were quickly expelled by the artists-in-charge. Because both boys and girls had caring responsibilities, they brought younger kin in these visits. They would constantly consult with peers about their aesthetic choices and share the same sheet of paper. Most artworks were a collective creation sketched by the oldest of the group. Since I was the only adult and did not speak Shipibo fluently, children chatted freely in both languages, expressing in Spanish only what they wanted to share with me. This collective and bilingual process of creation produced a drawing in mediation between 'the drawer, the thing drawn and their hypothetical viewers' (Taussig, 2009: 265). The latter, as Hunleth (2019: 167) wisely noted, are less hypothetical when there is an audience observing and contributing to the drawing's creation.

Noting the value of these encounters, I used the draw-and-tell technique (Driessnack, 2006) to initiate in-depth conversations. Art served as a buffer to talk about sensitive topics, giving children freedom to direct, elaborate on and limit conversations (Marshall, 2013; Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2011). Particularly during collaborative artwork, draw-and-tell was insightful because it fomented debates that helped me see how children's voices emerged stronger in a group setting, as if my interlocutors were empowered by peers. The same group dynamic was then used to build trust in research assistants during remote fieldwork before an individual stage of interviews (see section 3.4.5).

3.4.4. Document analysis

As discussed in previous chapters, contemporary research on childhood is filled with examples of how children's lived experiences are profoundly impacted by broader global processes, such as economic restructuring (Katz, 2004), and political and environmental changes (Klocker & Ansell, 2016). Moreover, childhood is in many ways governed by policymakers and policy implementers at regional, national and global levels (Wells, 2011). This thesis is interested in understanding these processes, and hence needed to analyse the experiences of children in relation to laws and policies that directly interfere in their lives. This work also engages with UN's reflection on the rights of Indigenous children (Miller, 2003) to review and criticise the globalised standards set for childhood in subalternised territories.

A series of documents were essential for this analysis. Firstly, the Peruvian Constitution (Peruvian Government, 1993) and ensuing policies concerning children and Indigenous

peoples were fundamental to get a comprehensive idea of the political context of these two issues in the country. This included readings on EIB (Peruvian Government, 2013b, 2018), where both topics intersect, since 'the native language is a vehicle to access [Indigenous students'] cultural heritage and to affirm their identity' (Peruvian Government, 2018:3). The thesis analysed policies, decrees, reports and resolutions published by four different ministries, all popularly referred to by their acronyms. Indigenous matters appeared at MIDIS (Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion) and MINEDU (Ministry of Education), while issues concerning children are discussed by the above ministries as well but are mainly concentrated at MIMP (Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations). The content of these documents were assessed in relation to what was observed in the field, with special attention to the National Plan of Action for Childhood and Adolescence, known as PNAIA (Peruvian Government, 2012), which influences UNICEF's projects in the country.

Other important sources of information at this stage were produced by the UN and support global ideas of childhood and indigeneity. As mentioned in the justification, the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989) and UNDRIP (United Nations, 2007) provided a basis for the discussions presented in this research. Other relevant UN documents were reports on the state of children at both global and national level (UNICEF, 2017, 2019, 2020), on Indigenous children (ECLAC & UNICEF, 2012; EIBAMAZ, 2008; UNICEF & INEI, 2010) and on Amazonian childhoods in Peru (Anderson, 2016; UNICEF, 2012a, 2012b, 2017, 2019a, 2021).

Lastly, some public databases were used to gather demographic and geographic information: ESCALE, for educational statistics; the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI), to get an overview of national, regional, and ethnic demographics; the Database on Indigenous Peoples (BDPI), for information on land rights and geographic distribution of native communities; and the Amazonian Network of Georeferenced Socioenvironmental Information (RAISG) and the Database of Global Administrative Areas (GADM) for the georeferenced information necessary to examine the intersection of extractive interests and Indigenous territories in Amazonia (see Chapter 2).

3.4.5. Remote interviews and collaborative mapping

Since my fieldwork was abruptly interrupted, I could not conduct the participatory workshops I had originally envisioned to answer question 3. Instead, I devised a research plan that could be commissioned with little margin for mistakes, limited funding, and respecting

COVID-19 protocols. Since I knew by experience that children would struggle to trust adult researchers in a formal interview setting, an impression shared by all my research assistants, I opted to repeat an activity that was familiar and associated with our time together: the draw-and-tell. Drawings had been proven to be a valuable method of interview with children during my first stage of fieldwork (de Carvalho, 2021), but there was a crucial difference between the activities pursued then and the form that encounters would take place in commissioned research. Previously, most artwork resulted from a playful dare proposed by me or one of the children in a ludic context; now, draw-and-tell would be coupled with semi-structured interviews. This is not an entirely novel methodology, as it has been used to understand children's role in care (Hunleth, 2019), changing household dynamics (Toren, 2007) and children's perceptions of social protection programmes (Pires, 2014). The challenge in my case was to commission an activity that would make sense to researchers with whom I would have little contact during fieldwork.

As argued in chapter 1, most research on childhood in Amazonian contexts – including UNICEF's (2012a, 2012b) work – ends up adopting an adult-centred lens. This methodological limitation is often justified on the base of cultural respect since Shipibo social norms demand a diligent respect for the elders. As a result from this logic, children are expected to be silent in most spaces in which adults are present, except perhaps for the school – which reinforces the idea that this is the only space where their opinions matter (Ansell, 2009). But even there the asymmetrical power of teacher over pupils makes children's participation tokenistic (Hart, 2008). An example of this was the EIB anniversary, a festivity that is celebrated as a recognition of an important political right, when the teacher ordered students to paint posters with the saying 'we are proud of speaking two languages' and 'Long live EIB', and parade through the village displaying their work while wearing traditional Shipibo garments. To counter this tendency of tokenistic participation, we would need to listen to children in contexts where they felt confident and comfortable to speak for themselves. Research dynamics needed to be planned cautiously to allow children to gain confidence in their interlocutors in a very different setting to the one we had in my previous months of fieldwork.

The limited budget and tight timeline for the completion of my PhD did not allow a fully collaborative methodology nor a long fieldwork. This impacted the size of the sample and the number of questions I could request as a minimum.[53] I had to be precise about the research

[53] Appendix III details my sample at both stages of data collection.

questions, methods, and sample size for each exercise, as interviews also had to be transcribed and translated. These restraints, combined with the fact that internet in the community was patchy and research assistants had never worked with children in an arts-based project before, led us to develop a step-by-step guideline of fieldwork. The toolkit was inspired by other commissioned research projects designed to be applied with child participants, such as Young Lives (Crivello et al., 2008) and GAGE (Jones et al., 2018), but edited to reflect some of research assistants' feedback regarding the research questions.[54] For instance, in the exercise about children with good and bad lives, Gésica included the question 'with who are they [the child in the drawing]?', which ended up being crucial to understand the impact of parental migration, as discussed in chapter 6. We also changed the phrase 'feeling unwell' to 'feeling not so well', given that the latter variation would be more likely to prompt responses about subjective ill-being in Shipibo.

The final guidelines indicated all activities that were necessary for fieldwork, including a shopping list of art supplies and health equipment (see 3.3.4 for Ethics). It also indicated the order of exercises that should be pursued to make children more comfortable, starting with a collective activity and moving towards individual interviews that started with an ice-breaker.[55] This order is based on the fact that group-based work can empower children to speak up and reduce age-based power imbalances (Boyden & Ennew, 1997), however recordings of in-depth interviews in large group contexts are incomprehensible due to the noisy background. In contrast, individual interviews facilitate the observation of children's creative processes, which is essential to the interpretation of drawings (Christensen & James, 2017). They are also more respectful of privacy around sensitive topics that may cause discomfort or withdrawal.

All activities planned for this stage of fieldwork had been used previously by research on children. Collaborative mapping is largely used to study children's relationships with the environment (Alerby, 2000; Ansell, 2016a; Holloway, 2014), and also for visualisation of the symbolic meanings of territories (Marshall, 2013). Cartographies can also indicate how children's individual experiences of place are influenced by larger political, social and

[54] Young Lives is a longitudinal study of 12,000 children and their transitions to adulthood in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. Available at: https://www.younglives.org.uk
GAGE (Gender and Adolesence: Global Evidence) is a nine-year (2015-2024) ODI project that follows the lives of 20,000 adolescents in countries of East Africa, South Asia and MENA regions: https://www.gage.odi.org/

[55] The methods toolkit, including order of activities and research questions, can be found in appendix IV.

environmental processes (Ansell, 2009). The good and bad life exercise is a strategy to discuss children's perception of well-being developed in Young Lives (Crivello et al., 2008). It started with an ice-breaker activity about children's favourite objects, that had been successfully used by GAGE (Pincock & Jones, 2020) to elicit conversations about what participants perceive as meaningful in their contexts. After this, the activity explores other prompts about well-being being by asking the child to draw someone with a bad/good life. Using the third person in this question ('someone') eases the burden of a more personal inquiry but ensuing debates can gradually lead the child to identify elements of a good/bad life in their own experiences.

Finally, the storyboard exercise was proposed as an alternative to a life-course timeline, given that reviews of studies using this indicate that children might have difficulties talking about the future with this exercise (Crivello et al., 2008). This could be even more challenging in the Shipibo context, given how children are taught to associate their native communities with the past, as mentioned in chapter 2. In comparison, the storyboard was intended to offer a link with a hobby beloved by children: the movies. Children were then asked to depict how the community was in the past, and how the community would be in the future. Most children opted for drawing two images (a past and a future) compounding all elements of the narrative that they considered relevant, instead of using a frame-by-frame approach. The different temporalities were later explained verbally by the participants. Regardless, the exercise led to novel information about children's ideas of past events and their imaginings of the future, as discussed in chapter 6.

While the focus of the project is on childhood, we also collected data through short interviews with parents to assess how their perspectives on child well-being differed from that of children. Questions were again semi-structured, and research assistants had the freedom to expand on them or reformulate when necessary. For instance, in the methodological guidelines the questions for parents appeared as follows (adapted from the Shipibo translation):

- How is a child that has a good life?
- How is a child that does not have a good life?
- What values are important to teach your child? Do you teach the same to your boy and girl child? (if pertinent)
- What do you wish for your child's future? Do you wish the same for your boy and girl child? (if pertinent)
- Do you have any worries about the future? Why?
- Is there any service or project in the community that helps children?

Most questions were easily translated to Shipibo and understood by parents, except for the last one. As I will discuss in chapter 5, the comprehension problem ensued from the fact that parents did not associate the existing programmes with better adult lives. Therefore, most parents replied negatively, in which case Douglas asked directly about Qali Warma and Juntos.

Research assistants took pictures and recorded activities whenever authorised by participants. They were also asked to take notes in situations where recording was not possible, particularly during the collective activity. We talked briefly during fieldwork, but the limitations of internet access made communication difficult. Upon their return to Pucallpa, I had individual meetings with the two fieldworkers to record their experiences and impressions of the research process. Both researchers had difficulties around the control of large number of attendees in the first activity with children and they had little time to discuss the maps in small groups and take notes. To solve this, they decided to do the question part at the end, and as a large group. While not all children felt comfortable expressing themselves, they were vocal about disagreeing or agreeing with an extroverted peer once they expressed an opinion. The group discussion used this technique to build meaning in the village maps.

The individual interviews also had challenges. Douglas, who was responsible for interviewing parents, said that he had to divide his time between hiking with fathers and interviewing mothers at home. He found it difficult to get women to talk privately – it was more common for a daughter or the husband to be present. Gésica, who was responsible for the children, felt rewarded by the methodology as children enjoyed talking about their drawings. This was particularly true during the activities on favourite objects. There was a substantial difference in the duration of interviews for adults and children, with the latter being shier and needing more dedication from the research assistant to obtain information, in addition to the time spent drawing in each activity. The translator and I were surprised at the quality and extension of interviews obtained through drawing. Despite their slow pace and initial hesitation, children grew in confidence quickly and were adamant about what makes them feel sad and what they want for the future.

3.5. Data analysis

During the first stage of fieldwork, my fieldnotes were recorded into a notebook that allowed me to conduct a preliminary data analysis while still in Amazonia. The process was helpful to avoid false analogies in my description of Mai Joshin, by adapting my pre-defined categories to their usage in this context. A central example of this is my use of 'childhood' in this thesis. As argued in chapter 1, the globalised definition of children includes people up to the age of 18 years old (United Nations, 1989). Age-based understandings of child development are also pervasive, particularly in contexts where the school system perpetuates these divisions. From this perspective, it could be argued that there are significant generational differences between early childhood (0-3 years old) and adolescence (12-year-old and older).

As I will explain further in chapter 4, the Shipibo distinguish between babies (*binshinbo*), small children (*bakeboshoko*) and children (*bakebo)* based on milestones rather than age (see also UNICEF, 2012a). There are no precise equivalents to the category of adolescence (see Ames, 2021). Girls with household responsibilities (as young as 9 years old) are called *shontakobo* (young ladies), while boys who attend school are 'children' (precisely *bake ranobo* or young male children) for as long as 15 years old. Mixed-age sibling groups made it difficult for me to sustain a focus on a particular 'stage' of childhood, particularly when all children are equally encouraged to engage in work (e.g., chopping wood with a machete or climbing a coconut tree). To capture this, I use the category 'children' in this thesis to refer to a wide age range, from toddlers to early adolescence, marking age differences where this is relevant. I also include research contributions from all children (*bakebo)*, albeit there is an overrepresentation of participants in the 9 to 13 age range due to more frequent interactions with students in the 3rd and 4th years of primary school, as discussed in section 3.4.1.

After re-defining the meanings of my core category, I typed up my fieldnotes and added them to NVivo. This content was then coded, and the themes that arose there were used to code other data, such as interview transcriptions, children's drawings, and photos (see Appendix V for a coding tree). Images were coded manually, in a password-protected folder inside One Drive, and documents were categorised using the Mendeley tag system. The choice of these three parallel software – NVivo, Mendeley and OneDrive – was done to use the best features for each file format. For example, NVivo does not read well scanned PDFs or image files, and Mendeley only works well for citable documents.

My data analysis, like the rest of this research, also had to be divided in two stages. While the preliminary analysis of my first fieldnotes was fundamental to define the questions and

methods that would be used in the second round of data collection, it was insufficient to make sense of the second fieldwork. The new data was originally coded in relation to my previous work, but it demanded a revision of my coding hierarchies. For instance, land invasions had been initially considered part of 'territory' and 'livelihoods', but after the second fieldwork this category became essentially connected to ill-being (see Appendix V). I also revisited data that previously did not receive as much attention, such as children's drawings of floods, and were now directly associated to wellness. Therefore, chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 had to be rewritten to incorporate the relevancy of environmental issues in Shipibo children's descriptions of well-being. To preserve the identity of my interlocutors, all names in this thesis are pseudonyms.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research design and methodology for my case study. It started by presenting the rationale guiding the design of this research, namely the need to listen to children's voices and a concern with cultural equivocation (meaning, false analogies between cultures based on assumptions about the universality of certain concepts). Then, I presented the various steps towards selecting a native community and obtaining consent for this research, along with the several gatekeepers that authorised my presence in Mai Joshin. I also discussed how I sought children's consent and rapport, and how my positionality as a Brazilian *mestiza* and adult woman affected data collection. Finally, the section described the context of the coronavirus outbreak in March 2020 and the ensuing ethical dilemmas that stemmed from a potential shift of research topics (which was eventually discarded) or a return to fieldwork amid the unprecedented and fast-changing COVID-19 pandemic. The choice to develop a remote methodology was based on medical anthropology literature (Briggs & Mantini-Briggs, 2016; Hunleth, 2017) that underpinned the possibility of doing sensible and ethical research with children during a health crisis.

The ensuing section lists the research aims and objectives and presents the methods that were used to address each research question. Given how this research aimed to examine Shipibo children's experiences of childhood and perception of well-being, a qualitative methodology was crucial. The research required daily interactions with children in various environments, such as their school, their families and their activities with peers. Hence, participant observation was a key method that contributed to an understanding of the context in which children's lives are embedded. Document analysis complemented this with legal and

policy frameworks shaping the action of State agents and the governance of childhood in Peru (a topic also discussed earlier in Chapter 2). Finally, to grasp children's perceptions of well-being, we implemented a set of arts-based participatory methods with children, with additional semi-structured interview with parents. I argue that the support of research assistants was essential to this latest stage of research, however, budgetary and time constraints restricted collaboration and length of data collection. The data analysis section gives an example of how the concern with cultural equivocation shaped how I defined the core category of this research (namely, childhood) and describes how coding changed after the second round of data collection. Data was analysed using NVivo, but the key codes developed through this software were then used to analyse image files and PDFs (e.g. laws) separately. The following chapters will present the result of this analysis in three empirical chapters, each of them answering a different research question.

4. Growing up Shipibo

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents Shipibo childhood experiences with attention to age and gender differences and focusing on the contrast between family and school dynamics. Section 4.2 explains how an understanding of care as the responsibility of whole families can expand the spaces of child rearing and discusses the values of personhood that are communicated to children through this form of care. Since children divide themselves in gendered groups from an early age, section 4.3 discusses the role of peer interactions in the social reproduction of gendered livelihoods, and how social and economic changes in the village are particularly burdensome for girls. Section 4.4 discusses the shared environment of children by considering how their livelihoods are dependent on the river and affected by seasonal changes. Finally, section 4.5 scrutinises the customs that children learn at school and identifies potential clashes between traditional wisdom (*onan*) and school learning (*axeti).* This chapter argues that childhood experiences are embedded in Shipibo values but are also being affected by social and environmental transformations in Mai Joshin.

4.2. Expanding the family micro-system

> The family is eating an early lunch when 2-year-old Biri enters the house with a caimito (*Pouteria caimito)* that she brought from outside. She opens the fruit with her fingers and eats avidly, the gluey juice quickly covering her face and hands. When Biri is done eating her mother interrupts her embroidering and washes the toddler straightaway. She then wraps her daughter in a towel and gently scratches the now solid caimito glue out of the child's face with an edge of the cloth. The toddler is left naked for a while, and the mother checks her legs, groins and buttocks for *isangos* (*Trombicula autumnalis,* a harvest mite). Finally, she wraps Biri in a hammock and takes a broom to sweep the kitchen. Biri's uncle, sat at one end of the hammock, swings the baby silently while he finishes his plate. After he is done eating, it is Biri's grandmother who takes charge of the hammock while sewing. Soon after, Grandpa Jose arrives from a hunt and trades places with his wife who goes clean up the game. He gently opens the cloth wrap then looks up at me with a smile: 'she's already asleep'. Still, he keeps on cradling his granddaughter. (fieldnotes, 29 August 2019)

Childcare in Amazonia is seldom the exclusive responsibility of mothers and is often a collective task. From a very early age, children are placed under the care of aunts, grandparents, older siblings, and cousins. Toddlers spend most of the day with these extended relatives and will often only return home to be fed or to sleep, with some children even living full-time with aunts or grandparents. The shared responsibility for child rearing, known as alloparenting, is

not exclusive to this Shipibo village and can be found among several other peoples in Amazonia (Anderson, 2016; Walker, 2012).

To fully understand how alloparenting affects children's lives, it is relevant to return to older ethnographies and reflect on the traditional organisation of Amazonian villages. Until the 1960s, sororal polygyny (sisters married to the same husband) and matrilocality were common traits of Shipibo families (Abelove, 1978; Hern, 1992). Consequently, villages were organised by maternal kinship ties, and nuclear families were typically composed of multiple wives who were often sisters living inside the same house. The spread of Evangelical missionaries led to an interdiction of polygyny, deemed to be sinful, and the establishment of native communities reduced people's autonomy of organisation in the territory, given the scarcity of land (Morin & Saladin D'Anglure, 2007; Valenzuela Bismarck, 2018). Despite all changes, these traditions left lasting imprints in the social order of villages and, more importantly for this thesis, in the environments that children inhabit.

In all villages visited at the scoping stage of this research, there was a noticeable pattern of matrilocality. While longhouses are rare, new families commonly build houses near the residence of the new mother's parents or cohabit in a private room. This shows the extent to which kinship remains crucial, as will become evident throughout this chapter. Apart from offering a solid support network for women, who often raise their children alone while men migrate (see also Belaunde, 2007), the physical proximity of maternal relatives provides children with a lengthy extension of their own households. Before they can even walk, children circulate through these different spaces, and rely heavily on the care of extended family to the extent of living full-time with aunts or grandmothers (see also Mezzenzana, 2020). The importance of this broader network of care is such that toddlers who are just learning to speak often refer to female kin as 'mummy' (*tita*), and to male kin as 'daddy' (*papa*).[56]

[56] In the 1960s, Abelove (1978) noted that Shipibo babies could recognise various degrees of kinship before they could even speak. Albeit some terminologies for maternal and paternal relatives have changed (see UNICEF, 2012a) and children are now much more immersed in Spanish language, children's capacity to discern complex kinship ties never ceased to amaze me.

Figure 11 – A toddler observes her grandmother as she cooks

Practices that are profoundly embedded in a people's cosmology, such as alloparenting, are more likely to resist or adapt to processes of cultural change (Anderson, 2016). For the Shipibo, the role of extended kin in child rearing is closely connected to the dangers of the exterior environment in a world where spiritual and physical ailments are profoundly interconnected. A baby (*binshin*, in Shipibo) is vulnerable to spiritual inflictions, known as *cutipas,* caused by plant and animal spirits and manifested through diarrhoea, vomit, fever or pain. Parents undergo several restrictions to protect the maturing spirit of a new-born: a father refrains from hunting, eating fish and bathing in the river, and a mother avoids certain meat and work in the *chacra* (field) (Valenzuela Bismarck & Rojas, 2004). This form of care, known as couvade, is based on the principle that human substance is not fully secured inside a new-born's body, and can be altered by external interference (Vilaça, 2002, p. 355). Since parents' labour is restricted in this period, the involvement of kin in the provision of food becomes essential. It is also common for grandparents to prescribe and execute protective baths with different types of *rao* (medicinal plants) and *waste* (plants that promote the development of skills and adequate behaviour) or using tobacco smoke.

The importance of extended family will increase as babies grow. Weaned toddlers (*bakeshoko,* in Shipibo) spend increasingly less time with their mothers and can even be sent

to live full-time with other relatives, as was the case of many children in the village. Childcare is never the exclusive responsibility of parents; conversely, the circulation of children (Leinaweaver, 2008) among different houses seems to reinstate and strengthen family ties among different relatives. Children (*bakebo)* of different ages formed affective bonds during their mothers' sewing reunions and took toddlers to explore the village together. Seldom supervised by adults, young children are instead found in the company of cousins, siblings, aunts, or uncles who are only a few years older than themselves (see Figure 12).

Figure 12 – A 9-year-old aunt peels aguaje *(Mauritia flexuosa) for her niece*

Clusters of children of various ages allow an experience of childhood that is constantly supervised by peers, but independent from adult watchfulness. Research on Amazonian child rearing practices suggest that child-led alloparenting is not only well-spread in the region but has specific social and cultural functions (Mezzenzana, 2020). Growing up amid peers that roam around freely strengthens children's social agency by allowing children to develop their own relationship with the village's territory (Morelli, 2017). Child-led alloparenting also guarantees that children's social development is not limited by hierarchical age dynamics. On their own, children are not expected to be obedient and can express themselves more freely. They are also 'helped to grow' (Pelusoa, 2015, p.50) by joining more skilled children in their activities. For instance, I observed while a group of 8 and 9 year-olds held a toddler's legs to

help them stand (see also Walker, 2012, p. 96), or how toddlers were incited to climb coconut trees after their more skilled peers. Childhood was then organically expanded from the constriction of the household to the entire village.

The expanded socio-ecology of Shipibo children's intimate lives challenges the supposedly universal spatialised structure of child development. As discussed in Chapter 1, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) distinction between spheres of influence in child development placed emphasis on the nuclear family and gave less importance to other relationships during childhood. This was based on an assumed primacy of the nuclear family over other social influences. The child's household was envisioned as an enclosed refuge detached from the rest of society. But in a context where children are encouraged to leave the household and learn from others who are not their parents, it might be difficult to maintain a distinction between micro- and mesosystems of influence.

In rural Shipibo villages, the nuclear family is just a part of a much more complex environment for child development. Children are expected to be self-initiated learners (Lancy, 2016) who can only develop by practicing tasks and appropriate social behaviour. In fact, the Shipibo verb for learning (*axeti*) also means 'getting accustomed', in a direct reference to the relatedness of practice and acquisition of knowledge. Adults will rarely interfere in potentially hazardous learning experiences, as children need experience to gain acuity in their skills. Children are also encouraged to take risks and can be seen swimming and paddling alone since the age of 4 years old. Families expect children to show initiative and social responsibility by being helpful at home without being asked, and therefore praise their social ties with peers as a display of independence. By becoming apprentices of slightly older and more skilled peers, children acquire the social responsiveness needed for effective teamwork and early autonomy from adult care (see Figure 13).

Figure 13 – Cousins working together

Cross-cultural studies of child rearing practices have argued that parental ethnotheories – the choices that parents make based on their culturally informed notion of good child care – are based on an understanding of what children are (Harkness & Super, 2020b). For instance, in a context where children are perceived as profoundly reliant on adults, the actions of parents tend to reinforce dependency by curtailing children's responsibilities (Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009). The social construct of nuclear family as detached from and superior to the remainder of society also contributes to the formation of an independent notion of self, with few ties as vital as that of the nuclear family (Harkness & Super, 2020a). These character traits might be highly valued in Western, educated and industrialised societies, but are not necessarily desired elsewhere (Rogoff, 2003). In fact, cross-cultural studies support the idea that different patterns of child rearing and parental responsiveness can generate different styles of attachment (Harkness & Super, 2020a; Keller & Otto, 2014)

In her research in Ecuadorian Amazonia, Mezzenzana (2020) observed Runa parents make a distinction between *mestizo* and Indigenous children as being, respectively, weak and strong. The weakness of *mestizo* children is blamed upon exclusively parental and indulgent care – an idea that directly challenges attachment theory. Similarly, Shipibo parents want to raise strong (*koshi)* children, and therefore tend to value and positively reinforce children's displays of

bravery, autonomy, and resilience. Even before children are strong enough to actively contribute to the family's workforce, children rehearse their chores by mimicking older family members. One morning, when the family went to the *chacra*, two-year-old Pietra wilfully grabbed a machete and attempted to chop a large bunch of plantain that was lying in the forest floor. No one interfered. While the girl failed, she did not give up. Every time her family laid down new bunches, Pietra attempted to lift them until she found a bunch with a weight that she could carry all the way home. Her grandmother was proud of her display of *koshi* and retold this story to family members several times.

My Shipibo informants claimed that early displays of prowess in work indicated that a child was healthy and had good character. That is because a healthy person is expected to be hardworking and resilient, a sign of having *koshi shinanya* (a strong good judgement).[57] In contrast, people who cannot endure physical labour are considered *yosma* (frail), and this is a flaw that must be fixed with plant treatments that improve physical strength. Laziness (*chikish)* is seen as a grave character deviation and essentially different from lacking the physical capacity to labour: while *yosma* are people who lack strength, *chikish* afflicts strong people who avoid work. Children's behaviour is constantly scrutinised for signs of *chikish*, defined as an illness that weakens the blood and affects one's spirit. The substance that causes *chikish* can be extracted from the body using a cleansing tobacco paste that immediately provoke vomit and diarrhoea, but afterwards sets thoughts and spirits in order. It is generally mothers who apply the treatment on their children, simultaneously as punishment and medication (Sarmiento Barletti, 2015b).

The above set of character traits – strength, willingness to work and good judgement – comprise the definition of *jakon jonibo* as good people who nurture reciprocity. The literature is full of examples of how good judgement (*shinanya)* is partially a predictive social responsiveness, a state of mind from which people can assess the needs of others and contribute to their best capacities to achieve social harmony (see Espinosa, 2012; UNICEF, 2012b). Hilario (2010, p.145) notes that, traditionally, Shipibo leadership used to be granted to men who fished abundantly to share food with the entire village. While sharing may not be always possible in terms of resources, it must be displayed by one's willingness to work. An example from fieldwork can elucidate this distinction. In my first week in the village, I once cooked an

[57] *Koshi shinanya* would literally translate as 'strong thoughts' and can be used either to express optimism or the ability to cope with whatever life gives you.

individual amount of porridge in a morning when I was late for school and the family was still asleep. Tita (the matriarch) reprimanded me: '*mestizos* are so stingy, always doing things for yourselves, it is rude not to share'. The admonition, which was very successful in correcting my behaviour, did not request me to share my now insufficient portion of food, as the oatmeal and bananas that I brought had already been given to the entire household. Instead, Tita suggested that I should have woken up earlier to cook breakfast for all.

The capacity to consciously anticipate people's needs and share the workload of a household is a decisive feature of *jakon jonibo* (good people), and an equally important element of communal well-being. Studies of Amazonian conviviality have shown that the development of an independent self is directly related to the collective unit, as it is precisely individual agency that allows social harmony to thrive (Overing & Passes, 2000). That is why notions of strength, health and shared vitality are profoundly embedded in an idea of communal wealth, as they provide a kind of living social insurance in precarious times (Santos-Granero, 2015). Drawing from such analyses, it is possible to think of social responsiveness as an essential characteristic for living well together.

The expansion of the family micro-system plays a key role in this, as it allows children to develop attachments throughout the village, instead of dyadic bonds with parents. Albeit this does not reduce the emotional importance of parental bonds, it provides children with a wider support network through extended kin. The literature on childhood teaching and learning in traditionally foraging contexts is particularly attentive to the ways that peer relationships, child-led care and imitation of older children's skills are decisive features in the development of autonomous and cooperative behaviours (Kramer, 2021; Lancy, 2016). The next section will reflect on how children embody gendered behaviour and skills through a particular attention to siblinghood.

4.3. Gendered livelihoods

The excessive focus on parent-child relationship in Western contexts results in relative silence about sibling relationships in studies of kinship, despite the recognised importance of peer interactions for child development (see chapter 1 and also Corsaro, 2003). Siblinghood can be defined and maintained in different ways depending on context, but is broadly summarised by Thelen et al. (2013) as the shared experiences of childhood that last for a prolonged period of life and in intimate settings. Considering Bronfenbrenner's (1979)

definition of the school as one the crucial micro-systems in a child's life, it could be argued that the school became the mainstream substitute of sibling relationships in contexts with a low density of children. But in Mai Joshin, as in other traditional societies with numerous children (Kramer, 2021; Peluso, 2015a), sibling relationships are the predominant form of sociality in children's lives.

As argued in the previous section, kin-based child clusters take shape at a very young age, as toddlers are encouraged to follow slightly older relatives in their everyday activities. The importance of these relationships is such that when children were asked to draw a good life or an important memory of their early childhood, most of them depicted siblings and cousins (Figure 14). In Shipibo language, both these relationships share the same denomination often translated as 'cousin-sibling'. The main difference expressed by the vocabulary relates to a gender relationality: the word *wetsa* refers to cousin-siblings of the same gender, while *poi* is used for cousin-siblings of the opposite gender. The importance of same gender cousin siblings is such that they are often interchangeable with children's definitions of family. For instance, scenes of *wetsabo* playing together, drawn in exercises about well-being, were often chosen as girls' depictions of being with family (Figure 14).

Figure 14- Wetsabo in children's depictions of family

The distinction between the expressions *poi* and *wetsa* goes beyond a relative gender differentiation. In practice, *wetsa* bears the significance of a close friendship, whereas a *poi* is a distant relative.[58] This division between male and female *wetsabo* clusters offers the ideal network for a gradual embodiment of skills and, subsequently, the performance of gendered behaviour. As they age, boys and girls will occupy different spaces, engage with different elements in the territory, and have a substantially different status vis-à-vis adults as well. This can be exemplified by a description of children's everyday patterns of work and play (see also Ames, 2021).

In the season when the river grows, boys are seen rushing to their canoes to collect a gooey substance from the river floor. The Amazonian catfish (*Psendorinelepis genibarbis*) known as *ipo* lays its eggs with the early rains of November, and boys entertain themselves with the task of finding *ipo* nests. Groups of male cousin-siblings fill up canoes: while the younger paddle and keep the boat afloat, the older ones stretch their arms into the river – it takes experience to deflect the fish's spikey armour (see Figure 15). When their plastic bowls are filled with translucid yellow globes, boys return to deliver their treasure to female kin, who will be responsible for preparing the delicacy. Girls help season *ipo* eggs with red onion and herbs, while their mothers patiently wrap the mixture in plantain leaves and smoke it slowly in the embers of the woodstove. Fishing in the village is a predominantly male activity, although women and girls will be seen fulfilling the role of fishers in the absence of men. On the other side of reproductive labour, cooking is an exclusively female task.

[58] Tournon (2002, p.194) notes that *poi* also means 'excrement' to communicate the repulsiveness of incest.

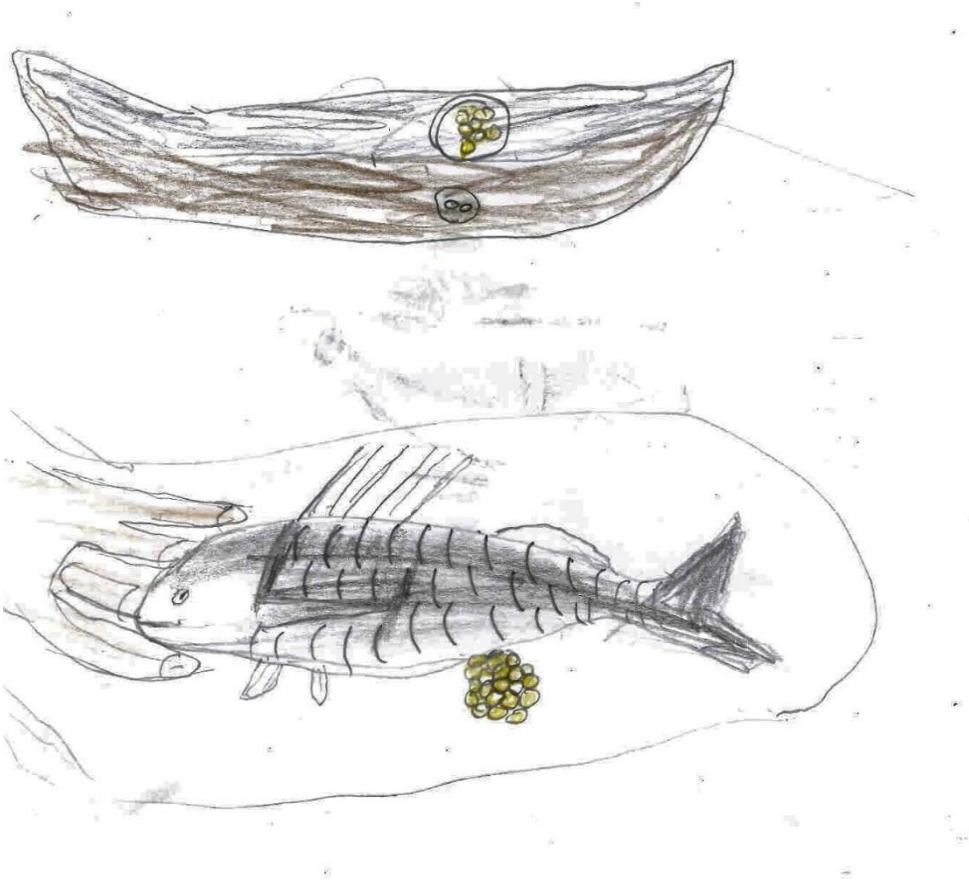


Figure 15 – How to collect ipo eggs

Drawn by Jacob (13 years old) and his younger wetsabo (5-9 years olds)

As in most non-industrial societies, a marked gendered division of labour becomes visible during middle childhood (Montgomery, 2010). This is manifested in different chore curricula (Lancy, 2012) – the inventory of skills that boys and girls are expected to master. As soon as children begin to demonstrate *koshi*, expressed as resilience and ability to work, they start joining older *wetsabo* in subsistence tasks. Their expected contributions will largely depend on a child's alleged vocation as *ainbo* (woman) or *benbo* (man), to the extent that older family members will shame boy toddlers who show interest in sewing, or older girls who refuse to care for older children. In the village, notions of 'femaleness' were constantly used to validate the allocation of care and domestic labour to women. Female persons are perceived as naturally nurturing, and therefore girls are expected to raise younger children, support their family with domestic chores and care for the *chacra*. In contrast, maleness is viewed as untameable and restless, which incites boys to engage with more physical activities. As argued by Butler (2006) gender is gradually learned through repeated performativity.

The production of gender in Amazonian societies is also experienced as a fabrication or enhancement of female and male traits. As explained in chapter 2, the Shipibo cosmological order perceives one's status of humanity as constantly disputed. The reinforcement of social ties, appropriate diets and gendered behaviours are part of a reinstatement of one's human status vis-à-vis potentially harmful other-than-human creatures (see also McCallum, 2002; Valenzuela Bismarck & Rojas, 2004). This is epitomised by the preparation of a child's body for gender-appropriate labour. Between the ages of 5- and 8-year-old, children receive plant treatments to enhance their ability to draw (if female), fish and hunt (if male). The treatment is done with different kinds of *waste* (piri-piri, in Spanish), a plant-based extract mostly applied as eye drops to improve visual acuity and instinct for specific tasks.[59] Each kind of *waste* will demand a diet, along with behaviour restrictions for the person undergoing treatment. For instance, in the case of *kené waste*, used to spark the vision of traditional Shipibo patterns, girls cannot cook or stand under the sunlight for several days.

The process of gendering accompanies that of asserting personhood insomuch that becoming an adult is directly associated with the capacity to labour in gender-appropriate ways (see also McCallum, 2002; Santos-Granero, 2012, p. 184). Consequently, childhood transitions are also deeply gendered. The word *bakebo* (children) will be seldom employed for a group of older girls, although it is often used in reference to mixed-gender or male peer groups up until teenage years. A 9-year-old girl is often called a *shonta*, a vocative commonly translated as 'miss' (*señorita*, in Spanish). Conversely, boys will be referred to as 'children' (*bakebo*) until much later, and as *bakeranobo* (male children) once their voices break and until they leave school or become parents. This imbalance in the ages that mark the transition into adulthood can be a remnant of the *ani xeati* (big drinking). Before the arrival of SIL missionaries in 1950, this ceremony would take place shortly after a girl's menarche, with ages varying from 10 to 15 year old (Valenzuela Bismarck & Rojas, 2004, p. 64). The event lasted roughly a week and demanded months of preparation, as the girls' parents had to invite other communities to the celebration, grow enough food, and prepare sufficient ceramic pots to offer beverages to numerous guests. Manioc beer (*masato*) incited a collective celebration of singing and dancing and led the transitioning girl to an unconscious inebriety. The girl would then undergo a full clitoridectomy, while boys who felt ready to be socially validated as adults underwent duels

[59] See Tournon et al. (1998) for a description of *wastebo.*

(see Morin & Saladin D'Anglure, 2007).[60] The girl's excision was later accompanied by a fringe cut that identified the recovered young women as being ready for marriage (Roe, 1982, p. 93).

Although the *ani xeati* is no longer practiced, it still illuminates gendered childhood transitions and divisions of labour among the Shipibo. While girls' maturity was marked by an uncontrollable physiological process (menarche), boys' transition into adulthood had an element of choice and mental preparedness (willingness to duel). Thinking about these gendered age transitions can also deepen an understanding of the levels of maturity and responsibility that girl and boy children are expected to assume as they grow older. Table 2 below shows a division of children's work by gender and stage of childhood.

Table 2 – Types of work per age and gender

TYPE OF LABOUR	YOUNGER BOYS (3-7 YEARS OLD)	YOUNGER GIRLS (3-7 YEARS OLD)	OLDER BOYS (8-12 YEARS OLD)	OLDER GIRLS (8-12 YEARS OLD)
SUBSISTENCE	Fishing Fruit collection	Food garden Fruit collection Chicken coop	Fishing / Hunting Wood procurement Plantain extraction	Food garden Wood procurement Chicken coop Plantain extraction
REPRODUCTIVE	Fetching water Chopping wood Picking up garbage	Fetching water Chopping wood Small cooking jobs Cleaning Picking up garbage	Fetching water (larger buckets) Chopping wood Burning trash Covering holes Cutting grass Building houses	Fetching water (larger buckets) Chopping wood Burning trash Covering holes Cutting grass Cooking Childcare Cleaning Washing clothes
PRODUCTIVE			Driving Selling plantain/crafts	Embroidering *kené*

[60] The socio-political and symbolic meaning of the excision has been extensively discussed by anthropologists who did fieldwork before the expansion of evangelism (e.g.: Morin & Saladin D'Anglure, 2007; Roe, 1982, p.103; Hern, 1994). During my fieldwork, my adult informants often reminisced about the importance of *ani xeati* for social cohesion between different villages – something that was lost to the newer generations. However, they would always talk about the end of clitoridectomy as something positive, acknowledging that girls suffered during the ceremony. While this response may have been influenced by my manifested interest in child well-being, it is also present in other descriptions of the ceremony (see Valenzuela Bismarck & Rojas, 2004).

In a process of social reproduction, older girls take over household chores, embroider *kenés*, and care for the *chacra;* meanwhile, older boys go fishing and hunting, assist with construction work and drive *motocarros* (autorickshaws). The division of male and female domains makes explicit two different spheres of livelihoods: the domesticated world (the house and the *chacra*) is mostly female, whereas dealings with Others (foreigners, animals and forest spirits) are predominantly male jobs. Traditionally, these mutually dependent spheres fostered a complementarity between the two genders, as both men and women partially relied on the labour of their spouses or cross-gender kin (Gow, 1991, p. 120; Siskind, 1975, p. 108). Older ethnographies suggested that men were likely to concentrate political power in relation to Others, but the matrilineal structure of villages meant that women could have more social support and a stronger internal network than men (Abelove, 1978; Seymour-Smith, 1991). Nonetheless, the growing importance of the market economy exposed women to more precarious conditions than men.

The commodification of culture creates new spaces of power for men, who are the ones intermediating contact with tourists (Slaghenauffi, 2019). While women are responsible for craftsmanship of Shipibo artwork, such as *kenés* and jewellery, men act as trade intermediaries and are often responsible for selling products made by women in bigger cities.[61] More importantly, the need to produce *koriki* (money) is underlined by more frequent floods due to climate change. As discussed in chapter 2, Mai Joshin has faced a high increase in occurrence of hazardous floods (the kind that disrupts or impede crop production). Extreme floods that only used to take place once a decade (Tournon, 2002) and always in the same months are now happening suddenly and nearly every year. The unpredictability of these events is creating a strong pattern of human mobility, with a recent study estimating that 75% of Shipibo households have at least one member who migrated seasonally in the last year (Collado Panduro, 2021).[62]

Men are generally more likely to migrate for work in Amazonia, albeit the types of employment may vary depending on the opportunities available. In Mai Joshin, there was a noticeable tendency for migrating men and older boys (above the age of 9) to work in coca plantations. This tendency is echoed by other studies that report that labour in commercial

[61] This is less true for urban villages, and Pucallpa's centre is proof of this, as Shipibo women from neighbouring communities are often seen selling art in the streets.

[62] The sample varied between 7-9 household in each village, which were in different regions of the river. This represented roughly a quarter of the total population in these native communities.

plantations to be the main income-generating strategy for nearly 90% of rural Shipibo families, followed by other activities such as fishing, hunting and, at a much smaller scale (5%), employment in logging companies (Sherman et al., 2016; Collado Panduro, 2021). All these activities are predominantly pursued by men, while women are more likely to sell handicrafts for a living (Collado Panduro, 2021).

Male migration overloads the family with subsistence labour and responsibilities for childcare, which are then shared by the children of the family. The division of labour among siblings will undoubtedly depend on family composition (Punch, 2001): while an exclusively female household might not be able to rely on male kin, mixed-gender families reproduce a traditional division of tasks. But what do these differences mean in children's everyday lives?

Figure 16 – Girl steaming fish

Created by Lina (aged 10).

Firstly, subtleties between obligatory tasks and leisure may affect what girls and boys experience as 'labour'. While in normative discourses about childhood it is usually assumed

that work and play are the opposite of each other, literature on children in traditional societies is filled of examples of how work and leisure can be sometimes enmeshed in the same routine activity (Katz, 2004; Lancy, 2016; Nieuwenhuys, 1994). The same was true in Mai Joshin. 'Play' would be defined by children of both genders as a time enjoyed with *wetsa,* outdoors and unsupervised, either in structured activities such as volleyball and football or simply in activities by the river. Given the nature of boys' chores, fulfilling their duties towards the household involved precisely spending time with *wetsabo* in the river, and was often treated as an alternative to boredom. As boys went to set traps in the river, they would playfully challenge *wetsabo* to swim, pretend to sink the boat or simply chat while actively contributing to household subsistence. In contrast, girls' chores are conducted in a more sober environment, inside the house and alongside their mothers. This conveyed a more noticeable distinction between leisure and work time. Girls' tasks are also lonelier in relation to their male counterparts, as they are less collaborative, particularly when they lack a same-gender sibling with whom to share their workload.

Consequently, girls' chores were exclusively embedded in a sense of duty towards kin and would not be mistaken with play. For example, when 12-year-old Wendy skipped school to care for her sick baby sibling, she described this as responsibility that comes with a close emotional bond to younger *wetsabo*: 'when a child cries for you and begs you to stay, they are already your baby'. Boys' work can also be incited by a sense of duty, although this is rarer. Every member of Mai Joshin is expected to contribute to the community by assuming responsibilities of territorial maintenance, and there is a penalty of 10 soles (2.60 USD) for those who fail to do so. Working in security (patrolling the borders of the village at night) was an exclusively male task, but children of multiple ages and both genders would pitch in to keep the village neat. Children are the ones responsible for filling up holes in the main street after a flood, cutting grass and cleaning the school. Notwithstanding the shared sense of duty in such activities, even in these tasks the nature of male labour is more sociable and collaborative, as men work in peer groups. In contrast, girls' agency was often limited by adult supervision (e.g., in sewing sessions).

Construction work is another example in which boy's time allocation is associated with a sense of duty. Male children will contribute to their fathers', uncles' or grandfathers' intensive manual labour around the village, such as building a house or a canoe. In those circumstances, they can work extensively for several days in a context in which their task cannot be easily enmeshed with play. Construction work is only paid when people hire

someone from outside their kin, but it implies a sense of social debt in the sense that one relative owes the other for their help and is expected to pay with diligent work when requested (see also Sarmiento Barletti, 2015a). A construction project can start at 6am and finish at 5pm, but it will only last for a week or so, after which boys tend to have an open schedule. In contrast, girls' labour is unremitting, as there is always a domestic task that needs doing. This reproduces a pattern of division of labour in which 'male work is discontinuous, contrasting relatively short periods of intense activity with varying intervals of leisure. Female labour however is unremitting and repetitive and is regarded by women themselves as 'boring and exhausting' (Seymour-Smith, 1991, p. 638). Girls also have a larger number of tasks, as they tend to combine their share of mixed-gender activities with exclusively female roles (Table 2).

Women are responsible for the reproduction of Shipibo material culture, as they are the ones who make *kenés*, ceramic pots, jewellery and *kushmas* (the traditional male robe) (Belaunde, 2012). The cultural importance of their labour is not diminished by men, who acknowledge women are the keepers of culture, and the real owners of the house – a pattern also observed by Mezzenzana (2018). Nonetheless, it is also women (particularly younger ones) who are blamed for the loss of material culture, such as the making of ceramic pots, now almost entirely substituted for cheap but time-saving plastic containers. Male adults complain that their daughters nowadays 'do not want to do anything' (*ya no quieren hacer nada*, in Spanish) because they will not engage as much with the food garden or learn ceramics. But in fact, the nature of girls' work is likely to make their diligence less noticeable to others.

Girls wash clothes for the entire family, cook meals, and often use their lunch break at school to care for younger siblings. However, adults often underestimate girls' workload (Punch, 2001), and generally did not consider domestic work to be as tiresome, worthy or time consuming as the external work of boys. The secluded nature of girls' activities is likely to make their labour less visible, but girls also spend more time caring than their male counterparts, and this activity is neither paid nor considered 'real work' (see also Crivello & Espinoza-Revollo, 2018). In Mai Joshin, children's contributions to the domestic economy tend to be phrased as a 'support' (*apoyo*, in Spanish), but the fact that the majority of these activities were performed by girls results in a highly gendered valuation of children's work (see also Leinaweaver, 2008; Punch, 2001).

Girls' work is also profoundly connected to the economic exploitation of adults. As argued by Campoamor (2019), given that girls are the ones doing most of the care activities,

they tend to be more overburdened when their parents need extensive hours of labour in order to provide for the household. It is also girls' involvement in childcare and domestic work that allows their mothers to produce income, especially in families where fathers are absent (see also Rosen & Twamley, 2018). This is particularly noticeable in the rainy season, when frequent floods damage the crops and push adults and older boys to migrate, while girls assume most of the subsistence labour, including fishing.

The migration of women is rarer for two reasons. Firstly, single mothers may lack the budget to relocate an entire family to the city. Secondly, they might need to remain in the village to sustain children and elders. And ultimately, older girls often mentioned a sense of safety provided by family, as they associated urban centres with a heightened risk of rape. Girls who migrate tend to stay with family and help with domestic work, a pattern also observable in the Andes (Anderson, 2013; Leinaweaver, 2008). In contrast, boys travel more frequently to work in bigger cities, particularly during the rainy season. While I did not follow their trajectories during school break, they described working with family in Lima, Pucallpa, Ica or Cuzco, but their sources of income varied. Boys who have older *wetsabo* established elsewhere will generally join older brothers or cousins working in factories and farms. Only a couple of children knew beforehand what they would do when moving in with relatives. Another common activity involves the selling of Shipibo art to tourists or working as load carriers in Pucallpa, or as shoe shiners and street vendors in Lima.[63]

The kinds of labour in which boys are engaged exposes them to considerable risks, particularly when it involves informality in urban centres, where access to a support network is scarce. However, boys talk about their seasonal migration prospects with excitement, as an opportunity to leave Mai Joshin and explore other regions. The sudden appearance of pregnant teenagers after the rainy season also suggests that this circulation may facilitate romantic encounters for young people. Seasonal migration can also be a means for children to expand horizons and social networks in a context where moving for work and education is increasingly common (see also Crivello, 2015). But boys' wider mobility positions them at a relative advantage to girls, as it allows them to earn money autonomously and build a sense of economic independence from an early age. In contrast, even if girls sew *kenés* for many hours, they cannot obtain income without the mediation of male adults. Girls might pursue small paid jobs in the

[63] While I did not follow children to the capital, Aufseeser (2021) provides insights on the livelihoods of Amazonian children who migrate to work as street vendors in Lima during school vacations.

village such as selling *humitas* (corn paste, slow steamed inside a corn husk) or popcorn, but they deliver their earnings to their mothers or grandmothers. Meanwhile, boys keep the small cash they obtain driving people in a *motocarro*.

Figure 17 – Boys driving a motocarro in a field

Despite the gendered differences in time allocation, nature of labour and access to *koriki* (money), there are also similarities in the shared space and culture of boyhood and girlhood. As mentioned in the previous section, children of both genders are raised to be *koshi* (strong) and *shinanya* (to have good judgement) and to be autonomous beings with strong ties to their extended family. The following section will return to the commonalities in the lives of boys and girls, by paying attention to the similar ways through which children experience their connections with their territory.

4.4. Riverine socio-ecology

The river is of utmost importance to any rural Shipibo village. It is the main door to most native communities, a source of nurturance and a watery playground for children, who often start their days there. At the earliest hours, before the sun is even shining, boys will jump on

their canoes and paddle towards the fishnets that were set up the night before. Children are also fond of bathing in the river. Morning routines bring young caregivers to wash toddlers, while schoolchildren autonomously get ready for school. Children will be absent from the river for most of the morning, during their classes, but reclaim the landscape in the late afternoon. In smaller clusters, it seems like all children of the village occupy the riverbank with volleyball matches and games of catch, climbing coconut trees, and swimming rapidly across the river in competition with peers. The end of the day again sees groups of older boys and young families heading to their boats, either to set the fishnets for the following morning or taking hooks or harpoons to catch some fish before dinnertime (Figure 18).

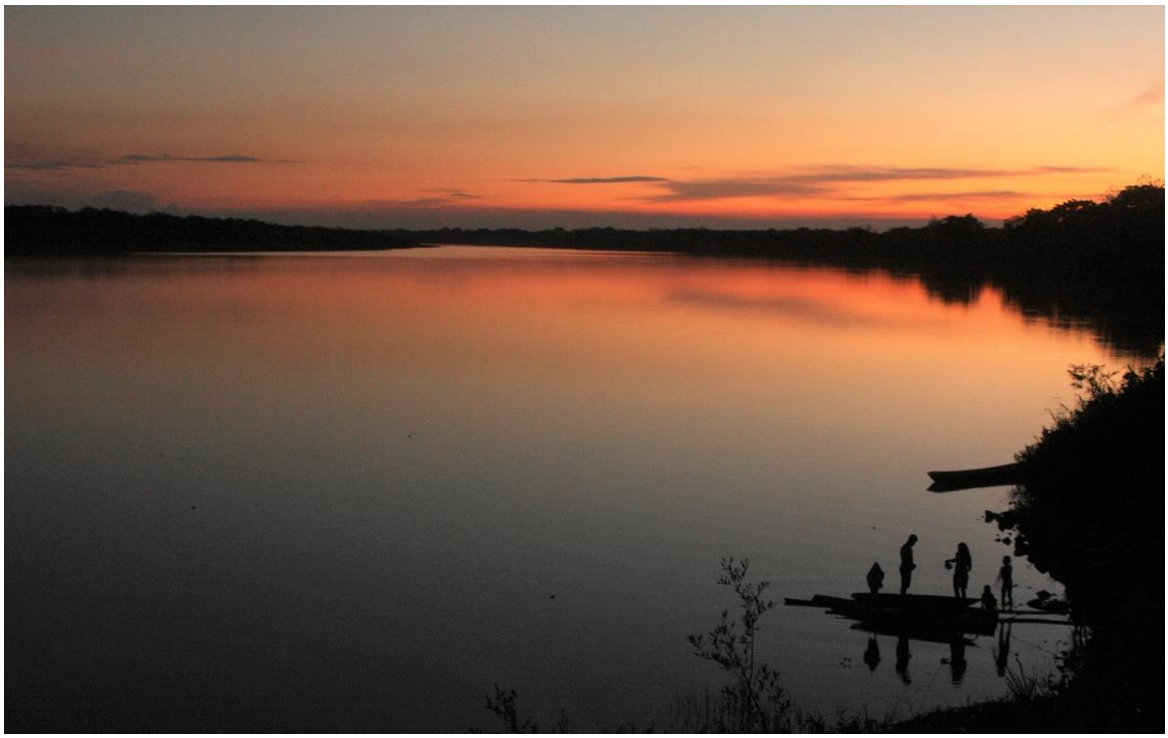


Figure 18 – Return from fishing at sunset

The everyday life in Mai Joshin indicates just how vital the riverine ecosystem is for rural Shipibo children's nurturance and sociality. Much of the socioeconomic organisation of villages is connected to a traditionally riverine dwelling, and the rhythm and repertoire of

Shipibo subsistence labour follows the patterns of the watercourse. Nowadays[64], a year is generally split into four seasons: from April to May it is *jene tsosinaitian* (when the water dries), a season to sow plantain, papaya, watermelon and corn, and ferment fish in preparation for the following season. From June to September, it is *baritian*, the dry season. The sun is unforgiving, and travel becomes difficult along the river tributaries, but fishing gets easier. The terrain is also good to plant yuca, and it is when most crops begin to sprout. During *jene beaitian* when water grows, plants bloom, fishes lay eggs, and there is plenty of yuca and mango. Finally, the period from January to March is known as water season (*jenetian*), when 90% of Shipibo villages are prone to be flooded (INEI, 2017a).

The river can grow tenfold during a bad flood season (Tournon, 2002), and the village's activities were traditionally planned around that annual variation. But the floods that are generally expected between January and March are now happening either too early (in December) or too late (starting in late March), and usually for a longer period. The bad floods that used to happen every ten years and result in the loss of crops are now also happening on an annual basis (see chapter 2). Studies of livelihood strategies in the floodplains of Peruvian Amazonia have already shown that adult experiences of floods vary depending on the intensity and duration of these events, as inundation can be positive if their extension does not threaten crops but still brings abundant amounts of fish (Langill & Abizaid, 2020; Tournon, 2002). But a bad flood brings risks that go beyond the loss of subsistence agriculture. Predators such as snakes, alligators and rats can enter people's houses in search of refuge, and prey on chickens and other domestic animals. Apart from the evident issue of scarcity, health issues become more prominent as mosquitoes abound. The same river water that is used for cooking becomes an open toilet for families that rely on small canoes to circulate in between houses.

While studies have disaggregated *mestizo* people's experiences of river seasonality by gender to show how men and women are differently affected by a bad flood (Langill, 2021), children's activities are also subject to change in these contexts. This became evident when children described their flood experiences in Mai Joshin in a collective mapping exercise. During *jenetian* the river can invade Mai Joshin for a period that can last between several days to over a month. This affects the school year, as teachers cannot open the classroom when the

[64] The seasons presented here were described by schoolchildren in a classroom context, and are different from the 7 seasons recounted by Tournon (1994). It seems the current number of seasons is equated to Western standards, with the extremes of *jenetian* and *baritian* often referred to as 'invierno' and 'verano' in Spanish (respectively, winter and summer).

village is flooded, and also food production (see chapter 2). Play spaces, such as the football field, can also become inundated if the whole landscape transforms into a waterway. Despite this, a 'low' flood is still associated with fun, since children can swim and circulate in small canoes and swim in-between houses, and the less experienced have a chance to catch plentiful fish with a hook from inside their houses. However, a 'high' or prevalent flood means that it is no longer safe to swim. Children report that 'there is nothing fun to do' as they must stay inside their houses. The river can also bring odd currents from upriver that kill fish and leave a putrid smell in the air, in which case the floating schools of fish can only serve as a target for small children who are learning to use a spear as they should not be eaten. Children also report falling sick more often (*noa isanai*) which they associate with river pollution.

The extent to which the river dictates the socio-cultural and economic life in the village makes evident how children's lives are highly dependent on ecology: the climate affects the intensity of rains, which in turn affects the length and extension of floods, and the subsistence of families. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the unpredictability and precariousness of floods worsen a tendency of seasonal migration, as it becomes hard to foresee the season and prepare for severe inundations (see also Espinosa, 2019). Adults and older boys relocate to wherever there is a temporary job offer, with many schoolchildren going to Lima to sell *kenés* or do small jobs, as discussed in the previous section. The peak of the rain season generally lasts from December to March, and at this time Mai Joshin is emptied of most male adults and young men. Households are then much more reliant on the work of children, given how schools are closed during *jenetian* and families are divided by the need for cash. Therefore, in this context the children who remain in the village become a reserve labour force (Lancy, 2015a) particularly involved in fishing (see Figure 19).

Figure 19 – Play with make-believe canoes

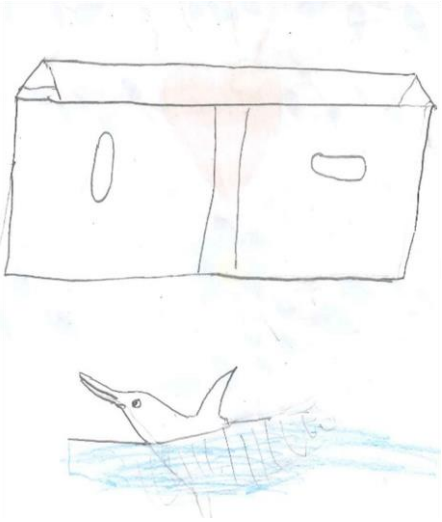
The importance of the river for people's livelihoods in Mai Joshin pushes children to learn from this environment at a very early age (Figure 19). As argued in previous sections, this form of learning is promoted by a child rearing tradition that incites the youngest to learn from more experienced *wetsabo.* However, it is also produced by the riverine landscape, as this ecology constitutes the base for many everyday practices in Mai Joshin. This socio-ecological rationale is supported by literature that considers interactions with nature to be a crucial part of learning during childhood (Hadfield-Hill & Zara, 2019a; Taylor, 2013b). I have already shown in chapter 2 that the Shipibo cosmology challenges the classic Enlightenment distinction between nature and culture, as for the Shipibo people plants and animals have agentic powers (see also Dev, 2020). Considering this, I look at children's entangled experiences in and with the environment as a means to acquire knowledge and skills about the environment in which they dwell (Ingold, 2000).

Unlike other forest-based peoples, for whom children's interest in the river might indicate a desire for outward mobility (see Morelli, 2017), Shipibo parents view children's interest in the river as precisely what guarantees the potential continuity of customs. Definitions of 'Shipiboness' are expressed as one's ability to fish, swim, envision *kenés* and use a boat, to the

extent that children who showed no interest in these activities were a source of concern. From this perspective, children's riverine activities go beyond peer sociality and subsistence to represent a potential replenishment of culture (Bravo Diaz, 2019, p.53). To fully understand the importance of riverine environments, it is necessary to delve into Shipibo cosmology and its complex socio-ecological understandings.

As argued in chapter 2, the Shipibo perceive our world (*non nete*) as an environment shared by humans with other forest creatures. Each creature has domain over their realms, and the various coexistent environments are interdependent. As in many other Amazonian cosmologies (Borea & Yahuarcani, 2020), the river world (*jene nete*) is another crucial environment for the survival of our world, inhabited by a life-giving anaconda (*ronin*) and other human-like river spirits known as *jenen yoshinbo.* These creatures punish human behaviours that endanger collective survival. Therefore, we can circulate between different environments, by swimming in the river or trekking through the forest, but we must do so with respect, as disrespectful behaviours (e.g. overfishing) can cause ailments such as the *cutipa* mentioned earlier in this chapter.

While the interconnected cosmological order described by my informants has less components than earlier attempts to schematise the Shipibo world order (Roe, 1982, p.128; UNICEF, 2012b), some vital elements endure. Firstly, the Shipibo share aspects of their cosmology with other Indigenous peoples such as a perception of the world as a web of interdependent socio-natural environments, which reiterates the relevance of thinking about an interconnected socio-ecological order (Descola, 2013; Ullrich, 2019). Each realm is essential for the survival of another, and life is viewed as a scarce resource that is transferred between different species by predation (see also Santos-Granero, 2019). Inside this logic, other-than-humans – such as riverine and forest spirits – are viewed as equally agentic and powerful in relation to humans, a common feature of a perspectivist ontology (Viveiros de Castro, 2014). This can be exemplified by children's depictions of Mai Joshin during a flood (see Figure 20).



I - River dolphin (*koshoshka*) drawn by Luis (11-year-old)

II - Mermaid *(jenen yoshin)* in the village, drawn by Dercy (7-year-old girl)

III - Forest spirit (*chullachaki*) drawn by Yully (9 year-old girl)

IV – Encounter with *chullachaki*, drawn by Manuel (10-year-old boy).

Figure 20 – The environment in Mai Joshin

Children's drawings depicted the closer proximity of the river to local houses and, consequently, that of other-than-human creatures. The creatures are *yoshinbo,* spirits of anthropomorphic appearance that dominate different environments to regulate predation. The river dolphin (Figure 20-I) is particularly infamous for its capacity to adopt a human form and seduce women, to the extent of conceiving semi-human children with them before disappearing into the river. Like the mermaid (Figure 20-II), who is also a *jenen yoshin* (river spirit), the dolphin can kidnap people who overfish or pollute the river. Finally, the *chullachaki* (Figure 20-III and IV) is a forest spirit (*niin yoshin*) that protects animals and trees from predation. It kidnaps people to mimic their appearance and trick hunters, who then walk into the depths of the forest searching for their relatives until they get lost. In children's depictions, the *chullachaki* is always a child.

The high rate of religious conversion among the Shipibo has not eliminated perspectivist thinking (see chapter 2 and Vilaça, 2016). However, it has to some extent changed the representation of *yoshinbo.* Slaghenauffi (2019) noted that the potentially dangerous character of forest and river spirits offered an easy association between *yoshinbo* and demons, and her Shipibo interlocutors referred to these entities as such. But many *yoshinbo* actually have an ambiguous character, as they help *onanyas* to heal spiritual inflictions and attacks from foreign sorcerers (see Brabec de Mori, 2017). In this context, one can think of the forest and river spaces as ambivalent, as other-than-human creatures constantly react to human action. Human life is also profoundly dependent on the resources of these environments. When explaining this interdependency to UNICEF, adult Shipibo consultants argued that 'the [Shipibo] people vision of their living environment is (…) binding given how plants, birds, animals, stars, spiritual beings, and everything that exists is intertwined with human life' (UNICEF, 2012b, p.37).

When asking children about their experiences in their territory, we also noticed a recognition of this interconnectedness among different spaces. The 48 school-age children who mapped Mai Joshin demarcated the territory as having four interdependent realms: the main village, the forest, the river and the *chacra.* Despite sharing some commonalities in landscape, including potential animal predators, a crucial difference between the forest and the *chacra* is that the plants and animals in the latter have been domesticated, and therefore an appearance of a *chullachaki* is less likely. In contrast, the forest and the river incite an ambiguous feeling of danger and dependency. Following Santos-Granero (2019), the duality of these spaces can be read through the logic of predation, according to which vitality is a scarce substance that is

disputed by prey and predators. Because the status of humans and other-than-humans are always shifting in these disputes for vitality, their ontological status is undecided: the victim of one predator is the enemy of another's prey (see also Brabec de Mori, 2017).

Despite signalling that the trek through the forest is a potentially risky endeavour due to the presence of jaguars, serpents and *chullachakis*, children claim to be unafraid as they know how to take care of themselves (*nenora noa koirametai*). For instance, trekkers watch where they step, walk backwards if confronted with a predator, and ask for permission to cross the path if they identify a *chullachaki* (recognisable by their reversed feet). Similar strategies of self-care are adopted in the river. Apart from recognising *jenen yoshinbo*, such as dolphins, mermaids and anacondas, children know where it is safe to swim and paddle. No one will swim in the two lakes of the community known to be the house of caimans and piranhas. Only the older and more experienced venture their canoes into these waters – and never to play.

Children's knowledge of the environment manifests their entangled relationships with other-than-humans (Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2018) and the endurance of a cosmology of mutual interdependence (Santos-Granero, 2015). The Shipibo believe that the environment is the main source of wisdom (*onan)* acquired by dwelling experience or in communication with plant spirits. This is epitomised by the figure of the *onanya*, a healer who learns how to diagnose ailments in dialogue with plants (see Dev, 2020). The idea that wisdom is a knowledge acquired from (and in dialogue with) the environment is not exclusive to the Shipibo (see Ingold, 2000; Taylor, 2013a). Nonetheless, it is essentially different from what is proposed by formal education, as argued in the following section.

Figure 21 – Play in the river during jene beaitian (start of the rain season)

4.5. The house of getting accustomed

The school is called *axeti xobo*. The expression is commonly translated into 'house of learning', although the verb *axeti* is more often used as 'becoming accustomed'. The name of the building references an approach to learning as a process of familiarity with a given practice. Different from the wisdom obtained from the environment (*onan*), *axebo* (customs) are obtained through sociality and bodily discipline. As quoted by the Shipibo schoolteacher (*axeamis)* Lener Guimaraes, '*onan* is not learned from teachers but from nature itself; a human teacher cannot substitute nature nor communicate its teachings. They will prepare us to learn from nature by our own experiences' (Tubino & Zariquiey, 2007, p.71). Thus, rather than reflecting on education through the curriculum, this section looks at classroom routines to shed light onto the customs to which children are getting used.

The school is not a novelty in native communities. Since the 1950s, when Indigenous peoples in Amazonia received their first schools, a generational division became evident: ''children' are those who go to school and become dependent consumers; 'parents' are those who produce food and do not go to school' (Rival, 2000, p. 114). Consequently, anthropologists considered that universal education could lead to a gradual deskilling of younger generations

and hinder the maintenance of traditional livelihoods (Levinson et al., 2000; Rival, 1997, p. 141). Although this chapter has shown that children continue to learn Shipibo values and livelihood strategies through interactions with family, peers and in/with the environment, students spend such a large portion of their time inside the classroom that an exploration of this space becomes crucial to understand their childhoods.

From the age of 3, children start to spend half of their weekdays inside *axeti xobo*, located at the rear end of Mai Joshin. The walk takes about 20 minutes for young children located at the opposite side of the village. Rather than grouping themselves with *wetsabo*, the 144 students are separated into three different buildings based on their age and curricular knowledge: pre-school (28 students), primary school (76 students), and secondary school (40 students). At pre-school, the selection of students is age-based (from 3 to 5-year-olds), but this is not always true for other levels of education. The primary school building concentrated 52% of the village's students, with ages ranging from 6 to 16 years, while those in secondary school are unlikely to be older than 17. Children need to comply with certain rules to progress through primary school. There is an annual assessment of basic knowledge of literacy and numeracy, along with frequent evaluations of quality of teaching, but the main driver of repetition in a school year is low school attendance.[65]

Apart from a separation by buildings, spatial divisions take place inside each school level with classrooms that combine two school years taught by a single teacher. Despite the potential for reproducing peer-learning in multi-age classrooms (Ames, 2018), the division of students reproduces a division per school year and age. Children in early years of education shared a large table with their peers, while children from 3rd year onwards sat in gendered pairs (Figure 22). Here the division does not necessarily represent an age distinction, as some 3rd year students can be older than 4th years, and the same applies for 5th and 6th years. Conversely, this ordering promotes a differentiation of students almost entirely by regularity of school attendance. This was more significant than knowledge assessments for school progression, and teachers verbally shame students that are considered behind the average. Given how those students are generally the ones who work more hours, their status inside the school contrasts

[65] Apart from localised school assessments, DREU regularly implements a national system of evaluation of quality of teaching, which is done by Shipibo EIB teaching coaches. These exams are conducted without much notice, to prevent the teacher from preparing for it, and assess whether children have reached standardised educational achievements for their year. The assessment monitors the quality of teaching in each institution, but does not hinder students' progress at school.

greatly with the appreciative social feedback that they receive elsewhere in Mai Joshin.

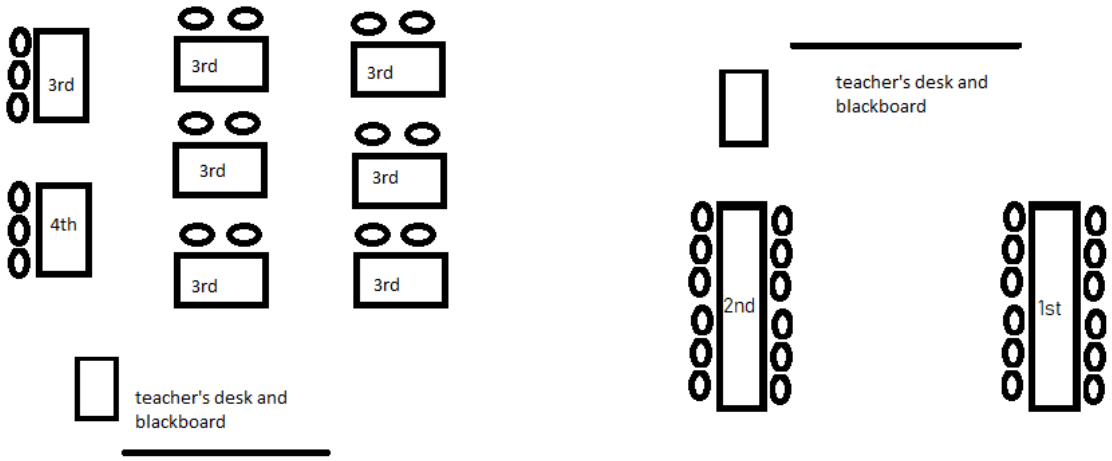


Figure 22 – Multi-grade classrooms at primary school

The school is globally assumed to be a space for children because it is a controlled, supervised environment (Nieuwenhuys, 2003). But *axeti xobo* leaves little space for children's agency. This is only recovered during school breaks, when children can play freely in the football field and under the school, hiding behind the stilts. The hierarchical environment is also unforgiving to girls, who face harassment from boy peers, teachers, and government staff.[66] Students claimed that the school was 'ok' or 'just fine' (*jakontani*). This could also be due to the fact that it was a site of access to processed meals (for which they had developed a taste) and because their families received a cash benefit dependent on their regular school attendance, aspects that will be further explored in chapter 5. During school hours, children manifested physical unrest and boredom by constantly adjusting their posture, sighing, or searching for reasons to walk around (e.g. borrowing supplies).

In every classroom, rules of decorum are strict and displayed in a sign on the wall: be punctual (*ora senen nokoti*), do not be untidy (*non keras imatima*), do not steal pencils (*rapis yometsoatima*), do not lie (*jansotima*), do not move books (*kirika petsetima),* have a proper

[66] I did not witness any physical punishment, but I question whether this was due to my presence in the classroom, as teachers knew that I was at some level reporting to UNICEF and DREU. However, I did witness with frequency the sexual harassment of girls. This happened especially in 5th and 6th years of primary school and in secondary school level.

haircut (*maxkorota iti*), be silent (*netetibi*). The intense disciplining of bodies, also witnessed by Morelli (2014, p. 277) and Rival (1992) in other Amazonian contexts, suggested that the production of desired subjectivities was the real goal of schooling (Wells, 2016, p.240). The set of rules apprehended at *axeti xobo* differed strikingly from Mai Joshin's communal values. They demotivate communion (e.g. pencils and books are school property, and children must have individual supplies), demand a punctuality that is not upheld by the teacher and set a rigorous atmosphere in which children do little more than sitting still. The expansion of mandatory years of education[67] also results in an expansion of childhood years in a way that can conflict with the generational understandings of Indigenous societies (Ames, 2012). For instance, I would often hear from parents that children were becoming lazier and weaker – a point to which I will return in the next chapter. But the rules of behaviour inside the school may to some extent justify parents' concerns, as 'children spend half of their days there and don't learn neither Shipibo nor Spanish, they do nothing' (interview with Jose, a father of seven children).

Parental claims were supported by data from standardised tests in Peru. The percentage of primary school students with satisfactory educational levels in rural Amazonia is less than half of that of students in Pucallpa (15%) and only a quarter of the national average (26.6%) (UNICEF, 2017). However, some contextual data can help elucidate the limitations of teaching in native communities. Firstly, the number of Indigenous teachers fulfils only half of the existing demand for bilingual education (Saavedra & Gutierrez, 2020). The scarcity of Indigenous teachers is likely related to the low number of students that actually complete their studies in rural Amazonia, given that nearly 30% of adolescents above the age of 15 years old drop out of school (Espinosa & Ruiz, 2017). But it is likely also aggravated by the devaluation of the teaching profession, as current wages (of around 2000 soles in 2019)[68] are less than one-third of what they were worth in the 1960s (ibid., p.156). Although in Mai Joshin that salary was a privilege, since it was over seven times higher than the average income of families, teachers did not feel that the money compensated for the total of expected work hours. The primary school's headmaster even argued that his profession was a bad career choice, as one could earn the same with less dedication working in tourism.

[67] 60% of all rural secondary schools in Peru were created in the period between 1991-2013, and the remainder of this percentage are schools built after 2001 (Montero & Uccelli, 2017).

[68] Salaries vary depending on the category of teaching, with those with a permanent contract earning more.

The frustration with their salaries led teachers to often avoid the task of preparing lessons. They would arrive late and simply ask students to copy contents from a textbook. While children obeyed, teachers took advantage of that time to fill the register and write lesson plans that they are requested to present to DREU during surprise checks. Visits by Shipibo educators (referred to as *acompañantes EIB*) happen regularly and without a precise schedule. Their goal is to offer pedagogical coaching through observation of school activities, and to monitor EIB teachers' work. Despite these attempts, the focus group with Shipibo pedagogical coaches suggests that Shipibo teachers can be dismissive of this initiative:

> They say it nicely, no? 'Yes, teacher, now we are going to change things, I am going to do this and that' [participants laugh]. We do it ourselves even, we help them do all the little things but the following month it's the same. I have looked for strategies here and there, I've said 'teacher, what do you want? Don't you want me to coach you? I can tell my bosses to change your *acompañante*' They [go:] 'no, teacher, I'm sorry, it's that this happened, my notebook got wet, my child got sick' [laughter]. Everyday it's a new excuse. (Lucía, Shipibo EIB educator)

> If an *acompañante* watched him today, they will put a little stamp there, some observation, something [in the teacher's notebook]. So you notice they only have that one lesson plan. You turn the page, you notice that the lesson plan that you left he only uses for you to see something at each visit. Maybe he has two or three there, he doesn't have more, and he will give you a lot of excuses. Maybe each fifteen days they might write something [a lesson plan], but you can tell what they are doing [skipping classes and copying the lesson plan]. (Eva, Shipibo EIB educator)

The dismissiveness of teachers might ensue from how power dynamics play out during these coaching encounters. A 68% of Shipibo EIB teachers are men (INEI, 2017a), and at primary and secondary school level teaching staff 'are really all male' (as argued by Lucía). More importantly, permanent teachers tend to be older men. Given how social norms dictate that their age require respect, coaching by younger people (especially if educators are women) is often not well received:

> We have a high percentage of male teachers, and those with secure employment are already old, over 50 or over 40 [years old]. Maybe that explains their low disposition [for improving their pedagogy]. Where I sometimes feel [there is] more initiative is with youth that are just starting [the career] and have few years of experience. They have all the will to do things. And they don't care if [EIB monitoring staff] are men or women. (Eva, Shipibo EIB educator)[69]

[69] It should be noted that when missionaries started training Shipibo people for teaching, they taught almost exclusively men. Women also face more challenges to pursue higher education due to lack of family support and the fear of gendered violence in the cities, according to the women in this focus group.

The religious training of older teachers (who were often educated by missionaries, as discussed in chapter 2) was also a factor of disagreement between EIB monitoring staff and the local teachers:

> The typical [Shipibo] teacher doesn't know what [traditionally Shipibo] spirituality is and what is religion. If we do something [some activity] about spirituality, he will pick up the Bible and start talking verses (laughter). (Ricardo, Shipibo EIB educator)

> There are schools where teachers, despite being Shipibo, don't really know what an EIB activity is, what local knowledge is… And having local knowledge helps a lot [for the EIB project]. (…) It should depart from the construction of our [Shipibo] people's identity. But the teachers in general are very colonised, they were raised by religion and won't stop talking about it (Gilson, Shipibo EIB educator)

An extensive literature on EIB discusses the challenge of integrating the somewhat contradictory *mestizo* and Indigenous knowledge traditions (Trapnell & Zavala, 2013). Although the State and the Indigenous organisations have made efforts to detach schooling from missionary education, most older teachers were trained by SIL and tend to follow the pedagogy of missionary schools (see Trapnell, 2003 and chapter 2). In practice, in most classrooms in rural Amazonia, the intercultural aspect of lessons remains limited to bilingual literacy, as teachers struggle to incorporate a critique of Western knowledge (Cortina, 2017):

> I said to them: 'This is not part of our customs'. And they would tell me 'we are now in the globalisation, we have to attach ourselves to that, to god' (Manuel, Shipibo EIB educator)

> How can we have a critique of knowledge if all the time they [teachers] are saying 'father god, father god'? (Gilson, Shipibo EIB educator)

While Mai Joshin's school lessons were not always informed by religion, geography and history lessons still portrayed Shipibo culture as frozen in time, with men going hunting wearing *kushmas* (an oversized robe) and women making ceramic pots. In contrast, activities regarding 'science' or the 'environment' would resort to the books used in non-EIB schools, with no critical reflection connecting that knowledge to the lived experiences of children in Mai Joshin. I never witnessed an activity that valued Shipibo mastery of plants, even though this was a fundamental marker of identity and source of income for the Shipibo people (Morin, 2015; Slaghenauffi, 2019). When I asked students about what they had learned about plants at school, the only content they could show me was a textbook's representation of the photosynthesis scheme.

Shipibo knowledge was mainly foregrounded in spelling lessons, which were almost exclusively conducted in this language. For this activity, students were ordered to speak in unison and write familiar words, such as the names of Amazonian fishes and fruits (Figure 23). Nonetheless, parents argued that these lessons were not representative of Shipibo knowledge and culture. This echoed the complaints of Agustina Valera, a female potter from an urban Shipibo village: 'They teach, for instance 'daddy went to plant cassava', only sentences like that. They also teach 'mummy went in a canoe'. But these are not our customs, anyone can plant cassava or travel in a canoe'. (Valenzuela Bismarck & Rojas, 2004, p.296). Ricardo, then president of FECONAU, argued further that knowledge acquired inside the school is not a substitute for wisdom coming from lived experience: 'You cannot separate the child from the community. Children learn by fishing in the river with their fathers, by doing *kené* with their mothers' (interview in August 2019).

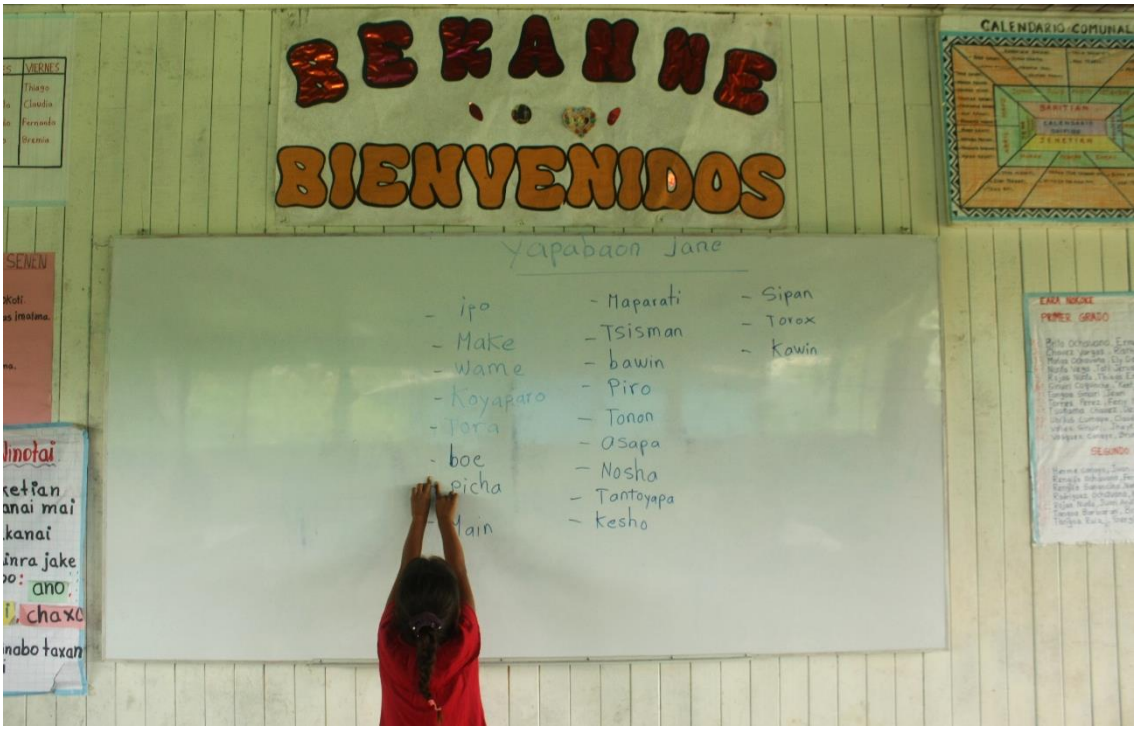


Figure 23 – Reading exercise at school

In Mai Joshin, like in most contexts, the classroom promotes a hyper-separation between nature and culture in the ways that children are expected to learn. If interactions with the environment are praised to improve young children's cognition, after entering school there is a sudden split between the natural child and the cultured adult, and knowledge starts to be

transmitted by theory more than by practice. Taylor (2013b) argues that this division stems from an Enlightened vision of civilisation in opposition to the disordered natural world, and from the central role that schools had in processes of colonisation. That is particularly relevant in Amazonia, given the Settler colonial image of Indigenous peoples as 'savages' (*ina*, in Shipibo) and the legacy of an education focused on the inculcation of a 'civilised', Christian *habitus* (see chapter 2). The challenge to think of alternative EIB pedagogies is directly related to this, as more senior teachers have been educated inside that logic and tend to reproduce it nowadays.

The classroom experiences in Mai Joshin show how, even inside the EIB pedagogical project, there is a tendency to value *mestizo* in favour of Shipibo knowledge. To some extent, it could be argued that this is due to very purpose of bilingual education: students attend the school in order to obtain better jobs (Espinosa, 2012), and the overpowering commercial and political applications of Spanish language makes fluency mandatory for securing better jobs in the future. However, parents complained that children did not learn sufficient Spanish to obtain professional careers in the city and were instead lacking subsistence skills and plant knowledge to thrive in Mai Joshin (a point to which I will return in chapter 6). Considering parental claims that children are growing fonder of *mestizo* lifestyles and detached from Shipibo customs, the next chapter discusses another form of teaching that takes place at school: the official and extraofficial rules of social protection.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter looked at Shipibo children's lived experiences with attention to gender and age differences. It discussed family life and Shipibo values of good character to reflect on gendered behaviour, children's knowledge of their territory and, finally, how these contrast with routines at school. The purpose of this chapter was to understand Shipibo childhood and examine the influence that the school has in shaping children's *habitus*. The chapter started by describing local practices of communal child rearing and how they expand children's environment from the nuclear family to the entire village. These practices also foster autonomy and gendered behaviour by inciting children to learn from slightly older same-gender kin.

The chapter links same-gender peer interactions to the reproduction of gendered labour. I emphasise that childhood transitions are influenced by gender norms enacted through plant treatments that enhance different desirable skills in girls and boys. Considering the importance

given by the Shipibo people to knowledge exchanges with nature, I also examine children's experiences of Mai Joshin's environment and seasonality. I argue that environmental knowledge helps validate communal knowledge about the cosmological order. Finally, the last section looks at school routines and its clashes with Shipibo customs.

The main argument of this chapter is that children's sociality and environmental knowledge remain profoundly moulded by Shipibo traditions and cosmological values. However, children's livelihoods are harmed by environmental changes in their territory, as frequent floods and adult migration tend to weaken their household economy and increase girls' workload. Lastly, this chapter reinstated the importance of the school for child development in Mai Joshin and introduced the ways in which school teachings encourage the development of a new *habitus* – an argument that will be strengthened in the next chapter.

5. Children, the future of the nation

5.1. Introduction

In earlier chapters, this thesis presented an overview of how 'childhood' has been operationalised to justify State intervention in Indigenous territories, with poignant examples from the history of Amazonia (respectively, in chapters 1 and 2). Chapter 4 also discussed how children's experiences are shaped by gendered differences, environmental changes and schooling. It showed how children's schooled *habitus* contrasts greatly with Shipibo values of wisdom and personhood. Building from this, the current chapter will reflect on children's double positionality as the future of the Shipibo and the Peruvian nations, through an analysis of child-centred development interventions in Mai Joshin and their effects on family life.

The aim of this chapter is to answer the question: how are current forms of child-sensitive social protection affecting the lives of children in Mai Joshin? To do this, the chapter reviews relevant documents from the child-centred programmes Qali Warma, Juntos and Vaso de Leche, that establish the State's rationale for pursuing a child-centred social protection. Then, it will explore why Peru expanded the reach of child-centred social protection in Amazonia, and what this tells us about the State's understanding of Indigenous peoples. This is then complemented by perspectives of government staff involved in programme implementation, gleaned by participant observation and a focus group. Through the observation notes, I show how people in the village perceive the programmes, and how familial and communal dynamics shift in response to the values established by the conditionalities of social protection.

5.2. Investing in children as agents of change

It's 7am and children arrive at school more than an hour before their teachers, as the building is also where they eat their breakfast. The meals are part of the Qali Warma programme, that feeds all students from pre-school to secondary school level. Breakfast consists of a combination of oatmeal or corn and milk, if the latter was provided via a programme called Vaso de Leche (VDL). Otherwise, the mothers in charge of school meals will improvise something like tuna pasta from the dry goods and canned items available in the kitchen. When the teacher arrives, children go into their respective classrooms and sit down for the rest of the morning. Students need to wait for a break to use the dry toilet, which UNICEF has built. At lunchtime, children grab spoons and plastic containers, and head to the kitchen

again. This meal is bigger: split peas, rice and canned meat, or a similar combination of dry food parcels. There is a longer break at lunchtime, and students take advantage of this to play football in the large open field ahead of the school. Before re-entering the classroom, children wash the sweat and dirt off their faces in a water tap built by the regional government. Girls also tie their hair up in front of a little mirror in the classroom, bought with their families' money. Classes only resume for an extra hour, but the end of the school day may bring surprise visits. The local nurse may come to administer parasite treatments, with children lining to take a pill in a disposable cup. She also reminds students of pending vaccines if a child has been avoiding a visit to the medical unit. Sporadically, a Juntos evaluator shows up without warning. Schooling and vaccinating children are key conditionalities for families' access to the conditional cash-transfer (CCT) Juntos, and the CCT promoter will check whether children are actually attending school, and in what state.

The pervasiveness of State interventions is noticeable in children's lives: the government feeds them, educates them, washes them, gives them allopathic medicine and money for school equipment. During my first fieldwork (August 2019 to March 2020), 55 out of the 73 primary school children in my sample said they were enrolled in Juntos and all 141 students in Mai Joshin got their main meals at the school, through Qali Warma and VDL. The numbers suggest a radical transformation of Mai Joshin's children's socio-ecology: from active participants in reciprocal relationships with family (as per chapter 4) into more passive recipients of State care. This chapter will look at the effects of this governance of childhood (Wells, 2016) on children's daily experiences, departing from an inquiry into the purposes of such programmes.

As discussed in chapter 1, the UNCRC led to a growth of interest in children in the international development community, and research started to highlight the long-lasting consequences of child poverty on human development (Boyden & Bourdillon, 2012). Economic research suggested that interventions during childhood could potentially break patterns of reproduction of poverty inside a family, as investments in child development would result in better human capital in the long-term (Heckman, 2000b, 2000a). This argument was so powerful that it was used by UNICEF to advocate for substantial investments in social protection to provide all children with the conditions to thrive (UNICEF et al., 2009; Winder

& Yablonski, 2012). Peru echoes this global trend through the programmes discussed in this chapter, summarised in Table 3 below.[70]

Table 3 – Programmes available for (and through) children in Peruvian Amazonia

Programme	Aim	Action	Conditionality	Target Audience
Vaso de Leche (VDL)	Addressing nutritional deficit	Distributes powdered or canned milk	N.A.	Ages 0-13, lactating and pregnant mothers
Qali Warma	Addressing nutritional deficit	Distributes canned food, dried beans and lentils, pasta and rice	Attending school	Schoolchildren*
Juntos	Intergenerational transmission of poverty	Pays s/200 (US$51) bi-monthly per household	Attending school and regular health cheks	Schoolchildren* and pregnant women

* Up to the age of 19 or at the end of secondary school, whatever happens first

As suggested by Table 3, the programmes can be grouped into two central aims: addressing nutritional deficits and intergenerational transmission of poverty. Chapter 1 already discussed how research on the permanent consequences of child malnutrition for a person's cognitive development was a landmark for child-centred development programming (see also Ansell, 2016). It is in this context that Vaso de Leche (Glass of Milk, in Spanish), hereby VDL, and Qali Warma (Vigorous child, in Quechua) were devised.

VDL was part of Peru's attempt to appease poverty-stricken families during a grave economic crisis and the country's internal conflict. Created in 1983, VDL originally responded to a march of working women in Lima that claimed children's right to have at least a glass of milk per day (Blondet & Trivelli, 2004). The programme was quickly expanded to national level, albeit with a patchy distribution (Vásquez, 2020; Copestake, 2008). Data from 2000 shows that 47% of districts with low prevalence of stunting received VDL, while 28% of the region with the highest indexes of stunting did not (Mejía Acosta & Haddad, 2014).[71]

[70] It should be noted that there are other programmes focused on children and young people in Peru, such as *Cuna Mas* (Cradle Plus) and *Beca 18* (Studentship 18). However, they are still incipient in native communities and were only recognised by a few people in Mai Joshin during my fieldwork. Those who did know about *Beca 18* believed that the programme did not benefit Indigenous students.

[71] The exact date when VDL reached the native communities of Amazonia is not specified by the literature. Government data indicates that Ucayali received 6.5 million soles for VDL in 2007 (the first programme budget available online). This figure represented 2% of the national budget for VDL, but only 80% of that money was actually spent. Data from the transparency portal Consulta Amigable

Evaluations have also shown that VDL was ineffective in improving child nutrition, but its curtailment would result in negative public opinion of the government in charge of this decision (Mejía Acosta & Haddad, 2014).

Aiming to improve the distribution of nutritious meals to children, Qali Warma was created in 2013 to substitute the previously existing National Programme of Food Assistance (*Programa Nacional de Asistencia Alimentaria* or PRONAA), which ran from 1992 to 2012. Inspired by the Rome Declaration on World Food Security (FAO, 1996), and well-timed with UNICEF's (2013) pledge for a global improvement of child nutrition, Qali Warma was designed to correct PRONAA's main flaws. It would expand operations into rural areas and provide children with locally grown, high quality meals instead of tinned and dried goods; those would be prepared and distributed by a school meal committee, composed of students' mothers (Lora, Castañeda, & Benites, 2016; Peruvian Government, 2017). Qali Warma's original design was funded through extensive lending from the World Bank[72] and the support of UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). However, the complicated logistics of food distribution led the programme to return to the same food parcels that it had attempted to substitute (Vásquez H., 2020).

Early evaluations suggested that Qali Warma managed to reduce overall malnutrition, but failed to improve child anaemia due to a failure to provide iron supplements to the regions most in need (Alcázar, 2016).[73] Subsequently, the government would attempt to improve the programme's distribution, as I will discuss in the next section. But Qali Warma went beyond the distribution of foodstuffs to include an educational component that would teach children to eat healthier (Peruvian Government, 2017). Nutritional education was expected to transform children into agents of change, as they would share their knowledge with their families (Vásquez H., 2020) and thus help tackle hidden hunger (when children are malnourished in essential vitamins and nutrients, but not underweight) (UNICEF, 2019). However, as I will argue later in this chapter, the focus on changing food habits did not integrate Shipibo

(Friendly Consultation): https://apps5.mineco.gob.pe/transparencia/Navegador/default.aspx Access in 6 May 2022.

[72] Loan Number 8222-PE, in the value of 10 million USD. Available at: http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/974341468287110339/pdf/RAD118485204.pdf Access in 02 January 2021.

[73] Alcázar (2016) compared national statistics of child malnutrition a decade after PRONAA's implementation, stressing the prevalence of a significant proportion of anaemic children (around 35%) and a steady decrease in malnutrition (at the time of Qali Warma's implementation, malnutrition affected 18% of Peruvian children).

knowledge (see also Micarelli, 2018). Instead, it operated through a replacement of traditional meals with *mestizo* food products.

A similar intent of child-centred social change was envisioned by Juntos (Together, in Spanish). This CCT, like most programmes of this kind in Latin America, was concerned with the intergenerational reproduction of poverty and its detrimental consequences for child development (Adato & Hoddinott, 2010; Barrientos et al., 2005). Juntos was devised in 2005, in a context where roughly 59% of Peru's population was living in poverty, 1.4 million children had never enrolled at school and only 67% of rural children regularly attended school. Moreover, 21% of children and adolescents had never had a health check (Vásquez H., 2020). The government perceived these statistics to be a consequence of families' inability to invest in children's future when they needed their present workforce (ibid.). The conditional cash-transfer (CCT) would alleviate the economic pressure of schooling children while obliging families to use health and education services.

In Peru, the CCT distributes a bi-monthly sum of 200 soles (US$50) per household regardless of the number of children. The monthly value is equivalent to 9.75% of the national minimum wage but can nearly double the income of a Shipibo family living exclusively from selling plantains, which is estimated to be around 283 soles (Collado Panduro, 2021, p.64). The transfer is always made to a mother, and the recipient and all her children must have an ID document number to enrol in the programme. In remote areas, where banks are not easily available, the money arrives via Itinerant Platforms of Social Action (*Plataformas Itinerantes de Accion Social*) that transport benefits from several programmes at once (Vásquez H., 2020).[74] Nonetheless, the payment depends on certain 'co-responsibilities' (as phrased by the Peruvian law), such as children's school attendance and regular health checks. Like Qali Warma, the CCT intends to incentivise behavioural changes among its users. Hence, Juntos includes random monitoring visits in which government staff check if children from enrolled households had their mandatory health checks, if they are attending school regularly and how the family is spending the grant (MIDIS, 2013).

The expansion of Juntos had some evident positive outcomes as a poverty reduction strategy in Peru. Although the country started the millennium with over half of its population in poverty, it managed to reduce this percentage to 20% by 2017 (Vásquez H., 2020). CCTs

[74] As I will discuss later in this chapter, this often confuses families about which programme does what, and makes them believe that the receipt of Qali Warma meals is also conditional.

also transform schooling children into a livelihood strategy for families with limited access to regular sources of income, however the benefits for children are highly gendered (Bradshaw & Víquez, 2008). CCTs are effective in reducing the workload of school-going girls, but not of their female siblings (Camfield, 2014). They are also not as effective in preventing boys' labour (Hagen-Zanker et al., 2017). Although CCTs tend to increase school attendance and access to school supplies, this does not necessarily convert into better education for children (Porter & Dornan, 2010). Rather, official and extraofficial conditionalities can be experienced as obligations, particularly due to the asymmetrical nature of relationships between officers and recipients (Ramírez, 2021). As I will argue in section 5.5, this imbalance can result in the promotion of a particular *habitus* in the children who are enrolled in social protection, as they incorporate performances and aspirations that are rewarded by Juntos' staff.

Global policy research claims that a solid scheme of child-sensitive social protection strengthens child protection by stimulating the use of basic services, such as health and schooling, and monitoring family dynamics (Devereux et al., 2015; Streuli, 2012). However, the success of this approach is just as dependent on policy narratives as on programme implementation (Molyneux, 2006; Ramírez, 2016). If social services depreciate Indigenous cultures and traditional knowledge, they may violate children's rights to cultural identity and self-esteem, as argued in chapter 1. To reflect further on this conundrum, the following section will examine the policies that boosted the expansion of child-sensitive social protection into native communities.

5.3. Extreme poverty versus public wealth

Access to social protection is a relative novelty in Mai Joshin. From 2014 to 2017, there was a 72% growth in the coverage of Juntos in the Amazonian region, and in Ucayali alone the number of enrolled households grew exponentially from 230 in 2015 to 6,241 in March 2022 (MIDIS, 2022). The growth of investments in child-sensitive social protection can be traced to a series of historical developments at international and national levels, as previously discussed in chapter 2. However, there has been a historically low offer of State services in Amazonia, with interest in the region following a pattern of extractive cycles, from the first rubber boom to the current oil explorations (Barrantes & Glave, 2014; Chirif & Cornejo Chaparro, 2009). Two key documents would change this scenario in 2015: the outline of a national development

strategy known as *Incluir para Crecer*, hereby Include to Grow (Peruvian Government, 2013a), and ministerial resolution n. 227-2014-MIDIS (Peruvian Government, 2014).

Include to Grow underpinned government action to reduce regional inequalities. Through this plan, the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) adopted a life course lens that would foster child development from early childhood to adolescence and the protection of the elderly. This framework sustained five key development programmes, three of which were focused on childhood and adolescence given how these stages are essential for a future economically self-sufficient adulthood (Peruvian Government, 2013a).[75] In order to identify potential beneficiaries, MIDIS set the household as the core unit from which to assess the socioeconomic classification of families. The measurement is conducted every three years by the Household Targeting System (SISFOH) through a survey that enquires about a family's access to basic services (electricity and piped water), geographical location (urban or rural), family's annual wage and properties (land and motorised vehicles). These categories served as a base to measure the wealth of families, however they failed to capture the diverse realities of the country. As discussed by chapter 4, the notions of 'family', 'household' and 'property' can vary greatly between the small nuclear families of Lima and the Indigenous Amazonian societies. Likewise, the certainty of an annual wage is alien to most rural workers.

The criteria used by SISFOH resulted in an inconsistent selection of CCT beneficiaries in native communities, as the government struggled to make sense of income differences inside Indigenous territories (Correa Aste & Roopnaraine, 2014; Correa Aste et al., 2018). Families with little or no stable income were often excluded from social programmes due to wrongful assumptions about their household economy, and discrepant classifications of households in the same village engendered distrust of government assessments (Correa Aste & Roopnaraine, 2014). To simplify the route of access to programmes in Amazonia, MIDIS published resolution n. 227-2014. The document recognised the State's inability to measure the socioeconomic status of Indigenous families in Amazonia via SISFOH and established that the main socioeconomic variable used for those assessments – access to basic services – is precarious for all native communities. Given that SISFOH also relied on a family's monetary expenses to make its assessment, the resolution considered that surveys failed this population

[75] Pension 65, a programme of economic assistance to older adults, also became more accessible to Indigenous peoples in Amazonia after ministerial resolution 227-2014-MIDIS. However, due to the scope of this thesis and because older people are only scarcely mentioned in the 'Include to Grow' policy, I will not analyse the expansion of Pension 65 into Amazonia.

because they live in 'predominantly non-monetary economies' (Peruvian Government, 2014). The State's solution was to combine a geographic criterion (Amazonia, the region with lowest social indicators in the country) with ethnicity (via its Database of Indigenous Peoples)[76]. Subsequently, MIDIS declared that all Indigenous peoples in Amazonia were extremely poor.

While the generalisation of native communities' economic status may have simplified their inclusion in MIDIS' programmes, it is filled with misconceptions of Indigenous peoples' living conditions. Previous chapters have already challenged the idea that native communities have non-monetary economies, but in MIDIS' resolution this category is paradoxically used as an argument to expand financial support to families in Amazonia. MIDIS also assumes native communities' lack of access to basic services to be a sign of poverty, disavowing the role of the State and civil society in the production of inequalities, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2 (see also Drinot, 2006). Finally, it positions native communities as backwards geographies, which contrasts with Shipibo descriptions of the forest as a formerly abundant territory, as per eminent Shipibo potter Agustina Valera's description:

> Before we used to find animals nearby and in abundance. (…) Before we did not know *mestizo* food. Now we barely see things from the forest because White people have killed all our animals. (…) Before when men brought peccaries they would say: (…) 'Cook it, sister-in-law, cook it, mum', they would say. We would invite all kin to eat with us. Now we cannot do this, because now there's not enough food. That is something sad for us. (Valenzuela Bismarck & Rojas, 2004, p. 213)

Agustina's account relates ecology to social well-being, as the Shipibo practice of sharing meals is directly dependant on resource abundance. In her view, poverty is not a consequence of individual conditions, but of environmental and political dynamics affecting the social life of native communities (see also Benjaminsen, 2015). This statement is echoed by the Ashaninka, also from Peruvian Amazonia, who perceive themselves to be rich since the forest provides them with most necessary resources for survival, unlike the cities where people 'live sad lives. They don't eat unless they have money' (Sarmiento Barletti, 2015, p.147). Such statements indicate how Indigenous notions of abundance are not based on individual accumulation of wealth, but rather on the social insurance of kinship ties and abundant shared goods –a notion that is alien to MIDIS' measurements of quality of life.

[76] Also known as BDPI, for the Spanish translation. Available at: https://bdpi.cultura.gob.pe/pueblos-indigenas Access in 14 March 2021.

The clash between the notions of individual and public wealth (Santos-Granero, 2015) is central to Shipibo confusion about the logics of social protection. This became evident when 8 out of 11 parents replied negatively to the question 'is there any service or project in the community that helps children?' during remote fieldwork. The mismatch between children's needs and social protection's purposes became clearer when Douglas (the research assistant) inquired specifically about Qali Warma and Juntos:

> Oh, you mean Qali Warma? (…) There is nothing wrong with feeding children, but when they finish school, they will have nothing. (Interview with mother, 24 years old)

> From my perspective, still there is nothing for children. Well, sometimes they [the government] do a workshop of two or three days, but this doesn't help much. I would like the State to do more in my community, because there are children growing up without a mother and a father now [due to labour migration]. They [these children] won't study. It would be good if the State would support more the education for these children (Interview with father, 18 years old)

Contrary to MIDIS' logics of poverty as an individual problem, these statements present children's needs as complex issues entailing weakened familial relationships (e.g. parental migration), inadequate skill training and resource scarcity (children have nothing after they leave school) affecting Mai Joshin's public wealth. In parents' interviews, children's lives are intertwined with the political challenges faced by the community and their emphasis on the social scope of community impoverishment suggest that children cannot be 'helped' with individual solutions (see also Boyden, 2015). The contestation of MIDIS' programmes is echoed by the Maijuna people interviewed by Ricaud Oneto (2019): 'Maybe they think we don't eat, that we don't have a *chacra*. But we have cassava, plantains, bushmeat, fruits, we have food. (…) We don't lack anything. What we don't have is money' (Ricaud Oneto, 2019, p.8, my translation). The Shipibo leader Ricardo, then president of FECONAU[77], was more critical of State intervention. In a wide-ranging conversation stressing the link between poverty and resource scarcity (see also Robbins, 2011; Lang, 2017), Ricardo told me that it was the government definition of 'development' that was often harmful – a common argument in Indigenous critiques of development (e.g. Bravo Díaz, 2021; Micarelli, 2015):

[77] The Federation of Native Communities of Ucayali and its Affluents (FECONAU) is the local base for a national-scale and multi-ethnic organisation known as AIDESEP (which stands for Interethnic Association of Development in Peruvian Amazonia). See appendix I for a detailed hierarchy of Indigenous organisations in Amazonia.

> Nobody says that two cups of *masato* [fermented manioc beverage], two cups of *chapo* [sweet plantain juice] and three *carachama* [Amazonian catfish] with plantain is wealth. But the children who eat this every day are not hungry. They are strong and healthy. Why is this not enough? We know that our children were strong in the past. Now that children eat food from stores, we have more sickness. They should change the formula that measures poverty. What generates poverty is the big industries. And religion, which is the most terrible thing.

Ricardo's perception is supported by a recent evaluation of Qali Warma that points out that schoolchildren's overall nutrition and iron levels have not improved after three years of enrolment in the programme (Francke & Acosta, 2021).[78] Moreover, the population of Ucayali with caloric deficit has grown nearly 22% in the period between 2014 and 2018 reaching a total of roughly 70,000 people – a pattern also observed in the neighbouring Amazonian districts of Loreto and Madre de Dios (INEI, 2019). While more data would be necessary to claim that Qali Warma is failing Amazonian children, literature on childhood nutrition suggests that food aid is insufficient to prevent child malnourishment, as the content of children's meals are also affected by complex political and economic issues (Nisbett et al., 2014). This is also acknowledged in Ricardo's statement, through the association of poverty with 'the big industries'.

But in the context of Amazonia the juxtaposition of social and economic development plans seems to push Indigenous families into increasingly impoverished livelihoods (Lang, 2017). While MIDIS worries about the 'extreme poverty' of Indigenous children (Peruvian Government, 2014), the government also envisions the extraction of oil and construction of dams that would aggravate the economic constraints of riverine native communities (Barrantes & Glave, 2014).[79] The two seemingly paradoxical strategies of regional development are, in fact, instrumental to advance a neo-extractive project in Amazonia. That is because social interventions guarantee a gradual expansion of governance into this territories, as I will argue in the ensuing sections (see also Ferguson, 1994).

The growth of State commitment to the economic and social inclusion of Indigenous peoples positioned children at the centre of State interventions, as persons whose customs can be moulded to improve the country's human capital (Burman, 2008). Although this is presented as a strategy to foreground children's rights (see Vásquez H., 2020), this chapter will argue that

[78] The study was funded by INEI and used data from national health surveys conducted between the years of 2014 and 2017.
[79] I will return to a reflection of oil extraction prospects in chapter 6.

this form of governance is not dissimilar to the child-saving initiatives of previous centuries (see also Wells, 2011).

5.4. Eradicating poor values

The quality of relationships between government staff and children enrolled in social protection is crucial to the successful delivery of social protection (Ramírez, 2021). However, during this research, only 32% of the 1765 staff working for Juntos knew an Indigenous language and, out of this percentage, 72% spoke Quechua (a mostly Andean language) (MIDIS, 2019). The low ratio of Indigenous staff in Amazonia follows the pattern of EIB education, where Indigenous teachers still represent only half of educators in EIB primary schools (Saavedra & Gutierrez, 2020).[80] Consequently, most native communities have their interactions with the State mediated by *mestizo* people.

These relationships are built over a complicated history. While people may welcome the arrival of assistance (Correa Aste & Roopnaraine, 2014), Indigenous peoples tend to have a strong distrust of government action that can result in failure to comply with the rules of the programme (Correa Aste et al., 2018; Santos-Granero & Barclay, 2011). The relationship between government staff and beneficiaries is already asymmetrical due to age and power differences, but this imbalance is aggravated by cultural divergencies (Ramírez, 2016). While the Peruvian State has committed to incorporate an intercultural perspective into all services, to 'eliminate discrimination (…) and [foster] national integration' (Peruvian Ministry of Culture, 2015, p. 11), in practice the top-down design of programme guidelines present a challenge for culturally sensitive implementation (see Correa Aste et al., 2018). Moreover, government staff may carry their own prejudiced views of Indigenous peoples, and this will interfere in the quality of relationships that they establish with recipients. This section will illustrate the practical implications of administrative simplifications (such as the argument of 'extreme poverty', discussed previously) in the performance of two *mestizo* government

[80] While the State declares a preference for Indigenous staff in areas where the identity of personnel might affect programme implementation (MIDIS, 2020), there is a scarcity of people who meet the requirements for these positions. Only 20% of students who speak an Indigenous language in Amazonia finish their school education (UNICEF, 2017) and those who do struggle to pursue university education due to money issues and lack of sufficient academic knowledge (Espinosa & Ruiz, 2017).

employees in Ucayali: Mara, headmaster of a primary school in an urban Shipibo native community; and Alberto, the Juntos evaluator in charge of Mai Joshin.

I met Mara in Pucallpa, in-between scoping visits to different communities. She introduced herself as a person who was committed to aiding Indigenous people: 'I always take food in a Tupper [container] for them when I go to work, I am always thinking about los *pobrecitos* [the poor things]'. The patronising expression '*pobrecitos*', commonly used by Christian missionaries and aid workers in Latin America (Hecht, 2002; Sinervo, 2013), conveyed her charitable intentions when confronted by poor children. Mara worked in an urban native community that had stark inequalities between different households. A common destination for *ayahuasca* tourism, located just an hour away from Pucallpa, this village received a high influx of foreign tourists. While resorts devoted to *ayahuasca* retreats could charge over 150 USD a night, this income was unevenly distributed in the village. Due to the proximity to the regional capital and its highly polluted water resources, most families relied heavily on women's ability to embroider and sell *kenés* as a source of income. Amid the *gringo* passers-by, some of the children performed cheerful *mashás* (a traditional kind of Shipibo-Konibo song), quickly extending their hands afterwards asking for tips.

As observed by Sinervo (2013), children in this urban village could perform or negate the stigma of *pobrecitos* to obtain favours. Robin, an 11-year-old boy from this village, once asked me after seeing my rain boots: 'if you have nice clothes, why don't you give it to me? I am poor'. Overhearing his claim, his aunt and cousin (Diego, a 10-year-old) reproached him and then apologised to me, making sure I knew they were not lacking. The aunt claimed that Robin had a 'dodgy character' and she 'did not know what to do anymore'. Mara, however, saw children's 'beggar habits' as a hint that they were following their parents' path. As a school headmaster and a teacher, she felt a responsibility to 'teach children about the difference between bad habits and culture'. She explained:

> The way some of them [the Shipibo] keep their houses so dirty, they never clean it. They also don't plant anything; they do not know how to make a living. This is not culture, this is a bad habit. But they don't know good from bad, we [teachers] must teach them. Sometimes you see such big houses on stilts, and children sleep with their parents. It is not decent, each person should have their own room, it is not proper for children to see the intimacy of their parents (…). For them there is no difference between adult privacy and childhood.

Mara's distinction between culture and good habits resonates with an ancient separation of culture from civilisation (Elias, 1994) and echoes the racialised othering narratives of colonial

times (see chapter 2). In her view, 'good habits' are a matter of decency and different standards of cleanliness, livelihood, and family would be wrongful, and perpetuate poverty in the lives of children. This rationale reproduces a linear narrative of development, which assume Christian and modern values as the 'proper ones', rendering any alternative mode of living (in this case, the Shipibo) to be uncivilised. Mara's ideas of 'culture' indicate the scope of her own interventions. She struggles to fathom the idea of houses shared by kin, as a shared bedroom is, in her view, improper. Notwithstanding, missionary action to build concrete houses for separate families has led to disaster in the past, disrupting essential kin relationships and facilitating the spread of disease (Elsass, 1992). Among the Shipibo, the transition from shared kitchens (in matrilocal households) to individual ones (in nuclear families) also weakened exchanges between the woman's kin (Behrens, 1992). As discussed in chapter 4, a large family network provides women with a support network and the circulation of children among different households is fundamental to nurture these relationships of proximity. These kinship networks are not fully understood by the Peruvian State, who mark the houses in the village with different numbers to monitor families as fully isolated units.

Moreover, Mara's view of family life is also ordered by a separation between adults' and children's worlds. The mixing of these two, in her view, defiles childhood. In *Purity and Danger*, Douglas (2002, p.50) defines pollution as 'matter out of place'. Defilement happens when a necessary order that ensures sacrality is somehow disrupted and pollution invades purity. Considering how the division of childhood and adulthood marked a fundamental turn in the history of Western family life, it is children's lack of awareness of adult knowledge, and consequently their detachment from adult spaces, that sustains the consecrated image of the modern child (Boyden, 2015). However, as argued throughout this thesis, this generational abyss is not the norm even in Western, educated, industrialised and rich societies (see also Punch, 2003; Lancy, 2015). In fact, chapter 4 has shown that although children are grouped with peers for most of the day, and therefore independent from adult supervision, they are still expected to assume responsibility for a series of subsistence work.

Mara perceived that Shipibo habits were inherently menacing to childhood purity. This pollution is epitomised by the alleged uncleanliness of Shipibo houses, an association also found in Juntos inspections. Streuli (2010), who conducted interviews with Juntos evaluators in the Andes described how programme implementation was often seen as an opportunity to better educate beneficiaries in hygiene practices and as a result families became 'tidier and cleaner'. Although these conditions are not part of Juntos' contract, they are so frequently

enforced that families assume them to be part of the conditionalities (see also Manarelli et al., 2007; Ramírez, 2016). According to data from Young Lives in Peru, the cleanliness of families and communities seems to be more demanded (87.5% of the time) by programme inspections than actual conditionalities such as regular health checks (<80% of the time) (Escobal & Benites, 2012).

Extraofficial conditionalities cannot be easily distinguished from 'real' ones, as both types become mandatory for beneficiaries from the perspective of the inspector (Correa Aste et al., 2018). This can be illustrated by an excerpt from my fieldnotes on 15th October 2019. There was a Juntos inspection after a school break, when children were returning from the football field. Alberto, a Juntos evaluator, did not respect Shipibo etiquette and entered the school (and houses) without asking for permission. Although most children had tidied themselves on their way back to the classroom, 7-year-old Gabriel returned covered in sweat and dirt, and did not put his flip flops back on:

> Alberto came into the primary school, gathered all classrooms, and asked children to form a row if their parents were Juntos beneficiaries. He picked three children at random from different age groups and brought them to the front row. Alberto then started a loud inspection of children's looks and belongings. Pointing to Gabriel, he mocked: 'This one is not even wearing shoes. Do you even have shoes at home?' Alberto also derided Gabriel for not having a uniform ('you barely look like you are attending school, are you messing with me?'), and asked the boy to open his bag. As Gabriel froze, giggling nervously, Alberto unzipped the rucksack and started to pull out school supplies, displaying the content to other children. 'This is not even a pencil, it's a tiny piece of wood! This dad is not buying school supplies, is he? Where is your dad? What is he doing with the money from Juntos?'. Gabriel covered his face with his hands. Some children screamed that Gabriel's dad drank the money [in beer]. The evaluator did not seem upset about this. He simply said to the boy: 'it can't be this way, your family will lose the benefit if they are not using it properly. Tell your mum that'.

In theory, Juntos' guidelines dictate that a promoter can only cut the family support after repeated incidences of non-compliance with the rules of the programme. But first, the CCT promoter would have to notify the family and give them a chance to correct their behaviour. Alberto's behaviour not only deviated from the official guidelines, but also exhibited a lack of understanding about what CCTs can do for children (Barrientos & DeJong, 2006). Research has already shown that raising the income of families is no guarantee to improving the living standards of children, as this will largely depend on the intergenerational and gender dynamics inside each household (Camfield, 2014). But Alberto expected that the s/200 bi-monthly allowance would suffice for children to have good school supplies and uniforms. In reality, the cost of a family trip to Pucallpa to buy school items could easily exceed

the CCT's budget, given that only the return trip cost 40 soles per person in the cheapest boat. Alberto argued that 'the government pays families to invest in children's education. If children are going to school without uniforms and shoes, the money is being misused', but I replied that a family could have more urgent needs for that money, and that uniforms made no difference in children's learning achievements (conversely, the requirement to keep them clean was more likely to increase girls' workload). At the end, he simply concluded our conversation by claiming that 'this is the law'.

Alberto's final statement expressed how child governance is enacted through a reproduction of policy narratives. His approach to recipients in Mai Joshin seemed to reinforce the policy premise that economic vulnerability is caused by children's behaviour, which needs to be corrected. However, the strict scrutiny of children's appearance may penalise precisely the families that are in most need of support. The case of Gabriel is illustrative of this. His father and older brothers worked in coca plantations, which meant that they often left the village for several months in a row. His mother received sporadic support from her sister's older sons, who brought meat when they had some to spare. But since Gabriel was the family's older child in Mai Joshin, he went fishing daily to support his family, was often late to school and did not tidy himself up as much as other children.

Mai Joshin parents' expressed confusion about the purpose of Juntos' inspections, which indicated that the programme's objectives were also unclear to them (see also Correa Aste et al., 2018). Complaints about Alberto's disrespectful behaviour were frequent, and after the episode above I heard from a father that it was a good thing that I was present during this intervention: 'you are seeing now how the Peruvians treat forest peoples [*los pueblos de la selva*]'. While there were no Indigenous Juntos inspectors in Mai Joshin with which to contrast Alberto's system of evaluation, a focus group with Shipibo EIB promoters (the teachers responsible for monitoring EIB schools) about their work practices indicates how these inspections could happen in a more respectful manner:

> We have a [work] protocol. But there is nothing [in the protocol] that says to go meet the [child's] family, and for me this is fundamental. I barely arrive and the first thing I do is: who am I, who are my parents, who were my grandparents. That is how I get to know children's parents. Sometimes I have uncles and cousins there, and there it starts the relationship of acknowledgement. It's important that people know me not only as a government worker but as kin. That's how they will trust me because they know how interested I am in doing a good job in the community. If you come to a port where you know no one, you need to ask who the chief is, who the authorities are. The authorities more than anything. Then you ask how they see the [issues in the] community, about the families. They [the authorities] will feel happy, they will

> see that monitoring is supposed to improve things. That is how we request a communal assembly. (Lenny, Shipibo man)
>
> The first thing I do is see the context: where and how the population lives, and in which conditions the children are living. In many cases the parents have left them, and the children are with their grandparents (…) If the village doesn't have fish, there will be none for them either. If we don't buy food, we will sleep with our belly making noises. That is why first I need to understand the context. Then, in the communal assembly, I can make them reflect about what children need, what is the role of the monitoring staff. (Gilson, Shipibo man)

Shipibo EIB promoters stressed the importance of communal assemblies as a space of dialogue between monitoring staff and the local population, to build rapport ('acknowledgement') and foster trust in their work. They also emphasise the importance of family and context, as it might shed light onto children's vulnerabilities. In their perspective, a context of concern involves the loss of public wealth (either through scarce river waters or weakened kin relationships). Given how children also have family responsibilities, their lives are directly impacted by socio-ecological issues that may not be noticeable in a rapid visit to the school, as illustrated above by the case of Gabriel.

The focus groups with Shipibo EIB promoters also highlighted that the centralised work protocol provided by the government does not mandate a communal assembly upon the entry of new personnel in an Indigenous village. This, along with a lack of training for dealing with cultural differences, might explain the cultural clash between Mara and Alberto's perception of Shipibo families and the lived experiences of children. Cultural misunderstanding can be exemplified further through a contrast between Shipibo definitions of 'good habits' (*jakon axebo*) and the government protocol:

> When we enter a community, we cannot expect that the community will like us, instead we need to win their trust. When you start to give them something to eat and share, they will already say 'this is a good person, *jakon joni*'. He has good thoughts, *jakon shinanya*. If when you first arrive they invite you [to have] *masatito* [fermented yuca beverage], even if it is just enough to wet your lips, [that is because] they are acknowledging you. I also give them some cake, or I'll say 'we need sugar, 'someone needs to buy sugar', but I leave myself and come back with it [the sugar]. From there we start to generate trust. There the acknowledgement starts. You are not just an *acompañante* [EIB monitoring staff], you are another kin member. Part of the family. (Ricardo, Shipibo man)

As argued in chapter 4, sharing is a defining character value in Mai Joshin, along with the social responsiveness to fulfil your kin's need without being asked. To be *jakon joni* (a good person) implied, for Qali Warma children, splitting their lunches with siblings and cousins that were too young to attend school, or lonesome aunts and grandparents who relied on

children to be fed. From Alberto's point of view, the partition of school meals was a form of corruption, as students would deviate benefits from their intended targets. But as Daniel (a 16-year-old) brilliantly summarised, individualisation was the true corruption: 'you should have seen how things were in my childhood. We [his family] would never be alone, one aunt would come bringing cousins, and another, and another… Westernisation is driving us crazy [*la occidentalización nos está loqueando*]'. The following section will examine Westernisation as an 'unintended effect' (Ferguson, 1994, p.223) of the child-centred cultural change promoted by social protection.

5.5. A conditioned generation

The concern with excessive Westernisation is an ubiquitous theme in research among the Shipibo (Espinosa, 2012; Slaghenauffi, 2019) and other Amazonian peoples (Morelli, 2015; Rival, 1997, 2000). Although I have already critiqued the notion of 'acculturation' in chapter 2, by showing how the Shipibo have successfully resisted external cultural, political and economic pressures, for the ensuing discussion it is worth revisiting the clash between tradition and Westernisation, here summarised in the words of Shipibo EIB teacher Lener Guimaraes:

> When the river grows it forms a tributary, but when it is still growing, when it rains, what happens is a slow process, like the waters are coming together in the same place. Then, it forms like a dam with stagnant water. It cannot flow, it does not flow much, and people can easily navigate. But when we realise that the water starts to go down there is a lot of current (…) it runs fast, because the water is going down. But we reach a point when [the river] is still, that is the central stage of winter. Then, a person can easily navigate the rivers, lakes and all places. (…) At some point the water starts to go down and again we notice large streams of water, so it becomes difficult to navigate. That is *jenetian* [the flood season]. I believe that Amazonian cultures are in that condition, a time when we cannot navigate, go backwards or forwards, it just keeps raining, raining and raining. And those rains are [different] knowledges, cultural practices and ideas that come to us from the *gringos*, *mestizos*, the Dutch, the Spanish, the Italians, the Europeans, the Americans, the Japanese... So far as Amazonian cultures we have reached that point of winter where we have nowhere to go. Now what we need is to identify this course, to clearly identify who we are. (Tubino and Zariquiey, 2007, p.60 – my translation)

Echoing Lener's perception of cultural influences, parents in Mai Joshin also perceived contemporary cultural change to be more fast paced. But they reckoned a particular generational element in this phenomenon. In the words of a frustrated father during a communal assembly, 'children are becoming just like the *mestizos*'. Parental complaints about children evoked a popular rumour about child-centred government programmes among Indigenous peoples, which is the idea that signing Juntos' contract mean selling children to the State

(Correa Aste et al., 2018, p.164; Santos-Granero & Barclay, 2011). While to some degree generational cultural change can be explained by young people's heightened exposure to globalised cultures in the city or on their phones (see also Virtanen, 2009), I will explain how schoolchildren embody *mestizo* mannerisms via Qali Warma, VDL and Juntos. More importantly, I will argue that children's new hybrid identity is symbolic of the successful expansion of governmentality into Mai Joshin (Ferguson, 1994).

Figure 24 – Siblings walking to school

From Monday to Friday, the village sees a parade of schoolchildren. Like the siblings in the picture above (Figure 24), they march calmly and tidily, wearing flip flops and colourful backpacks – items that they never use in other circumstances. A few have impeccably white uniforms and leather shoes, and girls sometimes tie their ponytails with red and white ribbons, in a subtle allusion to the Peruvian flag. Once students reach the classroom, the footwear is the first thing that they quickly ditch. Boys unbutton their shirts and girls untie their hair. Because children do not generally wear shoes out of school, they were more comfortable walking around barefooted in the classroom, leaving their flip flops under their desks. Uniform-wearing children were careful not to dirty their shirts or shoes and had a layer of clothes under the white buttoned shirts with which they played during football matches.

Children's concerns with maintaining an apparent tidiness indicated their adherence to the informal conditionalities of Juntos, discussed in the previous section. By enacting tidiness through their school costumes, hair arrangements and dress codes children suit the expectations of government staff and eschew bad outcomes in impromptu inspections. It is the subsequent act of undressing that makes the initial display of tidiness appear performed – like a staged act that fitted development workers' expectations of proper childhood (McCarthy, 2021). Given how students enrolled in social protection act as family sponsors (Pires, 2014), whose behaviours can safeguard or threaten a portion of their families' income, the performance of neatness becomes central to secure the continuity of the Juntos grant.

Unlike contexts where uniforms are used to promote an idea of equality inside the classroom (Kannan, 2022), in Mai Joshin clothing was a marker of difference. Only a few children owned uniforms, and those who did were often enrolled in Juntos and had more income to spare. The outfit was expensive and hard to keep clean in a dusty environment, and children rarely had more than one buttoned white shirt. Improvised variations of this attire appeared more often, with students wearing only the grey bottoms (skirt or trousers, depending on gender) and using a normal clean shirt as a top. Because families are pressured to acquire a proper school outfit to remain in the programme, more children would appear wearing uniforms in the days after an inspection. The different patterns of clothing among children reproduced Douglas' (2002) dichotomy between purity and pollution, as if only neat children had families that invested in them. This narrative appeared in interviews with parents, when asked to define a child with a bad life:

> This child wants to have school things, but there is no one to buy this for them (Lily, mother)

> You can see them [the children with bad lives], they are the ones who are dirty (Elmer, father)

Bodily performances went beyond the uniform dichotomy of trousers and skirts. Boys presented themselves in impeccably white shirts, smart trousers, and black leather shoes; those who did not have the official school outfit dressed in clean football shirts of the Peruvian national team. Girls neatly combed their hair and wore jewellery to school. There was even a mirror with a comb at the classroom, bought with Juntos families' monies, to ensure that girls could fix their hair after the school break. The practice of combing was encouraged by the teacher, who regularly mentioned the mirror as a fine and important acquisition for girls to learn how to present themselves properly (Figure 25).

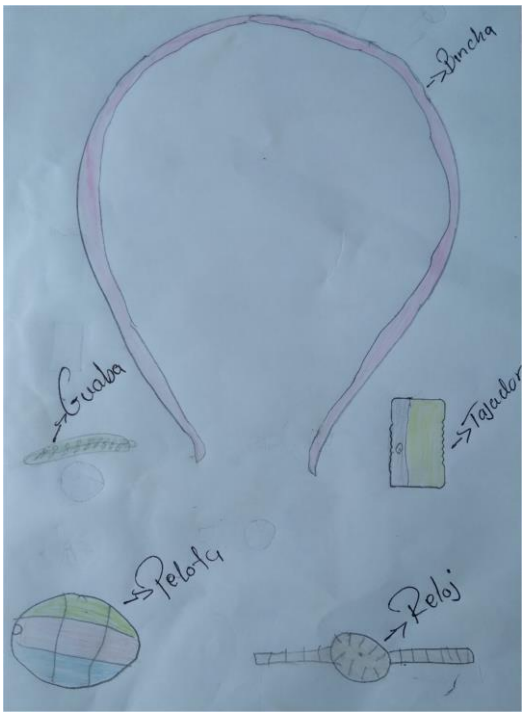
Figure 25 – Girls fix their hair in the mirror after school break

A large body of anthropological literature has discussed how adoption of Western dress serves as a strategy to disguise oneself in a conservative Settler colonial State, thus attracting less negative attention from neighbouring *mestizos* (e.g. Conklin, 1997; Gow, 1991). Given how bodies and clothes in Amazonia are continuously being fabricated to reiterate a person's identity (see chapter 2), it is also possible to think of different bodily performances as an exercise to incorporate another point of view (Vilaça, 2016). Among the Shipibo, for instance, this is noticeable in the way that adults dress conservatively to navigate the structural racism of Peruvian institutions and in traditional garments to fulfil *gringo's* expectations of exotic Indigeneity (Brabec de Mori, 2014; Slaghenauffi, 2019). Santos-Granero (2009) refer to these historically situated and socially negotiated identity performances as hybrid bodyscapes, drawing from Garcia Canclini's (1995) notion of cultural hybridity as a mixed alternative to acculturation and Goffman's (1990) notion of the social self as a theatrical representation.

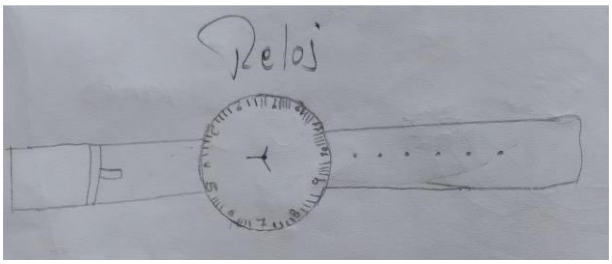
Likewise, children's school attire mimics the gendered transformations that adults undergo when circulating in *mestizo* spaces. Children's school clothing emulated that of Shipibo people who secured stable jobs, such as teachers, nurses, government staff and missionaries. It

contrasted with the laid-back clothing of rural workers, who dressed in worn out jeans, brandless t-shirts and rubber boots. Exceptions to these dressing patterns would only be seen in festive contexts, such as during the anniversary of EIB or the date of foundation of Mai Joshin. Then, the definition of uniform would change, and girls would be expected to wear Shipibo traditional skirts and blouses, while boys wore *kushmas* (an oversized robe).

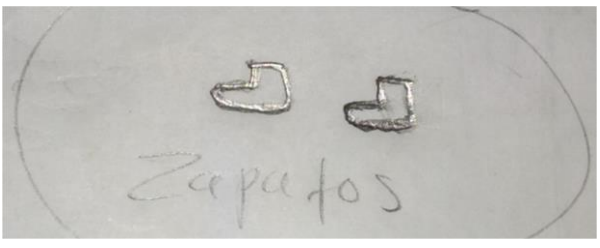
The way that children shifted between school and traditional outfits are representative of their two-coexisting status: as Peruvian school students (the future human capital of the country) and as Shipibo youth (essential to the continuity of Mai Joshin). However, the school continued to demand more complicated and expensive bodily performances by requesting uniforms, shoes, wristwatches, headbands, and new school supplies – luxury objects for the children of Mai Joshin. Subsequently, schoolchildren developed feelings of inadequacy, reckoning that their performances as Peruvian students were substandard. For instance, these accessories appeared in children's depictions of their favourite objects (see Figure 26) as essential accessories to have at school, and explanations of the meaning of a good life commonly included owning all school supplies and having parents that provide everything a child needs to do well at school.



Janet (age 13, girl) lists her favourite objects: a headband, the fruit known as 'guaba' (*Inga edulis* or ice cream bean), a pencil sharpener, a ball, and a wristwatch



Isabel (age 12, girl) draws a wristwatch as her favourite object



Ana (age 12, girl) drew shoes as her favourite objects

Figure 26 – Elements of school uniform and school supplies as children's favourite objects

Espinosa (2012:454) has argued that school experiences can threaten Indigenous identity when 'Peruvian' students are perceived as less Indigenous and accused of being assimilated by the Settler colonial society. That is particularly concerning when the argument of acculturation via *mestizaje* has been historically used to justify the curtailment of Indigenous people's rights, as argued in chapter 2. From the perspective of parents, the increasing requests for children's performances as school students had few returns but slowly detached children from Shipibo culture. In fact, the general perception was that students' education was not teaching new skills, but new habits. Elders claimed that although Mai Joshin children were not more fluent in Spanish, they were behaving similarly to children growing up in cities. The lack of positive outcomes to their behaviour changes made some parents question the effectiveness of investments in children, as summarised by a father's complaint during a communal assembly: 'Do they really want our children to learn? If they have all this money [referring to the existing programmes], why don't they pay for at least one of our children to get a good education?' These was echoed in individual interviews, where the topic of cultural change was pervasive:

> Children do not follow our teachings. As if we want them to be something that they are not. We don't know what our children are thinking anymore. That worries us, we want our children to listen. (Augustina, a mother)

As outlined in the first section of this chapter, a fundamental goal of child-centred social protection in Peru is precisely to help children break intergenerational patterns of social reproduction and transform them into agents of social change (Vásquez, 2020). Therefore, parents' concerns with cultural change were not unfounded. Social protection programmes might be failing to reach their original goals, as discussed earlier in this chapter, but they are producing new aspirations for children to express. As argued by Ferguson (1994), this side effect of development programmes may not be part of policymakers' original intentions, but it is still instrumental to improve State governance. While State attention to childhood was welcomed, it instilled worries about children's future livelihoods and, ultimately, about the future of Mai Joshin. These concerns were epitomised precisely by the changes in the way children dress and eat nowadays:

> I am a little worried [about children's future]. Firstly, because I realise that currently, in 2021, I am wearing shorts and shoes of the Western culture. And secondly the food. We are no longer eating 100% natural because we are consuming food from another culture. This is what I can say. We eat preserves or something sugary like an industrialised bold purple *chicha* [a purple-coloured corn juice, grown in the Andes and very popular in *mestizo* diet]. (Nathan, a father)

Eating habits are treated as a marker of difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Amazonianist literature. For instance, Santos-Granero (2009:487) argues that most native Amazonian peoples see themselves 'as peoples defined by their consumption of manioc, game meat, and manioc beer, all of which they consider to be 'real food'. By way of contrast, they see Peruvians 'as shaped by their ingestion of onions, canned foods, and barley beer' (ibid.). Similarly, Gow (1991) shows that Piro people distinguish between 'rich people's food' (ingredients that are bought and imported, which compose most of *mestizo's* meals) and 'poor people's food' (locally grown products). Albeit the Piro had a growing desire for *mestizo's* 'fine things', people never fully abstained from eating local food, for that was the nourishment of a complex social fabric of kinship.

Along with the food itself, the act of eating together from the same dish, referred to as prolonged commensality (Fausto, 2007), can transform the substance of people's bodies. Examples of this are several. Sharing food is a form of bodily familiarisation, and can become a means to assimilate someone as part of a family, as expressed by Shipibo EIB workers cited in the previous section (see also Vilaça, 2002). Children are often fed by extended family until they become old enough to contribute to family food production themselves. Moreover, feeding habits are a means of domestication of Others, as it is through feeding that animals become pets and the new-born baby is fully formed as human (Fausto & Costa, 2013). For instance, among the Shipibo, Slaghenauffi (2019) noted that the therapeutic diet that is prescribed in ayahuasca retreats for *gringos* was intended not only to cleanse people from the substance of Western malaises, such as anxiety and depression, but to slowly change the substance of people's bodies into a healthier, Shipibo one.

In Shipibo language, the act of eating has different names depending on the kind of nutrient that is ingested. But real food is *piti*, a cooked meal that must include a combination of plantain and game (*presa*, in Spanish). 'Good food' includes river fish and, in its absence, some alternative of fresh *presa* (game). *Kokoti*, uncooked food that comes from the earth, is not a satisfactory meal on its own. Other sorts of game are also welcome. Those can be chicken, which are scarcely raised in the village, or *carne del monte* (bushmeat). Not all animals can be eaten, and some game and fish are prohibited during certain conditions, for instance just after a baby is born (see chapter 4). These prescriptions relate to an illness (*cutipa)* caused by a vengeance that an offended animal or plant entity can produce in one's body, manifested in the

form of mental or physical ill-being (Slaghenauffi, 2019). For instance, when a toddler who was born to a Shipibo mother and a Yaminawa father was taken to visit her father's family for a couple of weeks, she returned to Mai Joshin visibly sick. Her father claimed that taking the child was a mistake because she was 'growing as a Shipibo, eating fish and plantain', and therefore got a *cutipa* (manifested as fever and diarrhoea) from eating game only found in that part of the forest. Older people can also miss their traditional meals when they travel:

> They miss their chapo, their fish, their boiled plantain. They get a bad depression from being far from home, in another food culture. But as soon as they come back, they heal quickly. Their bodies are used to our food, there are people that can't bear to eat differently. They fall sick, some even die. (Ronin, forty years old, describing his seasonal work in Lima)

All native communities that I visited had *bodegas* (stores) from which villagers could buy products that came from urban centres: pasta, rice, olive oil, biscuits, processed condiments and sauce, soft drinks and, whenever there is electricity, beer. However, from older adults' perspective, there was a clear line between *piti* (real food, the nutritious kind) and store-bought ingredients. A meal composed solely of spaghetti and canned tuna, for instance, was not considered adequate for a day of work under the sun. Elders would prefer any other meal before resorting to store-bought items. But because food preparation is strongly gendered, the absence of men led some families to rely almost exclusively on women's food gardens and on children's fishing skills (see chapter 4). When food is meagre, families buy more products from the *bodega*. But store-bought supplies were seen as a last resource for when a mother lacked enough ingredients to prepare a proper meal or needed a day of rest.

This seemed to be changing with younger generations. Students ate Qali Warma meals with enthusiasm and in large portions. Juntos' role in changing food habits cannot be ruled out, as CCTs are also associated with an increase in child's consumption of processed snacks, particularly when treats are perceived (and marketed) as 'child's food' (Pires, 2013). Schoolchildren are also less involved in local food cultures. For them, breakfast is not *chapo*, but industrialised quinoa biscuits. Instead of a plate with plantain, rice and fish, lunch at school was a combination of spaghetti and canned tuna. In primary school, children seemed to be growing fond of industrialised treats. As soon as boys started to earn extra cash through odd jobs such as helping unload boats and drive the nurses to the centre in a *motocarro*, they invested money in *gaseosa* (the fizzy drink Inca Kola), *galletas rellenas* (biscuits with a filling) and *gurichis* (ice cream), which they ate at school in a display of status. While girls often lacked the resources to afford these food cultures, they equally craved them. Jessica, a 15-year-old

from my host family, once sighed exasperatedly, as we prepared dinner: ‘the worst of all is that I hate plantain!’. When her parents travelled and she was left with money, Jessica made pasta with mayonnaise.

The lesser dependency on traditional meals, and the significant portion of the day spent inside the school, made children less involved in food production. In chapter 4, I described how children contribute to the household economy and often assumed their fathers’ responsibility for fishing. If a family only had girl children, fishing became an extra activity to be pursued on top of cooking, doing the dishes, and taking care of the *chacra*. But since children now ate meals at school, they could reduce their workload by sharing Qali Warma with their siblings. Older girls would often leave the school during lunch break to eat their meals with kin. Thus, they relieved the burden of fishing either by avoiding the task entirely or by fishing a smaller fraction of what would be needed for an entire meal. In the perception of parents, this was a lazy behaviour: children were becoming used to being handed things and skipping work needed for survival. A similar complaint is made by the Napuruna people interviewed in Northern Amazonia, who claim that Qali Warma is ‘food for lazy people’ (Ricaud Oneto, 2019, p.6).

Just like the Napuruna, the Shipibo perceive laziness to be a form of disease and a deviant character trait (see chapter 4). However, since the cure to this ailment is to force a change of substances in the body, this seemed to be rendered pointless by Qali Warma. Parental concerns that children’s abandonment of local food production practices may also lead to a greater dependency on cash are also supported by the literature that discusses the difference between food security (as proposed by Qali Warma and VDL) and food sovereignty (in which food consumers have control over the means of production and content of their meals) (Schanbacher, 2010). Furthermore, the habit of eating processed foods can potentially include children in a global trend of iron deficiency, diabetes and obesity (UNICEF, 2019). Despite the problematic character of these programmes, families in Mai Joshin did not reject these initiatives, as it is sometimes the case elsewhere (Santos-Granero & Barclay, 2011, p.156). Glasses of milk were easily put aside for *chapo* (a traditional sweet plantain beverage), but parents eagerly accepted the State’s food parcels and complained when those were delayed or absent (for instance, when the school closed due to holidays). A popular argument for this was that programmes were a necessary response to the pollution and scarcity caused by State-sanctioned depletion of resources. From this perspective, social protection followed the formula of a compensatory State (Gudynas, 2016) that offers a sort of indemnification for the expansion of extractives.

In another favourable defence of such programmes, parents argued that the increase in government presence addressed a long history of State neglect by finally acknowledging Shipibo needs. From this perspective, social protection was interpreted as a citizenship recognition (see also García Bonet, 2017): if Peru offers something for a child, it must offer the same thing for all Peruvian children. Considering how elders described Peruvian and Shipibo peoples as distinct (and often antagonistic) social groups, the fact that children were inserted in both the former and the latter signalled a transformation of the polarised duality. This hybrid identity – as Peruvians and as Shipibo – was manifested by children in various forms. Apart from clothing and eating habits, a hybrid culture was also perceptible in mixed Shipibo and Spanish idioms, children's love for Peruvian footballers and flags, and the perception of neighbouring Brazilians as foreigners – unlike Peruvian *mestizos*.

While children were much more receptive to a Peruvian identity – a phenomenon that can be interpreted as an instrumental side-effect of child-centred social protection – this should not be confused with a rejection of self-identification as Shipibo. For instance, children would often greet me by saying 'hi, *brasilera*' (Brazilian), to which I would respond, teasingly, 'hey, *Perucha*' (a popular way of saying Peruvian). But my interlocutors, even though wearing a Peruvian football shirt, would correct me with assertiveness: 'no, I am Shipibo!'. In another context, after noticing a pattern of several drawings with Peruvian flags, I asked Alfonso (aged 10) to draw a flag for Mai Joshin. Pondering for a while, he started sketching the national emblem once again, only to add a Shipibo *kené* at the middle (Figure 27). Therefore, the hybridity is not simply an assimilation into a national identity, but a sign of proximity between formerly dichotomic selves. While to some extent this marks a more peaceful and potentially co-dependent relationship between the State and Mai Joshin, as argued by Ricaud Oneto (2019) in regard to Qali Warma operations in another Amazonian context, it can also affect Shipibo children's conceptions of well-being. This argument will be the focus of the next chapter.

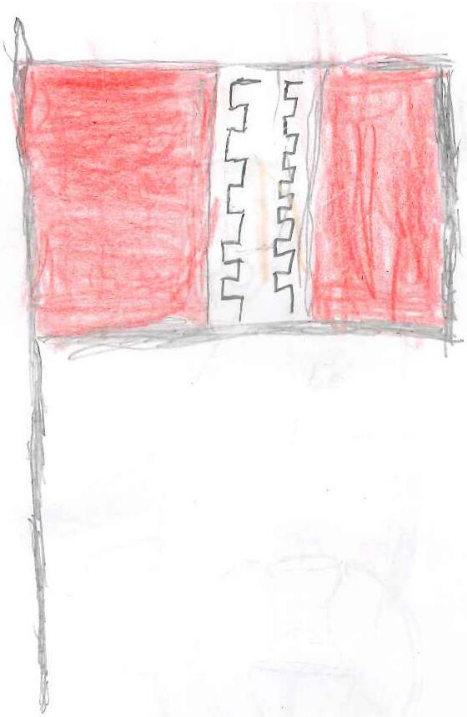


Figure 27 – A flag for Mai Joshin

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter discussed three child-centred development programmes that exist in Mai Joshin, presenting the rationale behind investments in child-sensitive social protection in Peru, the basis of its recent expansion into Amazonia, their monitoring and how they affect the lives of Shipibo children and their families. This was done to analyse how the State perceives Indigenous Amazonian children in policy and practice, and how children's lived experiences are affected by these interventions. The chapter started with a description of children's daily routines to show how much their lives are shaped by State interventions. The three programmes discussed in the chapter (Qali Warma, VDL and Juntos) were grouped into two main aims, which are addressing nutritional deficit and intergenerational reproduction of poverty that hinder children from achieving their full development potential. A review of the rationale behind investment in childhood highlighted how children are not only thought of as future human resources, but also treated as seeds of potential social change.

The ensuing section reflects on the expansion of child-sensitive social protection into Amazonia. It presented the political developments that pushed a new narrative of human development in Peru, focused on social inclusion of extremely poor household throughout the

life course. Given that the State faces significant challenges in its attempts to assess and classify Indigenous households' wealth, the government's solution was to pass a resolution that considered all Indigenous peoples in Amazonia to be extremely poor. I contrast the State narrative with Shipibo definitions of wealth and argue that this clash in perceptions of poverty can have repercussions in programme implementation. This argument is supported in the following sections, where I detail the monitoring of Juntos and how it ultimately affects children's experiences of social protection by placing and excessive focus on individuality and neatness.

The chapter argued that child-centred programmes may be failing to fulfil their intended goals but are efficiently fostering a proximity between the children of Mai Joshin and a Peruvian identity. All programmes are based on mainstream understandings of nutrition and poverty, but their proposed solutions clash with Shipibo definitions of a good diet and wealth. More importantly, the interventions only promote a superficial economic inclusion of Shipibo families because they fail to acknowledge and address the systematic impoverishment of Shipibo livelihoods strategies (Lang, 2017). However, given that Peruvian child-sensitive social protection is focused on transforming children's behaviour and dietary habits, the programmes are effective in engendering new aspirations for children by bringing them closer to *mestizo* lifestyles. This argument will be explored further in chapter 6.

6. Ecologies of well-being in a changing world

6.1. Introduction

In previous chapters, this thesis discussed how children grow up immersed in two different cultures: the Shipibo and the *mestizo* (chapter 4). It also explored how children are now the target of social development interventions that aim to instil social changes through children's routines (chapter 5). The aim of the present chapter is to answer the question: how do Shipibo children make sense of well-being amid the development of Amazonia? This chapter will contrast children's and their parents' definition of a good life and discuss how children's aspirations are being produced in Mai Joshin. To do so, it engages with the Amazonian concept of living well, proposed by Indigenous organisations as an alternative to a mainstream narrative of development that detached social and economic progress from environmental management. A brief overview of the political uses of this concept serves as a base to reflect on the importance of place in children's and adults' definitions of well-being. Section 6.3 describes how Mai Joshin's shifting geographies results in transformations of possible socio-ecological relations, as material and environmental transformations beget sociocultural changes. Children's place-based experiences of ill-being are then used to explain their propositions of 'Westernisation' as an attempt to address problems in their territory. Finally, I discuss the ambiguity of 'Westernisation' through the figure of the *pishtaco,* which epitomises how the seemingly unavoidable 'modernisation' of the village can be simultaneously hazardous and empowering.

6.2. Living well in one's territory

> 'The [*mestizo*] society must commit to an understanding of Indigenous peoples' modes of living. And they must understand that development cannot be separated from our well-being. The trees, the river, the plants... They are not things; they have spirits that we must respect.'

This comment was made by Damiana, a female Shipibo leader and then vice-president of FECONAU, on 9 August 2019. It was the International Day of Indigenous Peoples, a yearly opportunity to witness the diplomacy between Shipibo and *mestizo* politicians at the Ucayali Regional Government. On that year the intercultural dialogue was heated by Lot 200, an oil-

rich piece of land that crossed the territory of 13 Shipibo communities and was under negotiation for exploration by the Ministry of Energy and Mines and the national oil giant PeruPetro.[81] While only the communities directly affected were requested to approve the project, oil extraction could affect the entire Ucayali basin and thus provoked an inquiry into notions of 'development' and 'well-being' inside Indigenous organisations.[82] The arguments that ensued from this process reveal two clashing perceptions of quality of life: that of the Peruvian State, focused on economic inclusion (as discussed in chapter 5); and that of Amazonian peoples, focused on social and ecological relationality.

As seen in earlier chapters, oil extraction in Peru is often justified by the argument that it funds social protection and is therefore a means to promote a fairer society. Questioning this narrative, Damiana summarised grievances expressed by all the Ashaninka, Awajún and Shipibo leaders present at the event: government efforts cannot result in human development if they fail to consider the Indigenous peoples' definition of well-being. Amazonian notions of living well are connected to a perspectivist understanding of the world that conceives of nature as an agentic force (Dev, 2020; Viveiros de Castro, 2014). For instance, the Shipibo argue that some illnesses, such as addiction and depression, are caused by a pollution of *niwe* (one's essence), with treatments requiring cleansing diets that extract the contaminants from the patient's body (Slaghenauffi, 2019). That notion of sickness is confirmed by the Matsigenka, who perceive stinginess and laziness as symptomatic of the new diseases instilled by oil exploration in their territory (Izquierdo, 2009). Given that other-than-humans can directly interfere in a person's health, balanced human-nature relationships become a requirement for physical well-being.

But subjective well-being is also place-based (Sarmiento Barletti, 2016). The experience of conviviality in one's territory promotes what Bravo Díaz (2019) refers to as generative vitality, which is the replenishment of people and culture through the daily enactment of good values that are not equally experienced elsewhere. These crucial relationships with kin and with protective other-than-human entities compose a shared support network that Santos-Granero (2015) refers to as public wealth, in reference to a core element of collectiveness that underpinned the inherently sustainable cosmologies of Amazonian

[81] See chapter 2 for a map of disputed oil fields in Ucayali.

[82] This right is ensured by the Law of Prior Consultation, approved in 2011 (see chapter 2). However, literature has long argued that this negotiation process is biased and asymmetrical, and rarely fully addresses the cons of extraction (Guzmán-Gallegos, 2017; Merino, 2018).

Indigenous peoples. However, as discussed in the previous chapters, this conception of wealth conflicts with the State definition of prosperity as individual capital accumulation (see also Sarmiento Barletti, 2015a) and poses many challenges to intercultural dialogue on the purposes of large-scale development projects. From the perspective of the Peruvian government, there is a consensus (Svampa, 2015) that natural resources are commodities that allow an expansion of services for the extremely poor. But from the perspective of many Indigenous peoples, the environmental changes related to oil extraction hinder their potential to achieve a good life, as it alters the balance of human-nature interactions and sustainability of traditional livelihood strategies (Bravo Díaz, 2021; Micarelli, 2015; Sarmiento Barletti, 2016)

Political ecology scholars have supported Indigenous people's complaints by showing that the trade-offs of extraction are disproportionately felt by agrarian communities, as they are more likely to be impoverished by resource contamination and scarcity (Lang, 2017, see also chapter 1). Rather, the promise of redistribution should instead be interpreted as a compensation (Gudynas, 2016), given that it is unlikely to be an efficient strategy of poverty reduction (Lang, 2019). Since the series of oil spills that took place in Northern Amazonia in 2005, Indigenous organisations have argued that financial compensation does not remedy the issues caused by oil extraction, since resource contamination has long-lasting consequences on people's livelihoods and endangers the health of children (PUINAMUDT & Campanario, 2016; see also chapter 2).[83] Between 2019 and 2020, in the early disputes about Lot 200, child well-being was again a common justification guiding people's decision. Those against extraction would ask: 'if river waters become toxic, what will our children eat?'. A powerful counterargument enunciated by representatives of oil companies posed extraction as an investment in welfare, emphasising the advantages of extractive royalties for the improvement of public services.

Several communal assemblies took place at the time of my fieldwork, often with contradicting arguments about the benefits and dangers of extraction for Mai Joshin and what it would mean for children's potential futures (see also Sarmiento Barletti, 2022). For instance, some people argued that communities that accepted the oil deal would benefit more from the

[83] The argument was based on a study of Indigenous children's health in six native communities affected by oil spills in Northern Amazonia in 2005. Out of 74 blood samples, 66% presented high levels of lead and nearly 99% were contaminated by cadmium. (PUINAMUDT & Campanario, 2016, p.4). The same report gathered scientific evidence on the impact of lead contamination on child development, and listed anecdotal evidence of acute skin rashes and increased episodes of stomach illnesses on young children from the contaminated villages.

canon petrolero – the Ucayali government's percentage of profits from extraction – and have better schools, sanitation, and medical units.[84] A crucial part of this argument was the belief that the Shipibo would suffer with water pollution regardless, as the oil project could be simply moved to the outskirts of their demarcated land. Therefore, accepting extraction could at least guarantee children's access to a good education that would allow them to become *profesionales* (professionals) as an alternative to condemned rural livelihoods. Despite these perspectives, ultimately the affected Shipibo villages refused to participate in any further meetings with the Ministry of Energy and Mines alleging that the institution was partial in the process of consultation and did not fully inform people about the risks of oil extraction.[85]

The case of Lot 200 stresses how Shipibo children's school education is seen as the only certain route out of political and social marginalisation: it is a means of acquiring less strenuous and better paid jobs (Leinaweaver, 2008), and reaching the full citizenship and Spanish fluency that are necessary to take control of political processes and defend Indigenous ways of living (Flemmer, 2018; Virtanen, 2012). For example, one of the arguments of FECONAU when deciding to abandon negotiations regarding Lot 200 was the lack of translators that affected participants' capacity to understand and engage with *mestizo* interlocutors (IDL, 2022). This shows how literacy in the common language is fundamental to the protection of territory (Martinez Novo, 2014; Espinosa, 2012). But the hesitations during this process also expressed how land concessions are viewed as unavoidable, and as a potential political bargain to make the State more inclined to attend to people's requests (see also Arsel et al., 2019). This conundrum illustrates how parental aspirations for children, and their overall search for quality of life, are affected by neo-extractivism.

While wellness is inextricably connected to the territory, on which depends people's physical and spiritual survival, environmental depletion transforms people's experience of what the territory is. And as people's livelihoods change, so do definitions of quality of life. The shift in collective aspirations may mix a longing for lost customs and the search for innovative solutions for problems that emerge with the rapid transformations of Amazonia

[84] These promises can only be partially accomplished, as in Peru budget constraints are determined by national laws that do not allow the use of royalties on non-capital expenditures (Law 28411, art 41c). In practice, the *canon petroleto* can be used to build infrastructure, but not to provide other significant improvements to these services such as allocation of more teachers and doctors, improvements in teachers' and nurses' training or provision of materials.

[85] On 18 May 2022, and in response to FECONAU's refusals, PeruPetro withdrew the request for an oil exploration license. Available at: https://www.forestpeoples.org/en/press-release/2022/victoria-frente-proyecto-extractivo-lote200-peru Access on 25 May 2022.

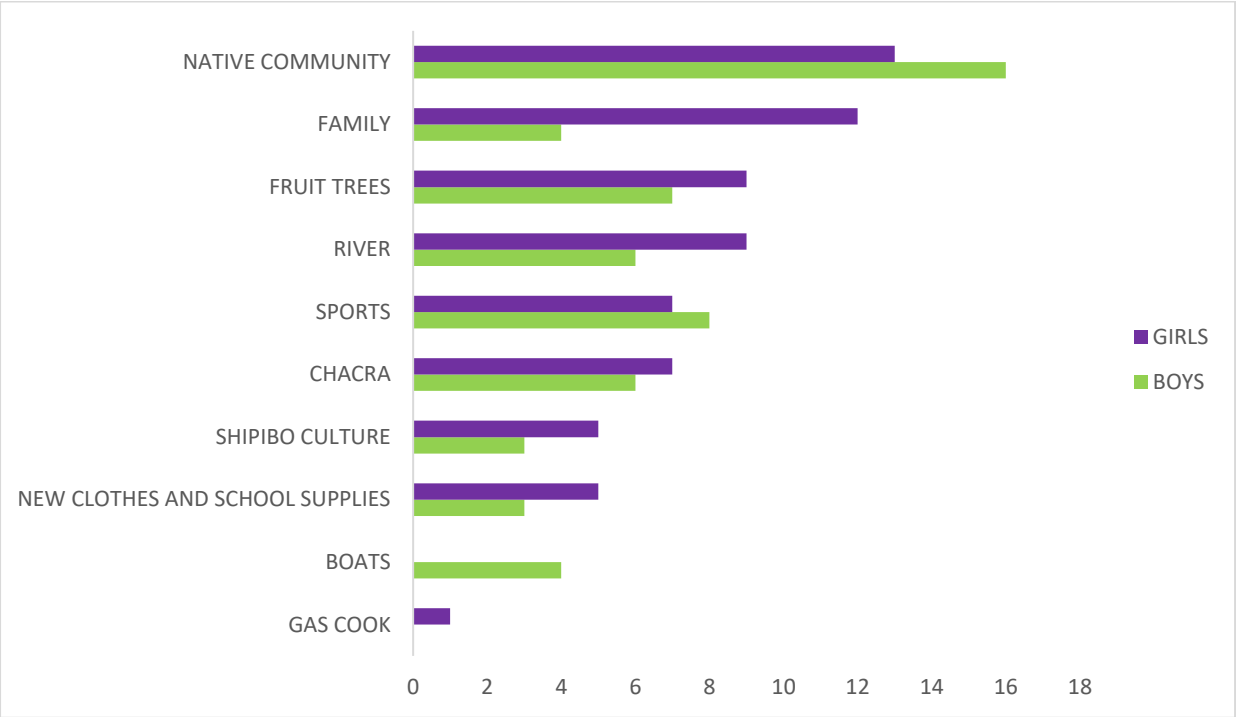
(Izquierdo, 2009; Santos-Granero, 2015). These contradictions generate new challenges to the management of native communities, as people living in the same village do not necessarily share the same customs and ambitions.

It is because of these growing uncertainties that the establishment of a cohesive *ethos* of living well became a matter of political importance, as expressed by the Indigenous life plans (see chapter 1). A common vision of these alternative development ideas is that well-being is place-based because humans generate meaning to their lives in active interaction with the environment (Espinosa, 2014; Sarmiento Barletti, 2015b; Escobar, 2014). More than providing resources, nature is a source of knowledge and protection, as illustrated by the image of the *ayahuasca* spirits that talk to the healer and indicate the diagnosis of spiritual and physical malaises. The perception of plants and animals as other-than-human agents, capable of sharing wisdom and interacting as equals with human persons, is a fundamental difference in relation to the modern Western ontology. In the latter, the environment – solely perceived as material and economic resources – appears detached from the conception of society (Latour, 1993).

Notwithstanding, and as argued in chapter 1, research suggests that generational definitions of a good life vary greatly, and especially around subjective aspects of well-being (Ansell, 2016a, p. 59; Camfield & Tafere, 2009). Moreover, when Shipibo adults complain that children are growing closer to *mestizo* modes of living (see chapter 5), they reckon that young people's aspirations might be clashing with their own. If the school and its social protection apparatus expose Shipibo children to a national culture that is more urban and consumerist, it is logical to assume that children's aspirations will be different from that of adults. I will argue that this is partially true, but that there are also important commonalities in the way that children and adults define and experience well-being. Table 4 below summarises the main themes in children's definitions of well-being, based on 41 drawings made by 21 boys and 20 girls in response to the elicitation 'draw what makes you feel happy' or 'draw a child with a good life'.[86]

[86] Most of these artworks were produced by small groups of children in drawing sessions in my porch, between August 2019 and March 2020. 12 drawings were made in individual draw-and-tell interviews during remote fieldwork, in July 2021. Children's age ranged between 6 to 14 years old, but over half of the sample was aged between 9 to 13 years old. Drawings with several components were coded multiple times.

Table 4 – Components of well-being according to boys' and girls' drawing



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The analysis of Table 4 can be broken down into three main aspects: gendered livelihoods, production of aspirations and territory. A girls' desire for a gas cooker, the more pronounced female interest for traditional embroidery (coded as 'Shipibo culture') and boys' interest in boats can be easily explained by the types of gendered work that children pursue, as discussed in chapter 4. The production of aspirations is likely understandable through CCT monitoring and its consequences on schoolchildren's *habitus*, as discussed in chapter 5. However, what is of particular interest to this chapter is children's overwhelming affection for Mai Joshin, expressed in drawings mapping the entire native community, the nearby residence of kin (coded as 'family' in the table, but also present in children's representation of sports), the abundance of fruit trees, river water and fishes, and products from the chacra. Some of these drawings are also gendered, with girls showing more interest in portraying where kin live (likely due to a pattern of matrilocality, where women live closer to their mother's family) while boys are more likely to portray the full extent of the village. Nonetheless, portraits of Mai Joshin signal to the importance of the native community's public wealth (Santos-Granero, 2015) in children's definitions of a good life.

The importance of Mai Joshin's territory was explored further in a collaborative mapping exercise during the remote stage of fieldwork (Figure 28). Grouped by their own

affinities, children were asked to draw a complete map of Mai Joshin.[87] All groups portrayed houses and placed emphasis on the river – a pattern already observed in drawings of the rainy season mentioned in chapter 4. Then, children added post-its identifying places and experiences that were important each part of the territory. The post-its sometimes included elements that were not visible in their drawings, such as *yoshinbo* (forest spirits), potential land invaders, the *chacra* and the forest.

Figure 28 – Emotional cartographies workshop

Children defined well-being as eating well and living together with kin, both conditions that were only experienced fully inside the native community. The importance of food was manifested both in concerns with the pollution of the river that is driving fish away, and by the abundance of beloved fruits that validated a pattern already noted in previous drawings (see Table 4). For children, the territory of Mai Joshin is marked by feelings of abundance, as they described knowing exactly where resources were and how to get them, because they were free. The description of life in the community as one of tranquillity and satisfied needs resonate with that of other Amazonian peoples (Bravo Díaz, 2019; Izquierdo, 2009; Santos-Granero, 2015). As argued earlier in this thesis, Santos-Granero (2015) summarises this Amazonian perception of well-being under the notion of public wealth, which refers to environmental, convivial and

[87] For a more detailed description of the methodology, see chapter 3.

socio-political elements that allow a people to live healthy and at peace. The notion of public wealth is also emphasised in children's strategies to address ill-being. For instance, all groups of children reckoned that the forest houses dangerous creatures, such as jaguars, serpents and *yoshinbo*. However, they recounted drinking a preparation made of tree bark that taught them to be *koshi* (strong, resilient) when facing those threats, and that helps them notice more easily the presence of those animals.

A reassuring balance between potential ill-being and children's environmental knowledge was also present in the individual interview with Pablo, a 12-year-old boy. Prompted by the exercise of favourite objects (which in Shipibo translated into 'show me what you like the most'), he proudly displayed numerous scars on his body (Figure 29). Pablo's description of each scar was not focused on the harmful experience, but on his capacity of recovery through direct or indirect care of kin. The first incident, at age 9, happened when he was chopping plantain at his family's *chacra*. His parents quickly realised the severity of his wound and prompted neighbours to drive the boy in an autorickshaw to Mai Joshin's medical unit, where Pablo's elbow was anesthetised and sewed. Recently, incurring a similar injury as a worker, Pablo healed himself by applying fat from a river otter over his injury. The treatment was learned from his grandmother in his previous accidents and cured his injury in just three days. Pablo's story serves as another testimony of the importance of public wealth, exemplifying how local resources (including kinship) strengthened his resilience strategies. It also signposts the combination of Western medical care and traditional knowledge, both of which were readily available during his emergencies.

Figure 29 – Pablo's scars and the story of his first accident

In my period of fieldwork, I only witnessed one severe illness that was deemed untreatable in the village, in which case the community rapidly gathered spontaneous donations from residents to send the diseased to Pucallpa, forging an impromptu network of health insurance (see section 6.4). The certainty of help in case of need is an important element of territorial wellness, as children expressed that such supportive networks do not exist in the cities. It also links to parental concerns with a growing sense of individuality on children, as discussed in chapter 5. When we asked a mother if she had any worries about the future of her children, she said that she feared nothing because the community had medicinal plants (*raobo*) and people knew how to use them. Other parents expressed that if knowledge of *raobo* and communal values were passed on, children would be healthy and live well. But do children's aspirations always agree with their parents' plans for their future?

6.3. Socio-ecological transformations and bad lives

> Before I was born, the community had no light. Nor water tank, nor tower [loudspeakers]. This is what my dad told me. Now it does have a tower, water tank, lights, a variety of fruits… We drink from this [drawn water tank]. Before we cooked with the sun. We made vessels and with this we caught water.
>
> (Jano, 12-year-old boy)

Jano's description of material changes in the village described significant transformations in people's livelihoods in the space of a few generations. Globalisation has been widening generational gaps as children's livelihoods unfold in ways that differ from the experience of their parents (Klocker & Ansell, 2016). While this is true at a global scale, rural children are most likely to experience such disruptions given the scale to which these transformations reconfigure the environment of rural societies (Holt, 2011; Katz, 2004). Considering how fast-paced environmental changes are altering people's livelihoods in Amazonia, it is useful to reflect on how children's notions of well-being shift in response to the social political and environmental changes taking place in Mai Joshin.

In a communal assembly with leaders in the village, I once heard an elder complain that children do not know how to make the traditional Shipibo pottery anymore. This appeared to be a cause of great distress once enunciated, as others present unanimously agreed that this was

a sign of cultural decay. But as important as pottery was for material and spiritual reasons (Belaunde, 2017), it is was also a now redundant endeavour: plastic bowls and bottles are so cheap, readily available and resistant to daily use that they are even used by *onanyas* in *ayahuasca* ceremonies. The long hours spent collecting the clay and the tree gourd that served as a cast, moulding the jar, and cooking the tree barks to produce tincture, to finally paint the intricate patterns on the dried adobe are not justified when people are overwhelmed by pressing income-producing activities. Moreover, the few matriarchs who were still able to produce the vessels – for sale to tourists as decoration, rather than for use in their own houses – were now struggling to find the gourd that gave the vessels its shape. Few girls today learn how to make Shipibo pottery, although they remain dedicated to being good embroiderers. This suggests that the lack of interest in ceramics may be related to changes in the social, economic, and environmental reality of children's lives, which consequently affect their experience of Shipibo material culture.

Developmental psychology has long argued that the environment is a space of learning for the child (e.g. Piaget, 2011) and in doing so privileged particular types of environment for children. While this has been rightfully criticised for attempting to impose a universal condition for child rearing, as discussed in chapter 1, other disciplines have gradually recognised that a child's surrounding *is* important, but mainly due to the social and cultural meanings that space conveys (Holloway, 2014; Toren, 2007). Children learn to make sense of the world in the environment in which they are embedded (Ansell, 2016; Taylor, 2013a), and skills are grown not only through cultural transmission, but by an environmental training that takes place as one dwells in their context (Ingold, 2000). As children's experiences of the environment changes, the skills and perceptions that ensue from that space also shift. This can be illustrated further by an analysis of children's maps of Mai Joshin.

Figure 30 - Drawn map of Mai Joshin with an oversized water tank (in green)

The first element to call for attention in any map of the village is the water tank. Always represented with a massive size, it was also often drawn on its own like other architectural elements that seemed to validate the village status of Mai Joshin, such as the medical unit and the school with Peruvian flags. Young people's memories of collecting water indicate that the water tank directly affected children's routines. Emily, a 17-year-old girl, recalled carrying large water buckets with her bare hands from the river to her house, in a muddy walk of several minutes. The effort was even harder during the dry season, when the water was so low that she had to climb the riverbank. Fetching water used to be the first step that children took towards assuming bigger responsibilities in the household, but the children in my research barely transported water buckets. When most of the children in this research were finally old enough for the job, faucets made the task much less strenuous by bringing water from the cistern to the front of their houses in 2015.

Apart from this impact on the daily lives of children, water tanks had an immense symbolic relevance for the Shipibo people given the 1991-1993 cholera epidemic. Like other diseases (see chapter 2), cholera was brought to native communities by regional development

and increased river boat traffic. A doctor who travelled around Ucayali at the time described the situation as follows:

> Hygiene conditions in many of the boats that travel through the Ucayali River are awful and inhumane. Excrements directly enter the water and food preparation is often contaminated. Boats are literally floating epidemics. (…) The Shipibo have long occupied the area of Pisqui and low Ucayali [rivers] and survived for thousands of years without boiling water. (…) Sadly, with new conditions of population growth some innocent customs can be deadly. (Hern, 1991, p. 31 - my translation)

As painfully recalled by my informants, ancient customs such as the collection of water straight from the river became suddenly harmful. Nonetheless, despite the 322,000 registered infections and 2,909 deaths in Peru during the first year of the cholera epidemic (Cueto, 2000), there was little concern with prevention of waterborne diseases in territories where people relied directly on river water for survival. In 2000, nearly a decade after the cholera outbreak, only 5% of households in native communities had access to improved water sources (UNICEF, 2017, p.3). Mai Joshin only received a cistern with a functioning water pump in 2015, as part of efforts from international organisations to mitigate inequalities in Amazonia (see chapter 2). But the lack of sanitation in native communities is presented in official discourses as a matter of poverty, and not as a consequence of the impoverishment of Indigenous people's ways of living (Lang, 2017). This narrative reinforces an idea of rural backwardness in relation to urban centres, and of Indigenous peoples as inherently unhygienic (see chapter 5). This narrative is often co-opted by children, as expressed by Ana (10 years-old) when talking about the lifestyle of her grandparents: 'we had certain customs because we did not know right from wrong, now we know better'.

For cholera survivors, the construction of cisterns represented a form of State recognition. It was a shift in development governmentality from the lethal neglect of previous decades to a politics of inclusion that let people live (Agamben, 1998), albeit precariously. The memory of the epidemic is alive among adults, who can also relate the appearance of the disease to the growth of the city of Pucallpa and the surge of densely populated *mestizo* settlements in rural areas of Ucayali. But children did not experience what preceded the environment in which they dwell; instead, they learned from interactions with teachers and government staff that life before external intervention was wrongful. In interviews with children, various other definitions of ill-being were similarly misrepresented as 'bad customs' instead of consequences of a shifting political ecology, such as migration, floods, and family

separation. Figure 31 below illustrates this through an analysis of patterns in interviews with 11 parents (6 mothers and 5 fathers) and 12 children (7 girls and 5 boys). While both groups manifested concerns about similar problems, children perceived most issues to be innate to Mai Joshin (except for poverty, which they experience as worse in urban contexts). In contrast, adults related most phenomena to a political and economic system that privileges *mestizos* and *gringos*. The difference in children's and adults' perceptions of necessities is a common research theme on child well-being (see Camfield, 2010; Barnes & Wright, 2012). It is also key to the analysis of children's and adults' aspirations, as I will argue below.

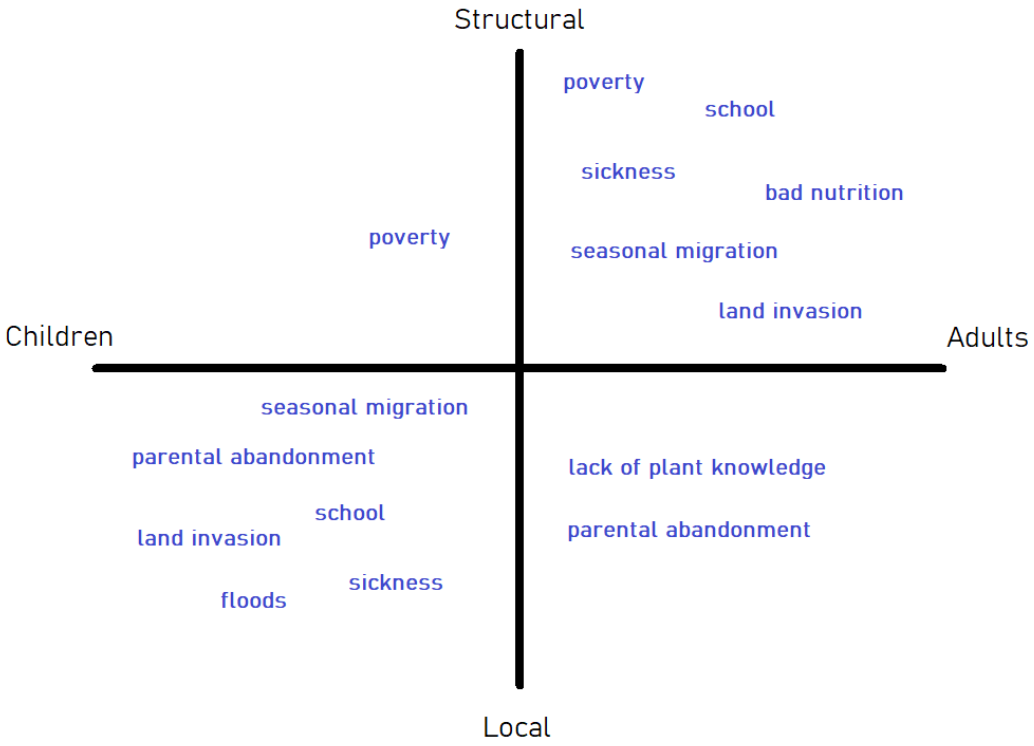

Figure 31 - Ill-being grid, segregating children's and adults' perceptions of problems (source: author's own)

Descriptions of a bad life were universally summarised as a life 'lonely without kin' (Anely, a 13-year-old), as opposed to a good life as one with many *wetsakobo* (see also chapter 4). A sense of belonging and community is central to wellness because 'the well-being of the individual cannot exist without the well-being of the community' (Sarmiento Barletti, 2016, p.154). However, seasonal migration (another important definition of ill-being, as shown by

Figure 31) is a common phenomenon among the Shipibo, estimated to affect 75% of families in floodable native communities (Collado Panduro, 2021). At the peak of the flood season in March 2020, it was possible to count on one hand the number of full households that remained in the village. In some cases, older children also migrated for work and left younger siblings behind with elders (see chapter 4). The children who stayed described these circumstances as boring and lonely, when 'there is not one sister to feed you, all your brothers go away, even if you want to go fishing you can't because they have taken all the hooks' (Jake, 8 years old).

There are also cases in which parents migrate permanently and leave children to be raised by their grandparents. These situations are harder to quantify via self-declaration, as parents could be away for several months but eventually return to the village, and all adults interviewed were very critical of parental abandonment despite often travelling for work themselves. While children are generally trusted with extended family, living permanently with one's grandparents meant that children would work longer hours in the *chacra* and lack access to money. In Mai Joshin money transfers were a complicated endeavour that required travel to Pucallpa, ID documents, access to a bank account or knowledge of the Western Union remittance system. In the best of cases, if elders had these means, remittances were dependent on working parents having enough income to spare. Anely, a 13-year-old girl, saw a clear link between poverty and parental migration: 'a sad child goes to school without shoes, and their old shirts has holes because they live with their grandmother who has no money'. In another situation in which a 1-year-old baby girl was running around the village in dirty pants and without her shorts, the father (a schoolteacher) scolded her: 'you are looking like the daughter of an old lady! Go change'.

Parents' decision to migrate without their children might seem contradictory in this context. Yet, this livelihood paradox is inescapable in the face of material needs (see Arsel et al., 2019). Most families would have at least a household member travelling to Pucallpa often to sell embroideries and crafts or cash crops such as plantain (see chapter 4). However, these jobs provide an average income that is equivalent to 30% of the national minimum wage, and payment is uncertain (Collado Panduro, 2021, p.67). Those Spanish-speaking adults can apply for more permanent jobs in retail or work autonomously as autorickshaw drivers and waitresses in Pucallpa. But the experience of urban life was one of poverty, as employed youth complained that money was insufficient to survive. For instance, a 20-year-old mother who worked 12 hour shifts as a waitress in Pucallpa made around 30 soles a day (roughly 7.7 USD), which would be 60% of the national minimum wage. While the income was an improvement in relation to

what she made selling plantain, it was not sufficient to afford the urban cost of living, since in Pucallpa 'everything costs money' (as per the mother's description). Taking a child to the city would imply an increase in these costs of living and depended on having a social support network to provide free childcare for extensive hours.

The children who did accompany their parents when they travelled were exposed to racial prejudice and fear of urban violence. In an exercise of emotional cartographies, when asked to define their experiences in the city, children declared that they felt afraid to walk in the streets (*noa raketai noabicho niti callenkobo*). This marks a stark opposition to the enclosed social world of the native community, where children roam around happily (*noara raroshaiki neno*). The negative feelings in the city are also marked by the experience of relative poverty, as explained by Alejandra (13 years old): '[a child in Pucallpa has a bad life] because their mum doesn't buy what they want [biscuits], because she needs to buy food' (Figure 32).

Figure 32 - Bad life as relative poverty

(Drawn by Alejandra, 13 year-old girl)

Arguably, relative poverty is not exclusive to Pucallpa since children also experience inequalities in Mai Joshin. I have previously discussed hierarchies between income-producing

boys and girls without a waged labour (see chapter 4), uniform-wearing and non-uniform-wearing students (see chapter 5) and children who live with their parents versus those residing with grandparents. These accounts suggest that children, and particularly girls whose parents have migrated, experience relative poverty in Mai Joshin as well. However, differently from the city, where children's freedom was restricted, in Mai Joshin children could obtain certain goods autonomously and without cash (see p. 166). As summarised by Rister (12 year old): 'Pucallpa has no fruit trees, one has to buy everything'.

All children understood that traveling to the city was the universal strategy to obtain money in Mai Joshin, as stories of parental migration were quickly followed by a description of their family's economic needs. But children did not envision the political aspects behind their family's growing dependency on cash. In contrast, a macro-structural framing of poverty was at the centre of parental concerns about children's futures:

> I worry a bit because of the economy. We are experiencing this illness [COVID-19], no? And everything economically, the flood... Our parents do not have work and that's why we all suffer, but we must persist (William, 17-year-old father, worked in the chacra with his father but is pursuing a university degree since the pandemic)

> I am always thinking about my children. Here there is no State support to excel in education. We don't have the means for my children to someday be professionals. I would like us to be able to reforest, to still have our fishes and animals and our medicinal plants to at least teach children that. (Nathan, father in his mid-thirties, works in the chacra and does seasonal odd jobs elsewhere)

The interviewees' answers were framed inside a context in which floods and the COVID-19 pandemic gravely reduced people's means of subsistence and sources of income. Commerce in the port of Pucallpa suddenly closed and the city streets were emptied, gravely reducing the opportunities for selling plantain (Abizaid, Collado Panduro, & Egusquiza, 2020). Given that tourism was also restricted, income from ayahuasca ceremonies and traditional crafts also vanished. Local crop fields could have allowed Mai Joshin to self-isolate and be self-sufficient during the coronavirus pandemic, but those had also been destroyed by a prolonged flood that invaded the village intermittently from December 2019 until late March 2020. The precarious experience of the pandemic strengthened the parents' fears that children would not be able to rely on subsistence *chacras* in the future and would be even more dependent on the availability of seasonal labour in commercial plantations or exploitative jobs in Pucallpa. Although local definitions of well-being remained closely connected to communal living and territory, as argued in section 6.2, the new crises engendered new and more urgent

needs. The next section will argue that when fundamental components of a good life (such as fish, plants and clean water) become scarce, people's livelihoods must be reinvented.

6.4. Hybridisation as resilience

> To my son I am teaching both things: the Western and what is ours. Because I wouldn't teach only our knowledge and not the Westerns' when I have both. But I am going to fight with this [Western] culture to have an understanding, a comprehension of both cultures, for it to become only one intercultural culture. This is what I think would be good living. (Nathan, a father)

In previous chapters, I discussed how the search for a truly intercultural education is a common theme in Amazonianist research, and a central claim of Indigenous organisations (Aikman 1999; chapter 2). Beyond the instrumentality of language skills to confront the State, education is also seen as the only means for children to achieve a more viable livelihood that is independent from exploitative work (Espinosa, 2008). The expansion of a Western capitalist economy and the Shipibo's difficulty in finding stable paid employment engenders a sense of skill inadequacy that must be addressed to overcome precarity. In Mai Joshin, finishing school is the only route towards certain professions that are associated with financial stability and social mobility such as teachers and nurses, or government and NGO workers. That is why many parents manifest the aspiration for children to become 'professionals', obtaining secure employment in office jobs rather than following the path of rural workers. Nonetheless, this desire tends to reaffirm an assumed superiority of *mestizo* modes of living over Indigenous livelihoods, and of urban over rural livelihoods:

> Us, as father or mother, we hope that our children are not like us, that they have a bit more knowledge than we do, that later in life they are better, *better than us in the society.* That they become our professional children, with work and *more knowledge than us*. (Jary, mother – my own emphasis)

The ideal of education as an opportunity to improve one's economic prospects is the main motivator for Amazonian children who finish their education despite numerous adversities (Espinosa & Ruiz, 2017). There is also a strong parallel between Jary's wish for children's self-improvement and the Andean notion of *superarse* (overcoming oneself). Leinaweaver (2008, p.109), who examined Quechua-Spanish dictionaries, linked *superarse* to the Quechua *llalliy*, which means triumph or defeat. She then argued that this popular

expression in rural Peru represents the triumph of 'professional' urban centres over 'peasant' villages. The phrasing implies a sense of socioeconomic advancement akin to linear ideas of progress and development: a 'better' child would be able to find secure paid labour, overcoming an economic obstacle that was unsurmountable to her parents. Other parents, and even children, related the importance of studying to 'become something in life' (*ser algo en la vida*), and the pursuit of a profession to the achievement of a full personhood outside Mai Joshin. Crivello (2011) had observed years earlier that the notion of 'becoming somebody', which is widespread in Peru, was a driver of rural-to-urban migration for youth in search of job and study opportunities. Different from the seasonal migration for equally strenuous and invisible urban labour, which was prevalent in the village, the self-improvement of education was believed to allow a transition to 'more important jobs' (Jose, a father) which demand respect from *mestizos* and ensure political power.

While becoming somebody is evidently an individual condition, the professions associated with it also contribute to expand public wealth. In fact, most children did not see their ambition to become professionals as incompatible with the space of the native community and declared that they wanted to become nurses or teachers precisely to improve services in Mai Joshin. In drawing exercises and interviews, the strong desire to remain in the village is accompanied by an ambition to improve communal spaces. Children know that 'to become somebody' means migrating temporarily to study in Pucallpa and grow into professionals. However, as discussed in the previous section, urban centres produce a stronger sensation of socioeconomic exclusion and vulnerability, whereas the space of the native community is associated with a feeling of belonging and social support. As previously argued in section 6.2, children's definition of well-being were noticeably associated to their experiences in Mai Joshin (see Figure 33).

Drawing made by Cintya, 11-year-old girl

Drawing made by Oscar, 9-year-old boy

Figure 33 - Children with good lives

Kinship ties were a key component of well-being for all child participants. In the drawings above (Figure 33), Cintya recalls going to the *chacra* with her mother and grandmother as a toddler and sleeping in the hammock with her younger sibling while adults worked. In her drawing, her mother cuts plantain and her grandmother collects clay from the river to produce a dye that is used in textiles. In Oscar's depiction, a girl embroiders a *chitonti* (traditional Shipibo skirt, portrayed in yellow in the drawing). Even though she is alone, she represents the most enduring craftmanship of the Shipibo, one that is passed from one generation of women to another. Hence, despite their depiction of different sceneries, both drawings express the importance of family as a network of care and as a means of continuity of 'good customs' and *koshi shinanya* (good judgement), as explained by Oscar in relation to his artwork.

The focus on village landscapes as the epitome of well-being seem to contradict the idea of cultural devaluation expressed by elders, particularly when combined with the negative descriptions of Pucallpa (on p. 174). Conversely, they reinforce children's bonds to kinship and the native community. Nonetheless, when children were asked to imagine the future of Mai Joshin, they designed the village in its exact location and with the same organisation, but with urban fixings: a *carretera* (highway), *ripio* (gravel)/*cemento* (cement), internet and *postes* (lampposts) (see Figure 34).

Drawing made by Anely, 13-year-old. From left to right, text reads: to have more houses, to have gravel [on road], to have more lampposts, to have a highway, internet.

Figure 34 - Planning the future of the community

When confronted with these images, an observer might question if the city yearnings of an 'archetypically rural people' (Mcsweeney & Jokisch, 2015, p.15) signal a loss of Indigeneity. Or, following the analysis of elders, the urbanised maps could be read as evidence of children's growing proximity to the *mestizo* lifeworld. Both interpretations would then justify the expansion of an urbanising development, or a politics of dispossession in favour or rural-to-urban migration and cultural assimilation. After all, Shipibo children's desires are similar to those expressed by the Matses children interviewed by Morelli (2015), who adored the idea of a village made of concrete and aspired to move out of the forest. However, for the children in this research the desire to remain in Mai Joshin and see it thrive was not incompatible with a radical transformation of the village's landscape. In fact, they were adamant about their aspiration 'to grow old, die and be buried here', as bluntly put by Adam (10 years old). Thus, in what follows I reflect on how the material transformation of the territory via the addition of highways, cement and electricity may indicate a form of strategic urbanisation (Mcsweeney & Jokisch, 2015) that reconciles increasingly mobile livelihoods with the fixity of communal living.

To understand this proposition, it is important to consider that despite children's appreciation for the native community, they did not experience the village as a trouble-free environment. On the contrary, in the exercise of emotional cartographies children pointed out several problems in the territory of Mai Joshin that provoked concerns or distress, and that they wish to fix. Two of the main problems identified by children in the space of the village related to recent changes in the river's behaviour. *Paro keras* (river pollution) is a known driver of disease and hunger, particularly when a mysterious and faint putrid smell arises from the waters after a heavy rain. Then dead fish erupt everywhere, as floating omens of the scarcity that will follow. The other issue was the frequency of extreme floods, now happening almost annually and without warning (see chapter 2). Although younger children could acknowledge some good aspects of inundations, like the fact that they can swim and fish in their houses and move around in small canoes, those coming of age (11 years old and older) were more inclined to associate the rainy season with boredom and loneliness. Moreover, both younger and older children worried that the water carried snakes into the village. They also disliked the task of repaving the holes that appeared on the street after the river receded – a communal chore that children were expected to assume.

The relation between floods and the children's aspirations are exemplary of how environmental issues impact childhood experiences (Klocker & Ansell, 2016). This is made more evident in an interview with Diana (8 years old), in which the girl declared that she wished the community would be made of 'pure concrete' in the future to stop it from flooding, unaware that cementing the village could worsen the likelihood of inundations. But the association between cement and flood protection is not so farfetched when we consider that it is a result of children's lived experience of different territories. The city of Pucallpa is less prone to inundations than distant rural communities, but the Shipibo were pushed out of higher land due to Settler colonialism and moved into more vulnerable territories (see chapter 2). The frequency of floods was then aggravated by climate change in recent years, as discussed in chapter 1.

Amazonian children's multi-sited dwellings (Peluso, 2015b) is also a motivation for building a *carretera* (highway). Children's experiences with buses and boats indicate that roads are much more effective than river transportation in connecting two distant points. Therefore, *carreteras* might bring a simple solution to another problem that children were vocal about: parental migration and family separation. Gabriel, an 11-year-old boy whose mother had migrated for work to a settlement near the city of Contamana (around 150km from the village), described how he faced a day-long boat journey costing 100 soles for a one-way trip; this made

it nearly impossible for him to see his mother often. In comparison, Esther (10-year-old) described travelling with her mother and father for work in the Andes in just over 17 hours via a paved road.

Boat to Contamana, drawn by Gabriel (11-year-old boy)

Andean landscape represents Cuzco, drawn by Esther (10 year-old girl)

Figure 35 – Families' multi-sited dwellings

Nonetheless, children's desires for a *carretera* contrasted with adults' opposition to a highway connecting the city of Pucallpa and the Brazilian Amazonian city of Cruzeiro do Sul. The road project was first proposed in 2003 and abandoned due to the environmental risks associated with the construction, but the idea was revived in 2019 after the election of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil (Vélez et al., 2021).[88] According to Shipibo adults, the highway posed a grave risk of land invasion and violence given the close proximity of narcotraffickers up the river, and the growing encroachment of Indigenous territories in the Peru-Brazil borderlands (Figure 36). These grievances are summarised by an official pronouncement published by the Regional Organisation of AIDESEP in Ucayali (ORAU) in response to the Peruvian Law Project 06486/2020-CR, which declared the connection between Pucallpa and Brazil to be of national interest: 'This highway will generate severe socioenvironmental risks in out communal

[88] Bolsonaro was elected with the promise of opening up Amazonia for commercial development, with a focus on mining industries and the reduction of Indigenous territories.

territories (…). There are countless evidences of an increase in violence against Indigenous leaders for defending their territory against illegal activities, and the Abujao river basin is one of the most critical areas' (ORAU, 2021, p.1).

Figure 36 – Map of road proposal in the Peru-Brazil borderland

Source: Vélez et al., 2021[89]

Observing widening generational cultural differences among the Matses people, Morelli (2017) noted that children's agentic imagination may be indicative of future directions for their community. However, children did not know the trade-offs of road development, just as they failed to see the downside of cementing Mai Joshin. Given how the Shipibo, like many other Amazonian peoples, have historically apprehended and incorporated their enemies' point of view (see chapter 2), I propose looking at children's development ideas as a strategy of resilience based on their understandings of communal well-being and territory. Children's ability to create innovative social reproduction (Corsaro, 2018), as argued throughout this thesis, equips them to envision particular solutions for the issues that threaten a good life, such

[89] The map's legend was translated by the author.

as abandoning the native community or being separated from one's parents. In other words, their ideas for community development could, in fact, be interpreted as attempts to safeguard valued aspects of Shipibo sociality.

In section 6.3., I have shown how prolonged migration and family separation were ubiquitous definitions of ill-being for children, despite their comprehension of the need for *koriki* (money). It was the difficulty of producing income in the community combined with environmental degradation and the weakening of subsistence agriculture that pushed adults to looking for paid jobs elsewhere. Given that cities were associated with better work and study opportunities and experienced as flood-proof spaces during the rougher months of the rainy season, children logically envision themselves as future urbanites. From this perspective, children's depiction of the village's inevitably urban fate may signal not that they are embracing *mestizo* development ideas, but that they are looking to find solutions to their ill-being based on their own experiences of available alternatives.

In considering this thesis, it is useful to think of Toren's (2011) notion of autopoiesis, which defines learning as a situated micro-historical process that takes place through socialisation and an embodied relationship with our surrounding environment. Inside this logic, if fast political ecological changes take place regularly in Mai Joshin, it follows that this will have strong consequences in children's aspirations, as it is through social and environmental relations that children make sense of the world around them. Although it can be rightfully argued that children's ideas of community development have significant trade-offs (e.g. cement may in fact aggravate floods, and highways the risk of land invasion), children are kept distant from processes of prior consultation and receive scarce information on territorial management and geography at school. Consequently, in envisioning the future of their community, they resort to familiar strategies – that is, the adoption of urban lifestyles. The following section will take this argument further by examining the dual meanings of electricity.

6.5. Westernisation as problem and solution[90]

I say being a patrolman [*rondero*] is important, otherwise we wouldn't be here anymore.

(Pablo, 12 year-old boy)

At the borders of maps sketched during the participatory mapping exercise, different groups of children added notes about safety. According to them, dark nights brought the fear of land invasion, and safety only prevailed due to communal care, expressed by children as '*rondaboan noa koiranai'* (the patrolmen take care of us) and '*non jemankora noa koirankanai'* (our community takes care of us). The mention of *ronderos* (patrolman) in Ucayali may seem at odd with historical accounts of Peru's internal conflict. As explained in chapter 2, *rondas campesinas* were peasant patrols active between 1980 and 2000, in response to the violent insurgency of the Maoist guerrilla Shining Path (CVR, 2003). The existing literature on their existence in Amazonia focuses on the Ashaninka people, who were the most affected by political violence (Sarmiento Barletti, 2021; Varese, 2006; Villasante Cervello, 2019; CVR, 2003). However, people in Mai Joshin were adamant that they were also threatened by the guerrillas, a narrative shared by adults and children alike.

The fear of land invasions led to the formation of *rondas* in Mai Joshin, and these remain active to date. Patrolmen volunteer as security guards at the frontiers of the territory, protecting the village in case of an attempt of raid. The continuous fear of attacks can be justified by an analysis of surrounding dangers. As argued in chapter 2, between 2016 and 2020 Ucayali had an exponential growth of coca fields from 390 to 2,452 hectares (DEVIDA, 2021). During the pandemic, the number of clandestine land strips in the region tripled to a total of 46, all identified by satellite images as pertaining to nearby coca fields (Aguirre, 2021). However, according to my informants, the terror of land invasions was unanimously epitomised by the *pishtaco* (decapitator, in Quechua).

Pishtacos were described as outlandish flying men who invade the community to steal people's organs using electricity. This description left me concerned about a potential network of organ trafficking, as those described by Scheper-Hughes (2000), but I struggled to fathom how such an operation could take place in the middle of the forest. Early in my fieldwork, when

[90] Parts of this section were published earlier in the journal *Global Studies of Childhood* (de Carvalho, 2021), but the analysis has been adapted to include data from remote fieldwork, where the *pishtaco* was again omnipresent in interviews about ill-being.

teachers were absent at school, I asked children to draw scary things in a playful dare and ended up with a series of *pishtaco* sketches that helped me to better visualise this threat. The portraits had some variation regarding the *pishtaco*'s exact weapon and appearance, but there was consensus about its covert tactics of extraction, flying capacities, and connections to an illegal market (Figure 37).

Figure 37 – Sketches of pishtacos

All drawings were made by groups of children in the primary school while in conversation with each other about the murderer's features. They told me that *pishtaco* raids were powered by cutting-edge hunting equipment, such as night vision goggles and flying machines, and victims had little defence against them. These portraits corroborated the testimonies of other Amazonian peoples who have also spotted murderers in flying aircrafts (Santos-Granero & Barclay, 2011). While one group drew the *pishtaco* as a winged man, the majority believed that he flew using some apparatus. In the second drawing, children portrayed the *pishtaco* wearing motorised steel wings attached to a full-body black suit which, in combination with wheeled boots, offered incredible mobility. In the third drawing, the raider travels in a flying motorcycle, but the children debated whether *pishtacos* travelled like this or in speedy helicopters, since small airplanes were a common sight.

Another point of debate was the killer's weapon. The first group portrayed a *pishtaco* with a medical syringe (on the left). They argued that he was like a Western doctor, White and tall,

and used the syringe to extract people's gut when they were asleep, since a long needle could penetrate through the holes in the floorboard. But most children believed that *pishtacos* nowadays had new techniques of organ extraction, which consisted in inserting electricity inside a person's body to extract their organs. This pioneering weapon gained a literal shape in the portrait made by the second group of children, in which the *pishtaco* is armed with a *corriente*: a Spanish word that can either mean metal chain or electric current. Finally, the third group drew the raider as a *mestizo* in a flying motorcycle. They also described the killer's weapon as a tiny laser gun since a *pishtaco* leaves no scars when shooting *corriente* into his victim's body. The weapon is gifted to the *mestizos* by their gringo bosses, along with a small fortune as a reward for each killing. That is why this pishtaco is covered in gold:

> *Pishtacos* can take in people who are looking for work. Once a man was struggling to find work, and this other one wanted to be a driver. They said they had no money and needed work, but the job he [*pishtaco*] gave them was killing people. (Carlos, 10 year-old boy)

The *pishtaco*'s role in an international network of organ trafficking was constantly referenced by both children and adults. Witnesses of previous murders claimed that *pishtacos* worked disguised as government doctors in Pucallpa and acted with consent from the Peruvian government who profited from the international trade. It was argued that Indigenous peoples' vital organs helped pay off the country's external debt, a suspicion also voiced by other Indigenous peoples (Portocarrerro, 2009; Santos-Granero & Barclay, 2011). Young adults of my host family once told me about their aunt who went to the city to give birth and came back disembowelled in the late 1990s. Similar stories were evoked in the informal assembly that decided to transfer the victim to a private clinic, as some women bore mysterious scars after giving birth in public hospitals. It is possible that these testimonies relate to a national policy of forced sterilisation that affected mostly Indigenous women in the period between 1990 and 2000 (see chapter 2) and reinforced an ancient suspicion of Western medical practices.

The *pishtaco* has been well-documented in Andean anthropology as a White doctor that extracts Indigenous person's fat for therapeutic purposes (Oliver-Smith, 1969; Vasquez del Aguila, 2018; Weismantel, 2001). Applying human fat in the treatment of wounds was indeed a practice of European colonial medicine, and the frequent abductions of natives have seemed to fuel the remainder of the *pishtaco*'s backstory (De Pribyl, 2010). While there are several historical accounts of the *pishtaco* in the Andes, he was less commonly reported in Amazonia until the late 1980s. Gow (2001) found only three Amazonian ethnographies, including his

own, that mentioned a similar murderer, then named *pelacara* (Spanish for 'face peeler'). He pondered that the *pelacara*'s sudden appearance had to do with the presence of American missionaries, since their presence was the only common factor between the three geographically distant peoples. But Brown & Fernández (1993) consider that the *pishtaco* might have travelled from the Andes to Amazonia with Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*), a Maoist-inspired guerrilla that attempted to replace the Peruvian State with a communist government (see chapter 2).

Children in this research acknowledged that land invasions were more common and frightening when their parents were children, and the guerrilla – which they refer to as *terrucos* (terrorists) – was active. As phrased by Diana, an 8-year-old girl: 'back then the *pishtacos* used to take children away'. The arrival of *pishtacos* and *terrucos* were intertwined in draw-and-tell exercises about the story of the community, signalling that their first appearances were concurrent. The timeline traced by children also fits the period of internal conflict in Peru, since the guerrillas reached the forest in 1989 and remained in the region until the mid-1990s (Villasante Cervello, 2019, p.218).

> Before I was born there were *terrucos* here. They came from far beyond the *chacras*. The *ronderos* killed all the terrorists, their bones used to lie here but there are none anymore. The *terrucos* took my uncle away. My other uncle too, they took them when they were just a little older than me. And something else happened here just by the riverbank. There was this man that had a lodge and he asked a boy to go fetch water for him. The boy was only 10 years old, and the *terrucos* also took him. (Pablo, 12 year-old boy)

Like the *pishtaco*, the guerrilla invaded the community and took people away. Data on the conflict suggests that children and adolescents accounted for nearly 40% of forced recruitments, and around 20% of disappearances and kidnappings (CVR, 2003). Survivors of forced recruitment suggest that Indigenous youth were perceived as ideal soldiers because they knew the forest and lacked the physical strength to resist abduction (Villasante Cervello, 2019). At the time of the conflict, a simile of *pishtaco* also began to act as a child kidnapper in Ayacucho, the place of origin of the Shining Path: the *sacaojos* (eye extractor) was described as a White doctor hired by the State to secretly kill *senderistas*; he would also extract the eyes of Indigenous children to sell in the international organ market and pay Peru's external debt (Portocarrerro, 2009).

Another similarity between *pishtaco* and *terruco* tactics include that both attacked during the night. Children described that *pishtacos* were more common 'back when the community had no lampposts' (Maria, 11 years old), as they took advantage of the darkness given that lanterns were a luxury item. Data from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission also reports that it was a common *senderista* strategy to provoke a blackout before an invasion by placing land mines around pylons throughout Peru (CVR, 2003, p.598). The use of electricity as a weapon became more evident when I witnessed the consequences of a *pishtaco* attack during in-person fieldwork, in November 2019. The victim was a 30-year-old man who worked as a patrolman in a local lodge. He was heading for his night shift when he felt a sudden shock in his back, fell to the ground and found himself surrounded by White men. He then fired three shots in the air to alert the village, which made the attackers disappear into the night. A group of men in the village ran towards the forest heavily armed and brought back the victim who was having convulsive body movements and dripping in sweat. The man described feeling electricity inside his body and experienced electric shocks whenever he tried to drink water. Since there was no local treatment for his agony, the community decided to transport the man to a private clinic in Pucallpa, the only place with sufficiently advanced technology to treat his ailment, and collectively funded the costs of his treatment.

After the attack, a few protective measures came into place. The street went quieter, and people only walked in groups, even during the day. Men organised themselves into ceaseless patrols of the community's borders. If hunters already wore rifles when trekking through the forest, now they hiked in groups, with each man bearing a gun. Darkness made the village particularly cautious since raids tend to happen at night. But like Morelli (2015), I noticed a frequent representation of street lights in children's artwork (see Figure 38), later emphasised by drawings of the future of Mai Joshin with more *postes* (lampposts) (see Figure 34). Morelli interprets the recurrence of urban elements as a sign that Matses children aspired to a modern way of living, a 'symbol of the increasing distance of Matses society from the forest world' (ibid, p.233). But while lampposts seemed important for children, the pishtaco attack implied that electricity was a deadly weapon injected by force. Were children fond or scared of electric lights?

Figure 38 – Lit landscape I

Made by a group of cousins: Geidy (9), Isabel (9) and Ariana (10).

Lampposts were seldom lit in the community, as electricity was produced by a generator. Petrol was costly and ended quickly, lasting only for a couple of hours. Nobody knew exactly which night of the week would be illuminated, as it depended on import of gasoline from Pucallpa, but the arrival of petrol was communicated in a buzz. Electricity was necessary for the phones and lanterns that people depended on during the week. When lampposts suddenly lit, people ran to charge their equipment. However, after the attack, the communal budget was dry. All money was spent with the victim's hospitalisation in Pucallpa and the village had dark nights for several weeks. Still, light poles appeared bright in children's drawings. The map above (Figure 38) and the one below (Figure 39) were produced in two different spontaneous drawing sessions in my porch, with distinct groups of girls aged 9 to 10. The images surprised me for displaying an illuminated nocturnal landscape straight after the electric attack. When asked about their aesthetic choices, children explained that the lights scare *pishtacos* away.

Figure 39 – Lit landscape II

Made by Gabriela (9) while I watched her sisters

The lit landscapes recall the few hours in the week in which the community is shielded from nightly threats. In the drawing above, people circulate alone in the street at late hours. Gabriela described this landscape as '*algo de susto*' (something scary), but painted lights in the lampposts straight after this, suddenly deciding to brighten up the village. With this silent but meaningful (Spyrou, 2016) aesthetic choice, Gabriela performed a change from a traumatic landscape into a safe one. The radical transformation charged by energy in her drawing recreates the seemingly magical features of a light bulb that illuminates a dark night (Winther & Wilhite, 2015). Lights prolonged the day in the village at a time when children had finished all their responsibilities. Two houses in the community had televisions and converted them into open movie theatres, beloved by children. The spectators could choose from a collection of

pirated action DVDs brought by men who worked in Pucallpa. Energy lasted just enough for a full-length movie, which would then be re-enacted in children's play on the following day.

Figure 40 – Children watching a movie

After COVID-19, the village became even more dependent on electricity. In-person teaching was interrupted for over a year because of tougher rainy seasons combined with the global crisis. State-funded classes, translated to several Indigenous languages, were aired through radio, television, and the internet to reduce infection rates.[91] For nearly a year, this meant that rural Shipibo children lacked formal study, aggravating inequalities between urban centres and rural villages (Abizaid et al., 2020). Indigenous organisations campaigned for access to these resources and, in July 2021, Mai Joshin – like other native communities – received a wi-fi hot spot and electricity source inside the local secondary school, powered by the Peruvian government.

Considering these recent events, the contrast between children's portraits of the *pishtaco* and the electrified maps drawn after his attack can be interpreted as an accurate representation of energy's oxymoron: the same element that inflicts harm can shield the

[91] Available at: https://aprendoencasa.pe/. Access on 11 January 2021.

community, promote entertainment and education. Since human relationships with objects are inherently cultural, technologies cannot have a single, universal meaning. The perils of electricity may rely precisely on the assumption that it improves human life (e.g. White, 1943), while its controversial consequences are overlooked (Anusas & Ingold, 2015). For instance, Zélem (2019) shows how electrification hindered the economic autonomy and health of an Indigenous village in Guyanese Amazonia, resulting in an increased commodification of basic needs and the overconsumption of cheap processed food. But in the Shipibo context electricity has also served to promote communication between distant villages and, hence, increase political mobilisation (Espinosa, 1998; Oyarce-Cruz, Medina Paredes, & Maier, 2019).

The paradox of electricity can help further the analysis of other controversial development visions manifested by children, such as the construction of roads and the cemented image of Mai Joshin. The case of the *pishtaco* shows a connection between the experience of hardship and the appropriation of technology once perceived as harmful. The same logics could be applied to the experiences of family separation and the aggravation of floods that makes the territory unsustainable, provoking rural-to-urban migration. The bricolage of familiar solutions expressed by children's urbanised images of Mai Joshin transforms what they experience as an increasingly precarious territory into an income-producing one.

The inescapability of technologies once perceived as destructive is symptomatic of the impoverishment of local livelihood strategies (Lang, 2017). In the case of electricity, this is symbolised by the closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing urgency for internet connection in rural villages. Likewise, the aggravation of floods in Mai Joshin that pushes relocation to *mestizo* territories implies the adoption of harmful practices, such as parental abandonment and employment in commercial plantations. These controversial livelihood strategies may result from a simple appropriation and reproduction of *mestizo* ideas of 'progress' and 'good customs', as argued in chapter 5. Nonetheless, they also indicate that children lack an alternative to the neo-extractive development narrative promoted by the State (see also Arsel et al., 2019).

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter discussed how ideas of well-being are transformed by changes in the society and environment in which children's lives are embedded. It departs from a discussion

of territory in Shipibo definitions of living well to discuss how environmental changes have shaped children's experiences of ill-being. The understanding of these negative experiences is then used to reflect on children's aspirations and contrast those to parental claims that children are losing interest in Shipibo culture. This was done to understand how Shipibo children make sense of well-being amid the socio-ecological transformations prompted by Amazonian development.

The chapter started by looking at the conflicting definitions of well-being expressed by the State and Indigenous organisations during negotiations for oil extraction in Ucayali. It then examined how adults' and children's definitions of well-being shift in response to the immiseration of Mai Joshin. Children share adults' appreciation for various aspects of communal living, but they also associate certain experiences of ill-being to the precariousness of life in the village. Drawing from children's definitions of ill-being, I examine their aspiration to transform Mai Joshin into an urban territory as an attempt to preserve aspects of Shipibo sociality that they appreciate. Moreover, I argue that the idea of 'Westernisation' is experienced as an ambiguous process for both children and adults, as it can be simultaneously harmful and empowering.

The chapter shows that children strive to identify solutions to what they reckon as experiences of ill-being in Mai Joshin. Their development visions make a bricolage out of what they perceive as prevalent in contexts of crises, such as electricity and cement. Their aspirations manifest a common development paradox, which is the desire to maintain good traditions while radically transforming one's life trajectories. However, children are not fully aware of the trade-offs of their propositions, which adults see more clearly. Children's interests are misinterpreted by elders as aspiring to a *mestizo* life, but I argue instead that children lack an alternative development path (see Arsel et al., 2019). The strong governmentality of children's lives, discussed in chapter 5, acts as a powerful campaign in favour of the State, as social protection is pervasive in their lives. The growing rapport with the State, combined with a lack of critical education both at the school and at community level, sustains the ideological dominance of *mestizo* development strategies.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

This thesis looked at Shipibo children's everyday experiences and definitions of well-being in a rural native community in Ucayali, Peruvian Amazonia, which I refer to as Mai Joshin. The first two chapters situated my case study in relation to the existing literature and in the historical context of Ucayali. This literature review linked the appearance of child-centred interventions, putatively aimed to improve children's living conditions, to State interest in Amazonia's natural resources. Chapter 3 described the methodology that I used to examine children's and adults' perspectives of well-being, and how data collection was affected by my positionality, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the choice of resuming research with the support of Shipibo-speaking assistants. In chapter 4, I presented children's routines around the village and inside the school. I argued that Shipibo children are expected to be autonomous, and generally learn by dwelling in the environment with same-gender kin. However, children learn different principles at school, where education is focused on physical stillness and detached from the values and realities of Mai Joshin. Ensuing from this, chapter 5 presents child-centred social protection as the Peruvian State's investment in childhood which is conflated with ideas of national development via the cultural improvement of younger generations (Vásquez, 2020). I examine how child-centred programmes are implemented as a form of governance in Mai Joshin, as the authoritative interventions of officers may produce specific aspirations and identities in children. Finally, in chapter 6 I contrasted children's (mostly aged 9 to 13 years old) and adults' perspectives of a good life and examined further how children's ideas of a good life are being produced. I argue that Shipibo children's aspirations are responding to Mai Joshin's impoverishment, embedding the analysis of their definitions of well-being in the recent socio-political and ecological history of Amazonia.

This chapter will present an overview of potential contributions of this thesis to both academic literature and policy. It is structured in three parts: a summary of findings that outlines specific insights from each chapter; a description of the contributions of this thesis, detailing empirical, theoretical, methodological and policy implications of the main findings; and a research agenda discussing some limitations of my thesis and the future directions that research can take to advance knowledge about this topic.

7.2. Summary of findings

The thesis examined how child-centred interventions and the growing presence of extractive settlements around Mai Joshin, two forms of development that are unified in the Peruvian national development plan, widen sociocultural change. This is expressed by parents' and children's distinct notions of well-being. Improving children's quality of life has been a common argument for State intervention in Indigenous territories since the 1950s, with the arrival of the first State-sanctioned missionary schools. Nonetheless, State interest in Amazonia is also well-timed with oil discoveries, and is arguably a form of control over this resource-rich territory (Barclay, 1991). Recently, the expansion of child-sensitive social protection from the urban context of Lima (where initiatives were designed and initially implemented) to the Indigenous territories of Amazonia coincided with a new oil boom. Like other progressive governments in Latin America, in Peru resource extraction is socially sanctioned because it funds programmes of social inclusion (Gudynas, 2009). However, what is less visible in this development promise is the fact that extraction tends to worsen the quality of life of those who endure its ecological costs (Gudynas, 2016). But this issue is very visible in Mai Joshin.

By focusing on children's experiences of development in Mai Joshin, I made evident the ambiguous nature of State interventions. I also sought to challenge a mainstream narrative of child well-being as solely defined by formal education and economic inclusion, by showing that educational and economic interventions can have detrimental effects for children if they fail to incorporate Indigenous insights in their design and implementation. Despite my strong focus on childhood, explicit in the chosen set of qualitative methods (see chapter 3), the research also incorporated adult interviews and document analysis to understand social norms, higher-level child governance, and the impact of territorial disputes on children's ideas of a good life. By doing so, I located children's lives inside the ongoing colonial history of Amazonia. I argue that understanding historical traumas and current challenges in Mai Joshin's territory is fundamental to grasp why adults and children are aspiring to different things. Therefore, despite focusing on a small-scale community in Peruvian Amazonia, this thesis' findings can contribute to reflection about childhood and child well-being in other multi-ethnic contexts.

I started my analysis by looking at ideas of appropriate child behaviour and learning around the village and inside the school. Chapter 4 described how Shipibo families have traditionally shared responsibility for childcare with extended kin, and how this practice

contributes to expand the spaces of childhood. Extended kin are central to children's lives. This pattern of multiple attachments helps children to be more autonomous, cooperative, and resilient – defining traits of a good person. Children also enhance their skills with the help of plants. Boys and girls undergo different plant treatments, which supports the development of gendered skills. Clusters of same-gender kin that double as peers and caretakers also support the gradual embodiment of gender, as children practice the same skills of their cousin-siblings. Seasonal transformations will dictate the rhythm of people's livelihoods, as Mai Joshin's social dynamics and economy change considerably between the dry and rainy seasons. The frequent floods justify the importance of knowing how to dwell in these two weather extremes. However, the focus of teaching inside the school is focused on the development of bodily discipline and basic literacy, and parents blame this space for children's alleged detachment from Shipibo culture.

The ensuing chapter developed this argument further by looking at other forms of teaching that take place inside the school, related to the implementation of social protection. Chapter 5 paid attention to the government narrative behind the expansion of child-centred social protection into Amazonia, reflecting on the clashes between State definitions of 'extreme poverty' and Indigenous perceptions of wealth. The government presents the increasing precarity of native communities as a cultural problem rather than a consequence of its own political and environmental decisions. Consequently, child-sensitive social protection is mainly aimed at changing children's behaviour to impede the intergenerational reproduction of poverty. Although the programmes officially intend to promote nutritional education and influence family expenditure on children, in practice officers invent extraofficial conditionalities when scrutinising children's appearance at school. I argue that the suggestions made by government staff are coercive because children's behaviour can endanger their families' bursary. The relationship between officers and recipients also heightens the governance of children in Mai Joshin and brings children closer to a Peruvian identity that is not equally adopted by elders. Children's hybrid identities, combined with the school's tendency to reinforce *mestizo* behavioural patterns, seem to support parental beliefs that children are growing detached from Shipibo culture. The following and last chapter partially supports this hypothesis by examining children's and adults' definitions of a good life.

Chapter 6 looked at children's and adults' ideas of well-being and aspirations for the future of Mai Joshin. It starts by emphasising some similar views expressed by the two groups, and then goes on to discuss the differences. Both children and adults manifest a strong

connection to Mai Joshin. The territory is associated with accessible goods (e.g. fruit trees) and a large social network that ensures the safety and resilience of struggling individuals. Regardless of age, people also reckon that river pollution and land invasion are two core threats to the maintenance of a good life in their village. There are, however, some noticeable differences in the way that children and adults conceive of ill-being, and this affects the responses of each group to these challenges. For instance, parents are concerned with the loss of plant knowledge – which they deem fundamental to thrive in case of future epidemics. They are also concerned with an excessive Westernisation in younger generations, manifested in children's behaviour (as per chapter 5) but also in their expressed interests in *mestizo* culture. Initially, the fact that children depict an urbanised village when asked to think about the future of Mai Joshin can seem to justify these parental concerns. However, upon further exploration of children's relationship to rural and urban environments, this hypothesis cannot be sustained. Children have a localised understanding of the floods and precarity in Mai Joshin, and experience migration to the city as an unavoidable fate that separates families. They also reproduce a narrative of cultural inferiority that they learned at school and in interactions with government officials, associating some of these problems (e.g. drinking polluted water from the river) exclusively to bad customs. Conversely, adults are aware of the unequal power structures between *mestizo* and Shipibo societies and tend to relate the issues of Mai Joshin to broader political problems, such as extractivism and political dominance. Considering that, despite these aspirations, most children represented well-being as their current life in Mai Joshin, I argue that their urbanised drawings are not representative of a desire to emigrate. Instead, they might illustrate children's impetus to protect the vulnerabilities of Mai Joshin based on their experience of urban centres as safer geographies. This apparent oxymoron shows how children lack alternatives to the current narrative of development, possibly due to the lack of engagement with political discussions both at community level and inside the school.

7.3. Contribution to the existing literature

This section will discuss the potential contributions of this thesis to the existing literature, reflecting on the insights of this research at empirical, theoretical, methodological and policy levels.

7.3.1. Empirical contributions

This research is an ethnography that combines a set of qualitative methods to engage with Shipibo children and adults in a reflection about their perspectives on well-being and the future of Amazonia. This thesis applied a childhood lens to discussions about well-being, and historicised Mai Joshin in engagement with other Amazonianist ethnographies and document analysis. In doing so, it finds that definitions of a good life vary greatly with culture and age (see also Ansell, 2016; Camfield & Tafere, 2009; Jones & Sumner, 2011). However, the timeliest contribution of this thesis ensues from the insight that children's perceptions of a good life are influenced by their experiences of environmental challenges, political disputes, and everyday routines. Rather than focusing solely on children's domestic life, this thesis stresses the role of extended family, and further, of Mai Joshin's territory, as affective spaces in children's lives.

As reviewed in chapter 1, previous studies of well-being in Indigenous Amazonian contexts have mostly lacked a childhood lens. The few exceptions approach the issue through the ambiguous category of youth that generally encompasses older adolescents and young adults (see Espinosa, 2012; Virtanen, 2012). Definitions of child well-being tend to be proposed by adults and reinstate a notion of childhood as confined to the spaces of the school and the family. Consequently, research often overlooks the effects of structures governing children's lives and moulding childhood experiences (Hart & Boyden, 2018). Moreover, although adult definitions of well-being in the region contest normative ideas of a good life as associated with wealth (see also Santos-Granero, 2015) and situate peoples' definitions of living well in relation to an extractive landscape (Bravo Díaz, 2021; Sarmiento Barletti, 2015b; 2022), there is little reflection on how neo-extractivism impacts social change and local definitions of child well-being. Inspired by a call for engagement with political economy when thinking about local childhood experiences (Hart & Boyden, 2018), and particularly considering how governmentality shapes the livelihoods of children (Wells, 2016), this thesis's main empirical contribution is to situate Amazonian childhoods at the core of a neo-extractive

development project. This reflection can also further the dialogue between children's geographies and political ecology, as argued in chapter 1.

What distinguishes this research from other ethnographic studies of childhood in Amazonia is the combination of anthropological enquiry with development research. The introduction to this thesis engages with critiques of Settler colonial development strategies and child-focused State interventions in various global contexts (e.g. Balagopalan, 2002; Moreton-Robinson, 2015) to reflect on how that same dynamic is operationalised in Latin America through neo-extractivism. The same State that pollutes the rivers and impoverishes the livelihoods of Shipibo families is the vector of child-centred social protection and education, which serve as a form of compensation for dispossession (Gudynas, 2016). While extraction is presented as a necessary evil to fund socio-economic inclusion, my data shows that Shipibo children have multiple negative experiences of resource depletion in their territory. For instance, via parental migration, river pollution and a pervasive fear of land invasions. Moreover, notions of child well-being brought forth by government staff and schoolteachers are punitively manifested in extraofficial conditionalities of access to social protection. For instance, children are pressured into presenting new school supplies and clothes and expected not to share their meals with out-of-school kin. The coercive propagation of these customs affects children's values and depictions of a good life. My thesis suggest that differences between children's and adults' perspectives of well-being are not simply a matter of new affections to foreign lifestyles (Morelli, 2017), but a result of social, political, and environmental pressure for children to adopt different livelihood choices to those of their parents.

7.3.2. Theoretical contributions

As previously argued in chapter 1, much of the normative definition of child well-being derives from development psychology's understanding of childhood as a stage of life centred around the nuclear family – and particularly on the dyadic bond between a child and their mother. This rationale motivated Bronfenbrenner's (1979) human ecology of human development and, subsequently, what Hart (2012) calls the spatialisation of child protection. Namely, this is the separation of microsystems of protective environments (e.g. the family, the school and the community) and broader macrostructures (e.g. politics) that might affect these environments, but from which children should be shielded. This perception of childhood,

formulated within the Western and middle-class view of adulthood as a potential pollutant of childhood innocence, has long justified the exclusion of children from spaces of power and, equally, a lack of attention to political contexts affecting the lives of children. In fact, childhood research has often reinforced this spatialisation by presenting the household and the school as preeminent childish spaces. Policymakers alike tend to conceive of child well-being as separate from political and ecological decisions.

This thesis' findings contribute to a theoretical reflection about the interlinkages between children's lived experiences, collective wellness, and environmental issues. Therefore, it can strengthen Ullrich's (2019) argument of an Indigenous connectedness framework, in which Indigenous children are presented as members of a community and a place that are as equally determinant to their sense of self-worth and identity as the child's immediate family. Unsettling the spatialisation of child protection can serve to rethink the kinds of interventions that are operationalised via social policy, and it can also re-engage children in discussions concerning community development and territorial management.

As argued throughout this thesis, the social and spiritual aspects to human-environmental relationships in Mai Joshin are overlooked by child well-being programmes that focus solely on economic inclusion. Shipibo notions of wellness remain deeply interconnected to other-than-humans despite the expansion of the State's extractive frontiers. A similar pattern has been observed elsewhere in Amazonia (Sarmiento Barletti, 2022; Bravo Díaz, 2019). Data from this thesis suggest that children's perspectives on well-being are equally marked by strong ties to their territory. Children's definitions of a good life were often associated with their experiences of food accessibility and social insurance in Mai Joshin, which seem to echo Santos-Granero's (2015) definition of public wealth. Even children's aspirations for the urbanisation of their village were marked by their desire to remain in their territory, in opposition to the experience of loneliness and inaccessible plenitude of *mestizo* cities. Therefore, this thesis suggest that issues of food sovereignty, sustainability and valorisation of local knowledge should become just as central to theorisation on child well-being in Amazonia as the current focus on universalisation of school meals and economic inclusion. Moreover, it stresses the reverberations of Amazonia's political ecology on Shipibo children's development aspirations.

Childhood studies is dominated by research that takes place in schools, inside families, and in playgrounds, reinforcing a perspective on childhood as separate from adult spaces. A

lack of integration between the micro-geographies of childhood (Ansell, 2009) and the political world of adults leads to a superficial understanding of the problems faced by children and, consequently, to simplistic solutions to such problems (Boyden, 2015). Since the publication of the UNCRC, literature has reinforced the importance of considering children's perspectives when making decisions that affect their lives (e.g. Hart, 2008). However, I have shown in chapter 1 that literature on Indigenous childhoods in Latin America has struggled to incorporate children's perspectives – for exceptions, see Morelli (2014) and Szulc (2015). By contrasting the opinions of Shipibo children and adults in the same community in chapter 6, I argue that elders cannot represent the perception of an entire village. Moreover, I argue that it is precisely by listening to children and understanding the context in which their voices are produced that we can identify critical sociocultural changes and address potential communication gaps.

Despite a relatively recent interest in children in international development, which I discussed in more depth in chapter 1, both academic and policy interest on childhood is still restricted to education and localised experiences of poverty. As argued throughout this thesis, there is little attention to how scarcity is produced – which again reflects the separation between the childish and adult spaces (Ansell, 2009; Hart & Boyden, 2018). However, this separation may affect the level of information to which children have access, and our adult understanding of the problems that children face. Engaging with political ecology is important because it supports an understanding that children are more exposed to the precariousness that ensue from environmental degradation (Stephens, 1996), an argument that can be illustrated by children's experiences of family separation and poverty when Mai Joshin is flooded. Therefore, this thesis reinstates the importance of integrating childhood in discussions about community development and territorial management (Hart, 2008; Tanner, 2010).

7.3.3. Methodological contributions

This research employed an ethnographic approach to learn from children's lived experiences amid their families, around the village and inside the school. Participant observation was crucial to a holistic understanding of the socio-cultural norms, political dynamics and ecological aspects shaping Shipibo children's livelihoods. Data collection combined an immersion in the community with various qualitative methods to elicit discussions about topics of interest to this thesis, such as well-being and aspirations. Since the early days of fieldwork, this research adopted arts-based play with children as a key strategy

to understand children's subjectivity and the extent to which it confronts or reproduces social norms. The in-person stage of this research used informal interviews with parents and group drawing activities with children to build rapport with participants. For children, working in kin-based groups gave them more confidence to speak freely. Drawing activities were proposed organically either by children or by me, generally in a tone of dare, and we often created drawing competitions together. Some of the results from these activities can be found in chapter 4, especially when children portray their everyday activities. Later in the research, I also planned a few semi-structured draw-and-tell interviews, especially about concepts that I was struggling to grasp, such as the *pishtaco* (found in chapter 6). The in-person stage of my research gave me the social, cultural, and environmental knowledge to analyse the data that was collected remotely and by others.

After the first COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, which resulted in my emergency repatriation from Peru, I had to design and implement a remote methodology to wrap-up data collection. Although methodological adaptations became common during the pandemic to the extent of generating a specific body of literature on qualitative methods (e.g. Crivello & Favara, 2021; Marzi, 2021), specific and innovative contributions can be drawn out from this thesis. Firstly, the reflection on the ethics of research withdrawal can contribute to literature on qualitative research methods more broadly, particularly in contexts with a history of exploitative and extractive research (see Smith, 2012). Secondly, the use of methods from other large-scale research projects, such as GAGE and Young Lives, reinforced the possibility of cross-cultural application of research toolkits when they are adequately adapted to the studied context. The efficient adaptation of research tools was only possible with insightful contributions of my research assistants (particularly Gésica Pérez) during the design and translation of appropriate research questions. Finally, the experience of conducting research remotely with support from local research assistants was transformative. My research assistants were able to collect an impressive amount of data in a brief period of fieldwork, and with a level of detail that my own language limitations would not allow. The approach of these two different fieldwork strategies as complementary (instead of mutually exclusive) can inspire other academics who face travel constraints to look for alternative pathways for qualitative research without diminishing the relevancy of in-person data collection.

7.3.4. Policy contributions

This thesis examined children's experiences of popular child-centred interventions such as school meals (Qali Warma and VDL) and conditional cash-transfers (Juntos). However, my observations of implementation suggest that these programmes can be coercively operationalised in some contexts. As described in chapter 5, reprimands from officers administering the implementation of social protection redirect children's behaviours and aspirations to ideals that differ from those of their parents. This tendency is potentially harmful for their sense of identity and self-esteem. Moreover, I argue that social protection cannot succeed by addressing only the symptoms of ill-being instead of its root causes, strengthening an argument made by Boyden (2015). For instance, in the case of Indigenous Amazonia the symptom is framed as 'household poverty' in national policy, whereas for Shipibo children in Mai Joshin ill-being is experienced as a series of shifts in the socio-ecology of their community – in other words, changes in the environment that are engendering socio-economic precarity and family rupture. Therefore, the approach to social policy as a compensation for ecological costs (Gudynas, 2016) is ineffective to promote Shipibo children's well-being.

The main policy implication of this research is the reflection about the clash between State-sanctioned and Shipibo definitions of wellness. Child-centred interventions are focused on economic and social inclusion but fail to acknowledge the importance of extended kin and the environment for the subsistence and the future sustainability of riverine native communities. Conversely, these elements of wellness are pervasive to both parents' and children's definitions of a good life. Given that the village's current condition is a consequence of resource depletion and the aggravation of floods, addressing the issues of nutritional deficit and household poverty by school meals and CCT does not offer a long-term solution. At policy level, this would mean shifting a narrative of socio-economic inclusion via conditional benefits to sustainable alternatives that could foster the food sovereignty and economic autonomy of those territories.

A common feature in children's description of a bad life was precisely the unsustainability of Mai Joshin as an isolated territory. The recurrent phenomenon of family migration for paid job opportunities was a ubiquitous feature in children's descriptions of ill-being. In addition to this, the increase in floods may force entire families to migrate seasonally, and children described their experiences in Pucallpa as mostly negative and related to a sentiment of relative poverty. Considering that the lowlands of Amazonia – which includes

much of Shipibo territory nowadays – is increasingly more prone to flooding because of environmental issues, more permanent solutions to this could include fostering native communities' adaptation to climate change inclusively by involving children in territorial management and disaster preparedness, as proposed by Tanner (2010).

Another relevant point was the finding that children's understandings of the problems faced by Mai Joshin are superficial. Children seemed unaware of the structural causes of floods, river pollution and parental migration, and viewed their seasonal movement to cities as the only possible strategy of flood resiliency. Given that most children disliked their experience of Pucallpa, it was counter-intuitive that children's aspirations for community development often included transforming Mai Joshin into a city. However, they did not seem to be informed about the trade-offs of urbanisation, particularly in the middle of the forest. At present, children's education does not seem to respond to the needs of the community nor the aspirations of parents, causing frustration about children's time allocation and skill development. The lack of engagement of school activities with the realities of Mai Joshin and the reproduction of colonial discourses that present Indigenous cultures as frozen in time may contribute to children's perceptions of their ill-being as a localised and cultural problem.

Finally, among childhood policymakers and advocates, findings from this research can contribute to a critical reflection about the design and implementation of universal social policies. Some degree of cultural adaptation of such initiatives is necessary to ensure that child-centred social policy is truly rights-based, as per the Art 2 of the UNCRC (no discrimination) and Art 30 (cultural rights). In the case of implementation of CCTs and school meals in Amazonia, this does not seem to be the case. Rather than strengthening the knowledge and practices of families, Qali Warma and VDL in their current form seem to foster a disconnection from local food cultures. Moreover, my data suggests that government staff invent new conditionalities and use their judgement to define what is proper child rearing, an observation that is corroborated by other research on Juntos implementation (Correa Aste et al., 2018; Escobal & Benites, 2012; Streuli, 2010). The government should ensure that every person in direct contact with a child from an ethnic minority receives appropriate training on ethics and cultural sensitivity. Families need clarity on the official conditionalities of programmes – and a safe route to denounce harassment of inspectors.

7.4. Future research agenda

Research on child well-being from a child-centred and Indigenous perspective in Latin America is still at an early stage. However, Indigenous knowledges have greatly inspired post-development thought in the region and could potentially shake the rigid spatialisation of child development by presenting a balanced ecology as a key component of thriving childhoods. Closer attention to Indigenous descriptions of well-being in child policy research could challenge the constrained understandings of 'best interest of the child' to integrate environmental issues as part of children's subjective and physical well-being. This could greatly benefit programming in multi-ethnic contexts by fostering the advancement of more appropriate social policy. But, more broadly, this is a crucial theoretical framework to explore when thinking about childhoods in the context of heightened climate change (see Hadfield-Hill & Zara, 2019a). Further research should attempt to bridge the gap between political ecology and childhood studies, particularly in disputed terrains such as Amazonia where Settler colonial interventions on behalf of children are pervasive.

Comparative research on the relationship between environmental depletion and Indigenous children's definitions of well-being in Amazonia would be a promising area of research to validate this thesis' findings in other cultural contexts. It would be particularly interesting to investigate how childhood influences (and is influenced by) Indigenous politics, given how Indigenous movements already approach environmental and sociocultural issues as being intertwined (see chapter 6). The use of other participatory methods, such as theatre, could allow children to express themselves in an intergenerational research dynamic. Participatory data analysis could also foster new insights and critical dialogue between adults and children on issues of community development.

This thesis has showed that socio-ecological changes affect children's and adults' aspirations in Mai Joshin. The children in my study displayed a remarkable awareness of problems in their village, but their understanding of such problems was more apolitical than that of adults. I argued that children's localised perceptions of ill-being inform their ideas for community development. Hence, I would like to conclude this thesis by emphasising the importance of improving children's access to political ecological knowledge and local resilience strategies. Furthering dialogue between childhood and political ecology literature is not only crucial to advance academic knowledge, but also to better inform programmes for children in contexts of heightened socio-ecological change.

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Appendix I – Hierarchy of Indigenous organisations in Amazonia

International Level

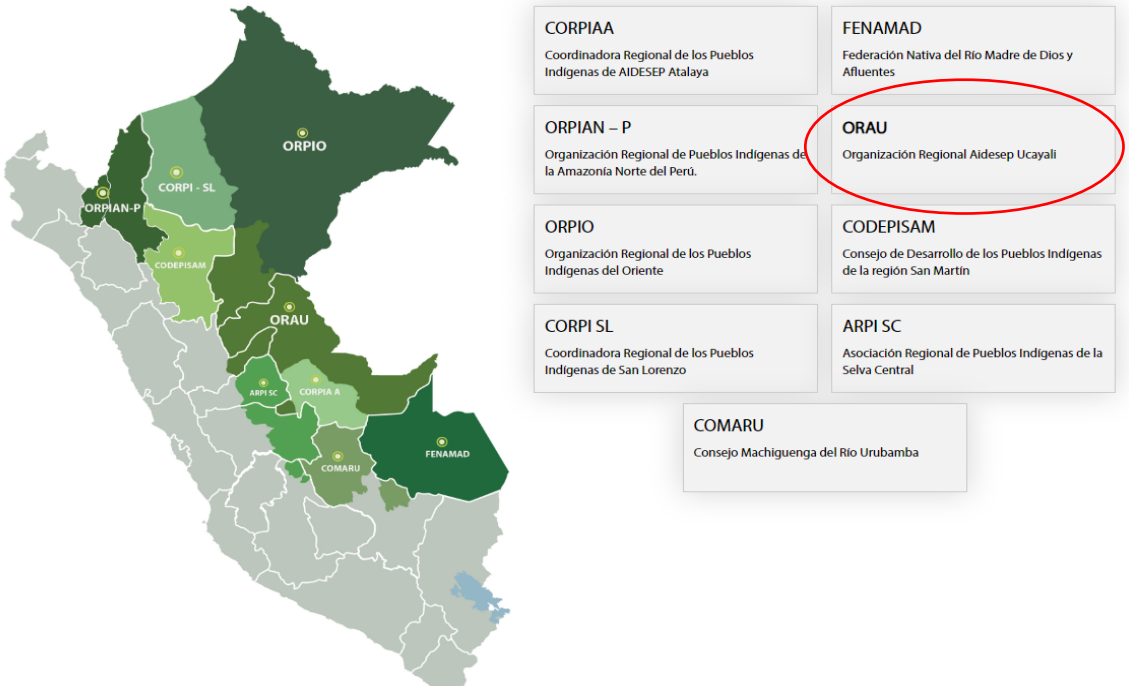
AIDESEP is the representative of all Indigenous peoples in Peruvian Amazonia vis-à-vis the international organisation COICA.

COICA Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin (Indigenous NGO)	**AIDESEP (Peru) - Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Jungle**
	APA (Guyana) - Association of Amerindian Peoples of Guyana
	CIDOB (Bolivia) - Confederation of the Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia
	COIAB (Brasil) - Coordination of Indigenous Organizations in the Brazilian Amazon
	CONFENAE (Ecuador) - Confederation of Nationalities from the Ecuadorian Amazon
	FOAG (Guyana Francesa) - Federation of Autochtone Organizations of French Guyana
	ORPIA (Venezuela) - Regional Organization of Amazonian Indigenous Peoples
	OIS (Surinam)- Indigenous Organization of Surinam
	OPIAC (Colombia) - Organization of Indigenous Peoples in the Colombian Amazon

Source: http://coica.org.ec/ Access on 19 May 2022

National Level

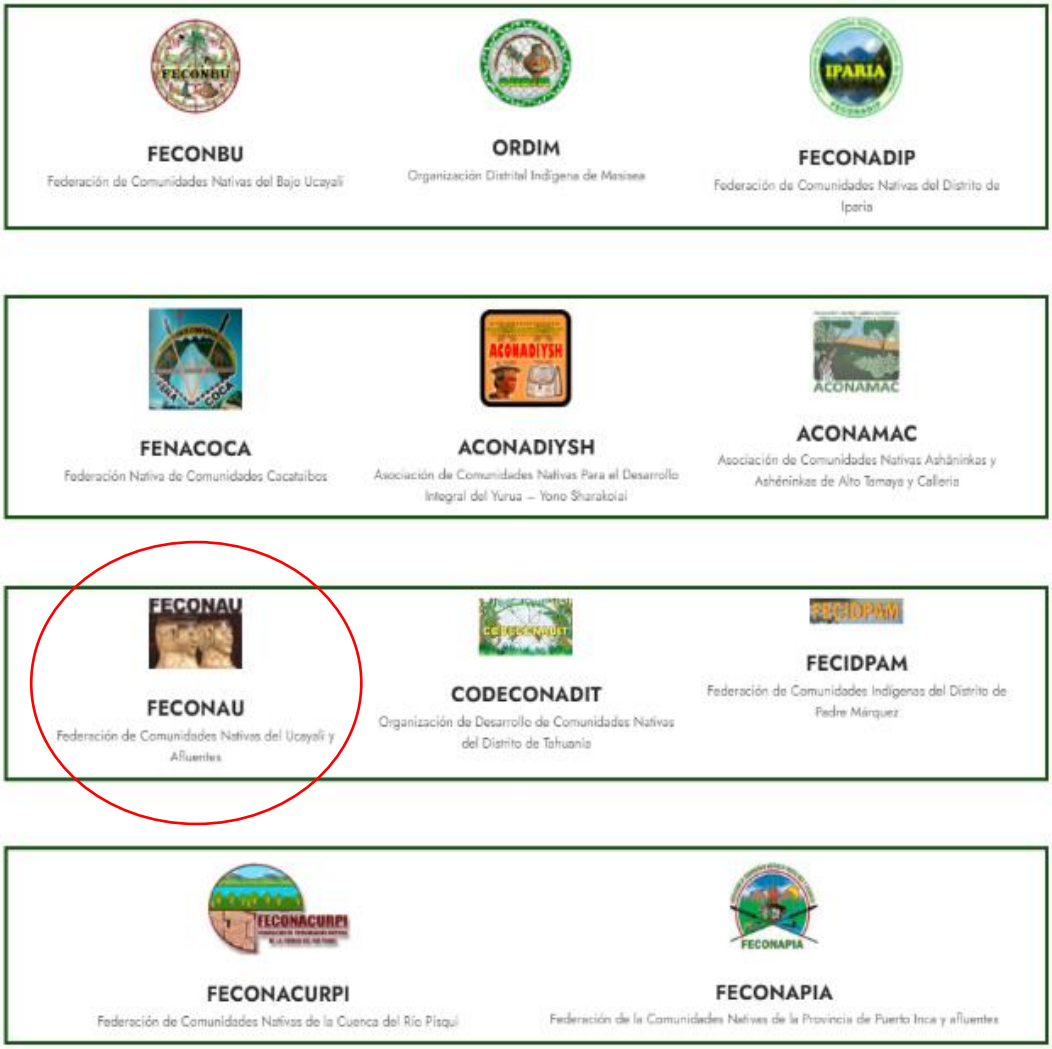
ORAU is the representative of Indigenous peoples in Ucayali vis-à-vis AIDESEP.



Source: http://www.aidesep.org.pe Access on 19 May 2022

Regional level

FECONAU represents native communities along the Ucayali River and its tributaries. At regional level, organisations are generally grouped by regions of the river or districts (when those are recognised by the State).



Source: https://www.orau.org.pe/federaciones/ Access on 19 May 2022

Appendix II – Ethical approval

In-person fieldwork

Dear Thais

Please find attached a copy of your revised ethics application. I am happy to say that ethics clearance has been approved. Well done – some tricky ethical dilemmas have been thought through in some depth and addressed in a comprehensive manner.

Please keep a copy of PART B for your records,

Best wishes,
Kate

Dr Catherine M. Jere
Chair of Ethics Committee (DEV)

UEA University of East Anglia

REVIEW REPORT AND DECISION - PART B
UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

APPLICANT INFORMATION
To be completed by the applicant

Forename	Thais
Surname	De Carvalho Rodrigues Lopes
UG, PGT or PGR *(if applicable)*	PGR
Supervisor *(if applicable)*	Laura Camfield and Caitlin Scott
Project Title	Shaping culturally sensitive protection for indigenous childhoods: a case study of children's wellbeing in the Peruvian Amazonia

RESUBMISSIONS – IF YOU ARE ASKED TO RESUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION FOLLOWING REVIEW BY THE COMMITTEE PLEASE ALSO ATTACH **A LETTER** WITH YOUR REVISED APPLICATION DETAILING HOW YOU HAVE RESPONDED TO THE COMMITTEE'S COMMENTS.

REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATION (✓)
To be completed by the Ethics Committee

Accept	✓
Request modifications	
Reject	

REVIEWERS' CHECKLIST *Delete as appropriate*

Risks and inconvenience to participants are minimised and not unreasonable given the research question/ project purpose.	✓	
All relevant ethical issues are acknowledged and understood by the researcher.	✓	
Procedures for informed consent are sufficient and appropriate	✓	

REVIEWERS' COMMENTS

All original comments and queries have been addressed in this re-submission

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION

Ethical clearance is approved

SIGNATURE (CHAIR OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ETHICS COMMITTEE)

Signature	Date
	18.07.19

Remote fieldwork

Dear Thais

Your addendum to your previously approved ethics application was sent out for review and comments have now been received. I am pleased to confirm that the DEV S-REC can approve your addendum to your existing research without requiring an additional full ethics application. Please see below comments from the review.

"The researcher has thought through key issues in relation to reorienting the methodology associated with the element of the research they were hoping to undertake on their return to the field, and adjusted it appropriately in the COVID19 context. They will be drawing on 2 RAs experienced in working with the local community and with an in-depth knowledge of the geographical context, and who will live in the community during the course of the research.

Measures are in place to ensure good communication between the researcher and the RAs, and it seems the researcher is very clear about the methodology to be used in relation to the questions they want addressed. The researcher will train the RAs in children's rights, the methodology, and ethics, remotely. If there is any UEA based training support to be offered to the researcher to support them, if they need it, this could be offered e.g. Dr Helen Campbell Pickford's online qualitative methods course, but it may not be required.

The researcher is reflective on the changed relationship between themselves and the community this rearrangement will have, and the 'author' role taken on by the 2 RAs and sees this as contributing to decolonising the research, and the benefits of that. Although the researcher won't be in the field mechanisms have been put in place to ensure their ongoing, culturally appropriate, links with the community".

With kind regards,
Catherine

Liz/Nancy Please file a copy of the addendum and this response alongside the original 2019 approved ethic application.

Dr Catherine M. Jere
Chair DEV Ethics Committee

Appendix III - Research samples

In-person fieldwork (July 2019-March 2020) | Main method: participant observation[I]	
GROUP	**TOTAL #**
Adults	6 households visited regularly[II]
Children	73 children in the primary school (6-16 age range) 53 with more frequent contact (8-14 age range)
Government staff	9 teachers 13 social protection/education monitoring staff
Shipibo leaderships	8 chiefs of a native community 6 members of AIDESEP
Remote fieldwork (July 2021) | Main method: participatory focus groups + individual interviews	
GROUP	**TOTAL #**
Parents	11 (6 women, 5 men)
Children	50 (mostly 9-13 age range) in the participatory focus group 12 interviewed (7 girls, 5 boys)

[I] The table counts only substantial interactions or interviews. Communal assemblies and political meetings involved people from other villages, and group play included younger children.

[II] Households included two or more nuclear families with children. I visited several other households throughout fieldwork.

Appendix IV – Toolkit for remote fieldwork

Research Aim	Understand how children make sense of their lives amid social and environmental changes in Amazonia (complements preliminary data from fieldwork 1)		
Activity	Collaborative mapping	Arts-based interview 1: good and bad lives	Arts-based interview 2: history of the community
Main research questions	How do children visualise their territory and their relationship with the city, the river and the forest?	How do children perceive their current lives?	How do children perceive their potential futures?
Objective	Find out how children experience their territory, and if they are aware of any dangers in its surroundings	Analyse how children make sense of their culture and their place in the world	Analyse how children make sense of their culture and their place in the world
Sample	All children in the primary school were invited, 48 attended.	All children in the previous workshop were invited, 12 participated (5 boys and 7 girls)	The same 12 children (5 boys and 7 girls)
Materials	Large paperboard, coloured pens and pencils, post-its, large scotch tape, facemasks, hand sanitiser	Individual drawing notebooks, coloured pencils, facemasks, hand sanitizer.	Individual drawing notebooks, coloured pencils, facemasks, hand sanitizer.
Description of method	Children should work in groups (they can choose freely); they should draw a map of the community with elements that they consider important. They will be invited to hang this at *jeman xobo* (the communal house) but can opt out.	Starts with an icebreaker: ask child to show or draw their favourite objects (it can be anything) and explain what they mean. Once this activity is done, ask them to draw a child that does not have a good life. A third drawing activity will be to draw a child that has a good life.	Ask children to draw storyboards showing important things that have happened in their lives, in their families and in their community
Suggested list of questions	What is important in your drawing? Why? Which houses do you visit? Where do you like to go? Where do you not like to go? Where do you feel safe? Is there anywhere you feel unsafe?	What makes the child feel good/not so good? With who are they? What do you do when things are not so good? What is important to have a good life?	Imagine that you are drawing the scene of a movie that happened in the past. What elements would have to be part of the story of your community? Why is this important? What is important for the community to be well? What do you want to see different in the community, and what should not change? How do you imagine yourself as an adult? What do you want to do then?

Appendix V – Coding tree