

Urban Mobilization in Solidarity
with Amazonian Indigenous Peoples

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Abstract

In Latin America, self-interested social movements have achieved their goals when supported by altruistic activists from the global north. Unprecedentedly, national altruistic social movements characteristic of democracies in the developing world have appeared on the Latin American scene in the form of non-indigenous civil society actors within these countries acting in solidarity with the indigenous movement. This research generates hypotheses about the emergence of urban mobilizations on behalf of Amazonian indigenous peoples. Using a protest event analysis, I present data on pro-indigenous altruistic urban protests in Peru from the last two decades. I propose that a combination of conditioning factors – primary conditions that have created a positive environment of civil society values and mobilization potential – and triggering factors – catalysts of the protests – have built and determined the timing of altruistic social movements in the country. These altruistic protests have helped the indigenous movement to achieve significant governmental responses to indigenous demands. Altruistic movements appear likely to shape substantially national and regional politics.

“Todos Somos Indígenas” (We are all indigenous) chanted vigorously thousands of urban protestors during the Jornada Nacional del Solidaridad in June 2009, reflecting their solid commitment and solidarity with their Amazonian indigenous compatriots. “Amo Amazonía” (I love Amazonia) was the phrase that hundreds of non-indigenous Peruvians represented with a human flag in October 2009 to express their concern for the protection of the Amazon region. “Bagua no se olvida” (Bagua is not to be forgotten) was the emblematic slogan used across the country to express their condemnation of the violence and repression by the government and police against Amazonian natives. All of these pieces of public discourse and demonstrations were part of a series of unprecedented altruistic societal mobilizations that has recently emerged in Peru in support of Amazonian indigenous peoples. Amazonian indigenous peoples suffer the greatest social and environmental impacts resulting from intensive and unregulated extractive activities by oil and gas multinational corporations. In the past, non-indigenous urban residents have rarely interacted with Amazonian indigenous; moreover, these have tended to socially exclude this minority indigenous group from public dynamics. Yet, this time, the cry of indigenous resonated among urban masses and altruistic mobilizations by non-indigenous nationals emerged to advocate on behalf of their Amazonian compatriots. Thus, the uprising of selfless social movements among nationals from the cities represents a surprising phenomenon never experienced in the country and neither in Latin America.

But, why are these new altruistic mobilizations so significant? Indigenous movements, as well as other social movements in Latin America mobilizing for the interests of their participants, have largely received the support from concerned actors and social movements of developed countries. In the same way, urban mobilizations recently

observed in Peru advocate on behalf of indigenous demands. Nevertheless, these pro-indigenous urban mobilizations represent an exceptional and unique case never seen nor expected in developing countries. Altruistic movements have been exclusively characteristic of advanced industrial democracies such as US or European countries. But now, it appears that national altruistic social movements have appeared in the Latin American region too: non-indigenous urban peoples within the Peruvian society have acted solely in solidarity with Amazonians indigenous. Additionally, these non-materialistic urban demonstrations have helped indigenous peoples to achieve more effective responses from the legislature and the judiciary to their demands, while gaining substantial battles against the government and MNCs.

How can we explain the emergence of altruistic movements in developing nations? This study attempts to explain the appearance of pro-indigenous altruistic mobilizations in the developing world by analyzing the Peruvian case. The next section provides insights about the historical struggles of Amazonians, followed by a detailed explanation of a crucial political event that has likely influenced the observed urban support. Last, I describe the occurrence of pro-indigenous urban mobilizations in the country.

Amazonian Struggles

Located in the western center of South America (Figure 1), Peru portrays a diverse cultural heritage and rich natural resources extended throughout its three geographic regions: coast, highland, and rainforest (Figure 2). About 47% of the total population is indigenous, including both Andean and Amazonian indigenous communities, and they represent the



Figure 1: Amazon Basin Region Countries.

greatest indigenous minority group in all Latin America (Van Cott 2007, 128). Andean indigenous peoples have inhabited the highlands since pre-colonial times; they are poor rural peasants who have syncretistic religious practices, maintain strong connections to their land and ancestors and have been involved with Hispanic states and markets over 500 years (Brysk 2000, 6). Since the first massive migration of highland peoples to the urban coastal places in 1970s, Andeans have increasingly migrated seeking better opportunities.

On the other hand, Amazonian indigenous groups have remained in the rainforest lowlands and avoided major interaction with other groups. Still, colonization agents and processes have affected Amazonians' social structure and environment. They suffered territorial intrusion, pandemic diseases, and labor abuses brought by Spanish that decimated the local indigenous populations. Since the last century, the Peruvian government has promoted colonization of Amazonian lands by mestizos (people of mixed



Figure 2: Peru: Main Urban Centers and Geographic Regions.

indigenous and Spanish ancestry), highland indigenous and foreigners (MINSU-OGE 2003, 15). Intensive agriculture, logging, mineral exploitation, and more recently, hydrocarbon development by multinational corporations (MNCs), have led to extensive deforestation and environmental degradation (ERI et al. 2007, 11).

Peru is one of the nine countries that share Amazonian rainforest territory occupied by Amazonian indigenous populations (Figure 1). The rainforest region makes up 61% of the

total Peruvian territory. Currently, there are 60 Amazonian indigenous peoples identified that maintain contact with the national society and another 14 indigenous peoples that remain in voluntary isolation in Peru's rainforest region. The total indigenous population is roughly 335,000 (INEI 2010, 11). Amazonians live in a symbiotic relationship with their territory; they maintain a subsistence economy depending on natural resources for survival and livelihood, while following conservation practices. However, they are very poor, living below the national poverty line, have limited participation in the country's cash economy, and maintain poor educational and health systems (ERI et al. 2007, 12). Moreover, they have been excluded from the political process. In 1980, having the support from civil society organizations, Peruvian Amazonian indigenous created the AIDASEP – Asociación Interétnica para el Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana (Inter-Ethnic Association of the Development of the Peruvian Jungle) – and later, Amazonian federations by ethnic group and by sub-regions were formed. These institutions have struggled to improve the rights and living conditions of their communities, gaining some progress in the areas of education and political participation. Nevertheless, Amazonian natives keep suffering discrimination and social exclusion imposed by the government and the dominantly mestiza society to them more than to any other minority group in Peru.

Bagua clashes

The elections of 2006 in Peru marked the beginning of the second government of president Alan García and with this, a democratic regime with a strong neoliberal pathway of economic development. In 2008, he formulated some “decretos supremos” (presidential decrees) with the purpose of modifying laws and regulations that dealt with land rights of Amazonian indigenous communities. All decrees proposed together violated substantially

their land and consultation rights, protected by the International Labor Organization's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 as ratified by Peru. For instance, decree 1015 established new procedures for indigenous communities' voting system and gave voting power for division of communal lands only to people that attended all meetings, while pushing for concentration of lands in one individual (Montoya Rojas 2008). Also, decree 1090 allowed changing lands from forest classification to agricultural or extractive classifications if the government considered it a matter of national interest (Montoya Rojas 2008). Decree 1089 gave a government entity the power to establish new conditions to formalize titled lands and change property guidelines (Montoya Rojas 2008).

Using these questionable legal mechanisms, the government intended to impose restrictions on indigenous over the management of their lands to promote hydrocarbon development in the Amazon. By increasing the amount of land concessions to MNCs the government gave them *carte blanche* over indigenous territories. For more than four decades, Amazonian indigenous peoples have suffered the negative effects of oil and gas exploitation. In addition, government has not regulated nor monitored adequately or used enforcement mechanisms in these processes to protect Amazon ecosystems and peoples.

Because of all these situations, in which Amazonian indigenous peoples felt ignored and unprotected by the national government, they began mobilizations in August 2008 at the national level, and blocked some important roads in the provinces of Bagua Datem, Echarate, and others (*El Comercio* Website, 25th August, 2008). The executive power promised to discuss their demands and proposed a dialogue that never happened, while the legislature started a debate that allowed the suspension of some harmful decrees until further evaluation. Since other decrees still existed, Amazonian indigenous organizations

continued petitioning the government for their reversal and creation and implementation of a law of previous consultation (free, informed, and previous consent). Without success, indigenous peoples started a more aggressive series of protests, road blockages, strikes, marches, and other forms of mobilization in April 2009.

During 56 days, different Amazonian groups unsuccessfully took several actions to get the attention and response from the government. On June 5th 2009, protest evolved into violent clashes between Amazonian indigenous and policemen. That day, hundreds of Amazonians protestors were peacefully sitting at the Curva del Diablo stretch of the Fernando Belaúnde Terry highway in the province of Bagua, department of Amazonas, when the special operations unit of the national police DINOES forced them out, following orders from the government (AI 2009, 14). The previous day, police commanders and Apus (Amazonian native leader) had agreed upon a non-aggression pact to give protestors time to voluntarily leave the zone (AI 2009, 15). Some policemen argued that an “order from Lima” pressured them to disperse indigenous using all available means (Montoya Rojas 2009), others report that the executive order was given before the non-aggression agreement and that not all commanders favored it (Comisión Bagua 2009, 47). While some indigenous were carrying only lances to self-identify as Awajún and Wampís peoples, the DINOES had military weapons such as grenades and AKM rifles (AI 2009, 14). A few protestors saw armed police officers approaching the area from a hill above the road in violation of the pact and warned the rest. Testimonies said that policemen threw tear gas bombs and began shooting indiscriminately against protestors (AI 2009, 7; Anaya 2009), provoking a more aggressive response. As a result, 12 policemen were disarmed and killed with their own weapons by protestors, while 10 civilians, including 5 indigenous people,

were murdered by policemen and hundreds of protestors suffered severe injuries, which in some cases resulted in amputations (AI 2009, 15; Comisión Bagua 2009, 67).

A few hours later, protestors who were occupying the state-owned oil company PetroPerú Pumping Station No. 6 (approximately 80km from the Curva del Diablo site) learned from exaggerated media statements about the killing. The crowd thought they were going to be evicted in the same way because helicopters were circling overhead. Desperate and outraged, they responded with greater violence against the 38 policemen that were guarding the station. The efforts of both commander Montenegro and Apu Wiipui to calm them down were in vain; a group of protestors took 18 police officers hostage and killed 11 of them (AI 2009,15). They stated that they captured 18 policemen because they were informed that 18 indigenous were killed at the Curva del Diablo stretch and they wanted to take revenge for this (Comisión Bagua 2009, 62). The families of the policemen murdered blamed mainly the government for not having warned the policemen at the station about the Curva del Diablo eviction.

The official report indicated that the whole brutal episode left 33 killed, 23 policemen and 10 civilians, and more than 200 civilians injured with firearm wounds, bruising and tear gas burns (Comisión Bagua 2009, 64; AI 2009, 7). However, the Indigenous Students Movement claimed that police covered up the assassination of more than 50 natives whose bodies would have been thrown into the Marañón River (Comisión Bagua 2009, 64). Apparently, police officers restricted the access of the public prosecutor and prevented the access of health professionals and humanitarian aid to the area (AI 2009, 18). The office of the Ombudsman investigated the disappearance of more than 40 natives (Defensoría el Pueblo 2009, 25). Most of them were at hospitals, imprisoned or returned to other

communities; yet, the status of 12 was not confirmed by their families and 1 policeman continues missing. Also, Amazonian communities contend that other indigenous remain missing, but that problems related to the inaccessibility and inaccuracy of public registers for their communities prevent them from denouncing these cases. Overall, the evidence reveals that indigenous protesters acted with great levels of violence, yet in response of uncivilized aggressive actions and trickery by the police. Governmental repression along with police's violent attacks in Bagua represented another provocation added to the long list of abuses and injustices against indigenous peoples.

Following these events, the government initiated a publicity campaign to explain to the citizenry why such violent clash occurred. The Government aired a TV spot stating: "...Policías fueron asesinados con ferocidad y salvajismo (por nativos amazónicos)...los extremistas por consigna internacional quieren prevenir que los peruanos se beneficien con el gas y el petróleo de su subsuelo" ("...Policemen were murdered with ferocity and savagism – by Amazonian Natives –...extremists following international command want to prevent Peruvians from taking advantage of their oil and gas resources") ("Spot televisivo del Gob. Peruano", *Perú21* Website, 10th June, 2009). The government blamed Amazonian peoples entirely for the massacre and displayed photos of the dead bodies of policemen to prove the supposed barbarity. The government persecuted indigenous leaders as well as other political activists and accused them of criminal actions.

In the aftermath of the Bagua clashes, both national and international actors responded by condemning the government's actions and pressuring it to stop the repression against Amazonians. Peru's Human Rights Ombudsman urged the government to watch over the rights of indigenous and resolve the conflict taking an intercultural approach (Defensoría el

Pueblo 2009, 26). International NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International started campaigns worldwide against governmental actions. Also, the United Nations special rapporteur on indigenous peoples, James Anaya, visited Peru to investigate the events. Based on his report, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommended the state to form an independent commission with indigenous representation to impartially investigate the events (LatinNews Weekly Report, WR-09-43; LatinNews Andean Group, July 2009¹).

What changed in Peru Post-Bagua?

Less than a week after Bagua clashes, the country was polarized between García's government and a coalition of civil society members from different regions supporting Amazonian indigenous. As shown in Table 1, during the 1990s and early years of this decade, Amazonian groups in Peru have protested all over the country against the state and corporations to improve their living conditions. They demonstrated in rural areas, but focused their effort on marches to the main cities, where they thought they could have more effect on having their demands listened by public institutions. However, since late 2006, there has been a noteworthy series of actions taken by urban civil society members on behalf of Amazonian indigenous peoples. Especially after the Bagua clashes, increasing mobilizations of this kind are observed in the main cities of Peru.

In May 2009, the CGTP (National Labor Union of Peru) organized a national strike in support of Amazonians in the cities of Lima, Arequipa, and Trujillo (LatinNews Andean Group, May 2009). Later on June 11th, more than 30 thousand Peruvians protested in

¹ Citations to specific issues follow the Report's format: WR-09-43 is the 43rd issue of the Weekly Report in 2000. For Andean Group reports, the record is indicated by the month and year of publication: July 2009.

solidarity with them during the “Jornada Nacional de Lucha” across important cities: Lima, Arequipa, Loreto, San Martín, Tacna, Junín, Ayacucho, and Piura (*El Comercio* Website, June 12th, 2009). A demonstration of such scale had not occurred since the late 1990s, when several groups united nationwide to protest against ex-president Fujimori’s authoritarian regime. During this massive mobilization, protesters’ banners announced “La Selva no se vende, la Selva se defiende” (The rainforest is not to be sold, but to be defended). Also, several social organizations, NGOs, academic institutions, and companies have sponsored the Amo Amazonía cultural platform in October of 2009 and 2010 to increase awareness about Amazonians’ culture and living conditions (AmoAmazonía Website: eventos). During the 2009 event, Peruvians from all over the nation gathered in Lima to be part of this cultural platform and 500 hundred committed activists protested peacefully to protect Amazon’s ecosystems by creating a human flag that said “Amo Amazonía” (I love Amazonia) (AmoAmazonía Website: eventos). Recently, thousands of Peruvians participated in the “Marcha por la Vida” organized by the left-wing parties in Lima on April 13th 2010 (LatinNews Weekly Report, WR-10-15).

What changed in Peru Post-Bagua? A new social phenomenon with no precedents in the Latin American region emerged in Peru: altruistic social mobilizations in solidarity with Amazonian indigenous issues. Members of political parties (Socialist Party, Nationalist Party, Land and Liberty Party), CGTP affiliates, syndicates, university students (San Marcos, Villareal, Cantuta, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, and Callao universities), professional associations (anthropologist, archeologists, sociologists) gathered to stand on behalf of their “brothers and sisters” (LatinNews Weekly Report, WR-10-15; *El Comercio* Website, 12th June, 2009). For decades, the Latin American

Indigenous Rights Movement has strategically channelized their demands to the government through demonstrations led by indigenous peoples themselves, while having the support from benevolent civil society actors of wealthy developed countries. In the recent pro-indigenous protests, contrary to what we have seen, the main political actors are not indigenous peoples, but civil society mestizo nationals from urban zones. Moreover, these are not the usual self-interested and identity-based movements of disadvantaged groups from the developing world. But they can be recognized as altruistic protests on behalf of “the other” that in the past, were only conceived possible in the developed world.

Table 1: Occurrence and type of mobilizations favoring indigenous demands. Information sources: LatinNews Monitoring Center - Peru, El Comercio, Perú21, and Defensoría del Pueblo’s social conflict reports.

Month / Year	Mobilizations /Protests	Indigenous mov.	Urban mov.
1990-1995	Since the 1990s, more than 200 protests, road blockages, etc. The media underreported some. -1992 Achuar and Quichua, land titling process -1995, Achuar againts MNCs as Oxy.	xx	
1995-2000	More than 100 protests (Some underreported by the media)	xx	
October 2002	Movimiento Indígena de la Amazonía Peruana: Llapansuyo pluri-ethnic political party.	xx	
October 2007	Rio Corrientes Communities against PlusPetrol with support from national NGOs and local authorities.	xx	x
August 2008	AIDASEP and Amazonian communities against 35 governmental decrees with support from urban social organizations.	xx	x
April 2009	Indigenous Federations and social organizations to demand dialogue and consultation.	xx	x
May 2009	CGTP (labor union) in support of Amazonian natives in Lima, Arequipa, and Trujillo.		xx
June 2009	-Bagua (June 5 th): Amazonian natives against police forces. -“Jornada Nacional de Lucha” (June 11 th): More than 30 thousand Peruvians in solidarity with Amazonian indigenous in the most important cities within and outside the country.	xx	xx
July 2009	CGTP and civil society (July 7 th -10 th) in national strike.		xx
October 2009	First Cultural platform Amo Amazonía (October 15 th -25 th): Social organizations, companies and Peruvians in Lima.		xx
February	AIDASEP and social organizations in protest for the	xx	x

2010	government's report on Bagua events.		
April 2010	"Marcha por la Vida"- (April 13 th): NGOs, students, academic scholars, and political parties in Lima.		XX
June 2010	- Washintong (June 1 st): Peruvians and activists gathered at the White House to protest against president García - Civil society and indigenous (June 5 th) to commemorate 1 year of the Bagua clashes. -Indigenous peoples and activists (June 8 th) to demand enforcement to the OAS in terms of indigenous issues.		XX
July 2010	Amazonian groups in Loreto protested against the possible deportation of priest McAuley who has helped Amazonian communities for 20 years.	XX	X
August 2010	First decentralized cultural platform Amo Amazonia (August 8 th -30 th): civil society in Iquitos city (urban city and capital of Loreto, department in the Amazon region)		XX
September 2010	-Second cultural platform AmoAmazonía in Lima (all month along): raising awareness, support and training about issues impacting the Amazon and its indigenous peoples (documental videos, art, panels and forums, pacific demonstrations, photography records, etc). -First decentralized cultural platform Amo Amazonia in Datem city, department of Loreto.		XX
October 2010	First decentralized cultural platform Amo Amazonia in Tarapoto city, department of San Martin.		XX
December 2010	First decentralized cultural platform Amo Amazonia in Puerto Maldonado city- department of Madre de Dios.		XX

I. The Latin American Indigenous Rights Movement in the Literature

In this section, I will analyze relevant literature on the subject of Latin American indigenous movements in order to establish how the recent mobilizations in Peru are distinctive from what has been previously seen. Since the 1960s, scholars focused on Latin America given the increasing level of mobilizations against governmental authorities. Based on a historical-structural perspective, scholars consider that the pattern of social movements in Latin America is contingent on historical circumstances shaping "social structures, local social arrangements, and cultural traditions" (Eckstein 2001, 3).

The Latin American indigenous rights movement emerged as a revolutionary movement against oppressive socio-political structures. The first wave of these

mobilizations of the first half of 20th century was mainly led by Andean indigenous peasants who sought greater political participation and labor rights. At this stage, the indigenous movement was class-based and did not involve matters of racial discrimination and exclusion (Eckstein 2001, 385; Brysk 2000, 8). During the 1930s, many Latin American states adopted the ideology of “indigenismo”, which promoted the preservation of indigenous cultures, while attempting to “modernize” indigenous social and economic systems with paternalistic reforms (Van Cott 2007, 129). Beginning in the 1970s, the second wave of this movement arose. This has been characterized by local movements in both the highland and the rainforest that maintain a great sense of collectivism and community. It has also maintained high levels of transnational linkages. Indigenous organizations’ social capital and networks are facilitated by their shared symbolic understandings (cultural capital) and strong connection to their lands and natural resources (Perreault 2003, 345). These movements has sought to improve their socio-economic conditions, while also pursuing political influence for the purpose of achieving more national level recognition of indigenous rights and cultural practices (Brysk 2000, 33; Perreault 2003, 328).

The literature has sought to understand the roots of this movement. In the 1970s, paternalistic military regimes provoked mobilization by blocking channels for representation and self-determination (Van Cott 2007, 129). Since the 1980s, the main drivers have been the negative effects of neoliberal free-market projects and structural adjustment programs in these countries. These new struggles have intended to construct a more inclusive and fair concept of citizenship, one that includes the marginalized indigenous peoples (Yashar 1998, 31). Yet, globalization of information and ideas and

increasing interconnectedness among issue advocates and knowledge processors advanced the movement (Brysk 2000, 12). In sum, its emergence is the product of the collision of the “tribal villages” with the power of states, the profitable character of the global market, and the principled ideas and values of the global civil society (Brysk 2000, 27).

Nevertheless, the major focus in the literature has been to understand the effectiveness of the movement and the strategies and conditions that made possible the attainment of its goals. Brysk 2000 argues that identity-based politics and internationalization are the main forces behind the success of indigenous movements. The use of identity-based and persuasion politics has helped them to empower members of the movement, raise public consciousness, and change political institutions and behavior (Brysk 2000, 36). Tribal affiliated communities that extend throughout the Amazon region do not identify with the definition of “citizen” within their countries. Rather, they stress their ethnic identity and join with other ethnically similar groups, giving origin to the Amazonian pan-indigenous movement. In addition, internationalization has offered indigenous peoples transnational alliances, resources, and leverage to strengthen the impact of the movement (Brysk 2000, 37). For instance, the use of identity politics and transnational relations has allowed Ecuador’s indigenous groups to have “voice, space, and recognition” within national politics. The Movimiento Pachakutic (Indigenous political party) congressional bloc and CONAIE (Amazonian peoples federation) have transformed the state to safeguard their culture and collective rights (Brysk 200, 40).

Additionally, Keck and Sikkink 1998 argue that the emergence and development of Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) in favor of indigenous rights is a key factor. TANs advocate for social causes and promote norms and ideas globally. They work

beyond domestic boundaries and connect the international arena with individuals and groups within states to affect states policies and actions (known as the “boomerang pattern”). For example, since 1984, Amazonian indigenous federations from the nine Amazon region countries have networked throughout the Amazon Basin Federation COICA (Coordinadora Indígena de la Cuenca Amazónica) with other organizations. NGOs such as Rainforest Action Network and World Wildlife Fund have joined with IGOs such as the UN and the ILO to pressure states in support of COICA.

In sum, the Latin American indigenous movement can be defined in terms of three aspects: the actors are transnational indigenous peoples, the purpose is to defend their ethnic identity and rights, and the strategic actions they used are effectively supported by international networks (Brysk 2000, 33; Van Cott 2007, 140).

Beginning in 2006, a new form of social mobilization emerged in Peru: urban demonstrations by culturally Hispanic people on behalf of Amazonian indigenous peoples (Table 1). These and the indigenous movement have the common purpose of advocating for the improvement of indigenous peoples’ conditions and rights. Nevertheless, within the study of indigenous movements and other social movements in the region, these demonstrations represent a new phenomenon. First, it has been emphasized the role of identity politics in indigenous mobilizations and other self-interested movements. Yet, in this case, we are seeing non-indigenous individuals from the urban zones looking after the needs of Amazonian natives. Secondly, indigenous peoples have taken advantage of their cultural capital to strengthen the movement’s social capital. Conversely, urban residents do not possess the cultural values, social dynamics and connection to nature that Amazonians share, but still, they have selflessly engaged in the movement. Moreover,

internationalization was proposed as a crucial element for the movement's success. Indigenous peoples have successfully interacted with global agents from advanced wealthy democracies that promote non-materialistic movements worldwide. But, the new demonstrations represent altruistic protests on behalf of indigenous coming from within the national civil society, mainly in urban regions. As a result, we can say that social movements characteristic of democracies in the developing world have appeared on the Latin American scene in the form of non-indigenous civil society actors acting in solidarity with the indigenous movement.

Since the 1980s, analysts of social movements have characterized recent mobilizations as "new" because these seek to redefine conventional political institutions and concepts of citizenship by favoring heterogeneous collections of groups and values (Stahler-Sholk et al. 2007, 7). These support horizontal and participatory decision-making processes and promote solidarity with social causes based on shared subjective identities such as race, gender, religion, and others. Urban demonstrations observed in Peru in the last years support these goals, but for the benefit of people other than movement participants. How then, can we explain these altruistic pro-indigenous mobilizations by urban non-indigenous people? After having reviewed several theoretical approaches about the appearance, development and impact of the indigenous social movement in Latin America, this will be the task of this work.

II. Toward explaining a new social movement in Latin America

Individuals and groups within the national society have displayed diverse relationships with indigenous peoples. For the most, political and economic elites have privileged their

interests over the basic needs of native communities and disregarded their demands. Religious missionaries, academic researchers and non-profit organizations have provided them with resources and advocated on their behalf. However, growing levels of solidarity with social problems of Amazonian communities has become visible in the entire national society. This work focuses on mobilizations performed by national civil society actors voicing indigenous peoples' demands, adding to the discussion about the impact of the indigenous movement in Latin American politics. Yet, this is a preliminary qualitative investigation that will allow me to generate hypotheses about such mobilizations by focusing on a particular case study and using process-tracing methods. This exploratory work assesses the occurrence of urban protests supporting Amazonian indigenous demands in Peru over the period 1990-2010.

Primarily, this research aims to understand the determinants of the emergence of the mobilizations carried out by social organizations, institutions, and residents of economic and political urban centers in support of indigenous issues, as opposed to protests led primarily by indigenous peoples. I define the term "mobilization" as public collective actions of protest, support and solidarity, including marches, strikes, road blockages and cultural events promoting awareness. In Peru, the main urban centers are mostly placed in the coastal geographic region (Figure 2). Most of the powerful and wealthy groups reside in the urban areas, which concentrate the main political and economic institutions, services and resources. Still, poor Amazonian indigenous bear disproportionate share of social and environmental harm from extractive activities in the rainforest (Widener 2009,51). Also, most of the urban population is ethnically "mestizo", speaks Spanish, and typically does not self-identify with indigenous cultures. "Mestizo" people are descendants of the

blending of a Spanish person with an Andean indigenous or an Amazonian native. The two predominant races in the mestiza population are Andean indigenous and Spanish; thus, a few mestizos that identify with their native ancestries feel more proximate to Andean indigenous peoples than to Amazonian ones. As a complementary research question, I will analyze initial effects of such mobilizations on the responses of different public institutions toward indigenous demands. Effects should concentrate in the implementation of a consultation process for the participation of Amazonians in extractive projects and recognition of their rights.

Table 1 indicates that since 2006, and especially since the Bagua clashes, several urban mobilizations have taken place to support Amazonian peoples' demands. These pro-indigenous protests appear to be altruistic with no material interests at stake for the urban protesters. In order to identify the occurrence, characteristics and evolution of urban protests favoring Amazonian indigenous affairs, I used a protest event analysis built on print media sources (Hochstetler 2006, 404). The data is collected from the Latin American Monitoring Centre service from the Latin American Newsletters (LatinNews) database, which provides information on the most relevant political and economic affairs of Latin American countries, including protest and mobilization events, from 1967 to present (LatinNews: About Us). The Monitoring Centre has links to all previously published LatinNews articles on a country-by-country basis, but the most frequent types of reporting are LatinNews Daily and Latin American Weekly Report (LatinNews: Monitoring Center). Also, as complementary resources, I have consulted websites of national press such as *El Comercio* and *Perú21*; monthly electronic reports on social conflicts prepared by La Defensoría del Pueblo since 2004; annual reports from NGOs Amazon Watch and Earth

Rights International; and official documents posted in the indigenous federations' websites. These sources provide information about social protests, indentifying the place and time of the events and the actors that participated. This enables me to distinguish protests carried out by Amazonian indigenous peoples themselves from mobilizations led by civil society urban members (Table 1).

Growing numbers of individuals and organizations from Latin America are actively participating in emerging global and regional civil society processes such as issue conferences on environment, human rights, and women (Friedman et al. 2001, 32). The recent pro-indigenous urban mobilizations reflect the increase in civic engagement levels in the region. But, this systematic trend cannot explain this type of mobilization. In the following section, I suggest that two different kinds of factors determine the growing support from the urban civil society to Amazonian indigenous. First, a group of factors are responsible of building altruistic social movements in the developing world by facilitating the fundamental conditions needed for selfless civil society activism; for the purpose of this study, these will be called conditioning factors. Second, the other group of factors, named triggering factors, sparks the actual protests. Both factors combined determine the emergence of pro-indigenous urban mobilizations in Peru (See Figure 3).

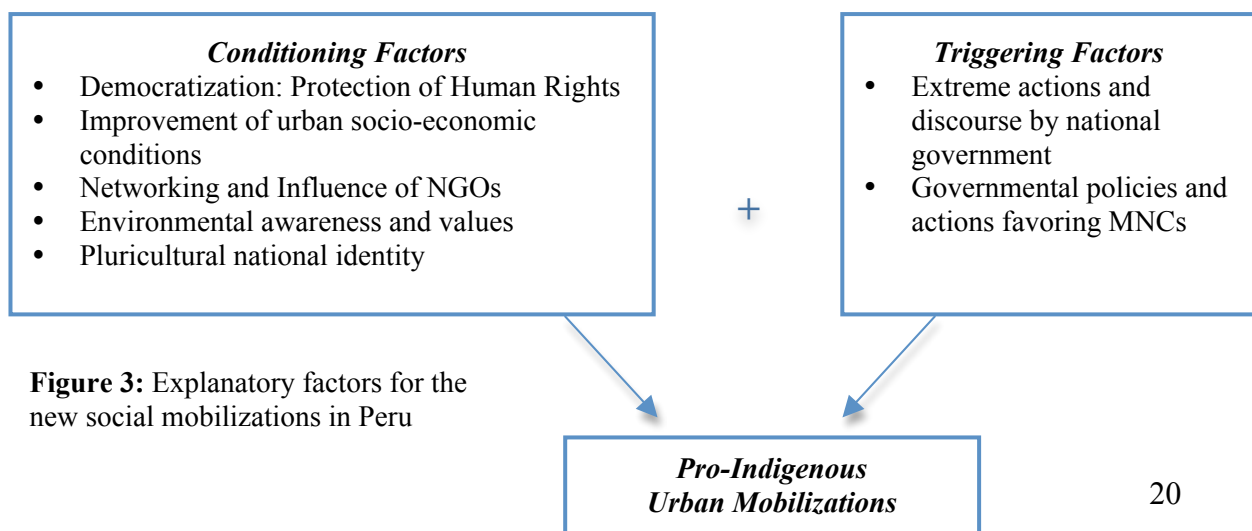


Figure 3: Explanatory factors for the new social mobilizations in Peru

1. Conditioning Factors: Building Altruistic Social Movements in Latin America

In order to explain the new social phenomenon, this study considers certain primary conditions that have prepared the terrain for the emergence of pro-indigenous urban protests in Peru by creating a positive environment of civil society values, sense of social responsibility and mobilization potential. Before the outbreak of these mobilizations, Peru underwent five important political and socio-economic transformations that have impacted the dynamics of national civil society. Some of these changes started even before the period under study.

1.1 Democratization: Protection of Human Rights

I propose that rising democratization levels and effective human rights conditions in Peru will likely favor the occurrence of these protests. Democratization enhances the protection of human rights and thus conditions for political tolerance. More democratic regimes enable the formation and advancement of social movements because they empower citizens through contested elections and are more likely to protect political rights (Tilly and Wood 2009, 13). However, the “transition-to-democracy” literature, argued that the growth of social movements in Latin America was the product of the political repression by bureaucratic and military authoritarian regimes and predicted this trend to reverse with the return to electoral democracy (qtd. in Stahler-Sholk et al. 2007, 5). Contrary to this, the democratization of Latin American countries coincided with an increase in social movements, reflecting greater tolerance and receptivity to people channeling claims through social movements. In fact, the development of social movements has been mainly associated with an effective protection of human rights. In a context of democratization, social movements have flourished and increased when regimes

succeeded in protecting specific civil and political rights: the right to assembly that enables social movements' organization and functioning; the right to association that allows the formation of special-purpose organizations and crosscutting coalitions; and freedom of speech that enables public making of claims and opinions in meetings, protests, and media (Tilly and Wood 2009, 54). Participants of protests would feel more secure to mobilize if they believed that the government would not violate their rights.

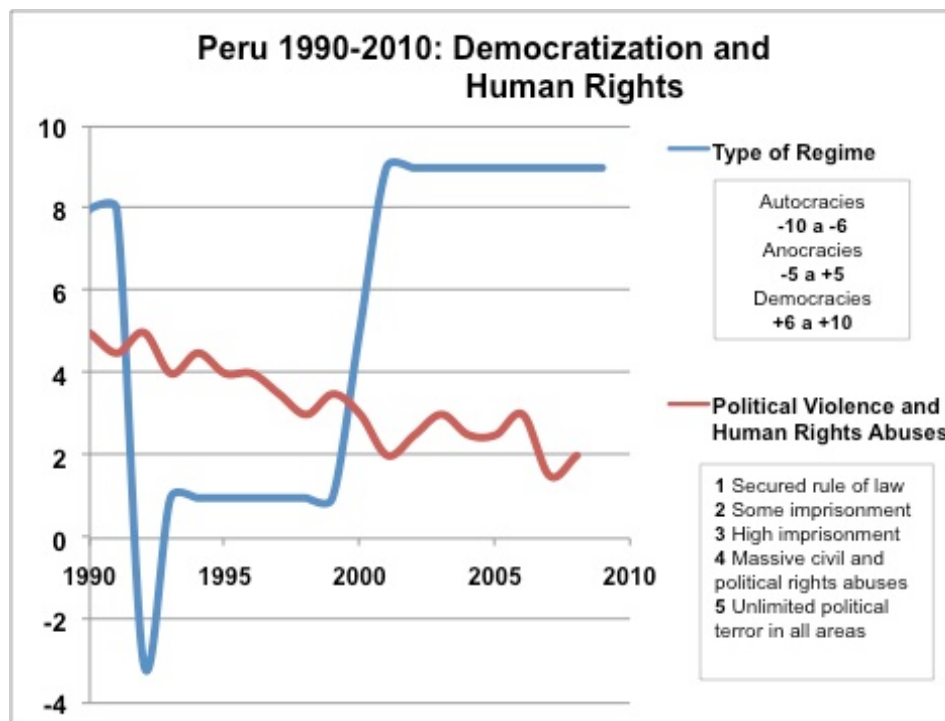


Figure 4: Democratization and Protection of Human Rights.

As expected, over the last decade, Peru has experienced a consistent progress in democratization levels, facilitating the occurrence of urban protests during the last 5 years. For the last century, Peru experienced different periods and levels of democratization, interrupted by years of authoritarian regimes or anocracies. To measure regime type, I have used public data from the Polity IV project, which ranks the government type of all

countries in the world for the period 1985-2009² (Marshall and Jagers 2009). As observed in Figure 4 in regard to the trends for type of regime, during the first ten years of the period 1990-2010, Peru's national government was a mixed regime (anocracy) that was more authoritarian during the early 1990s and less so for the last five years.

The year of 1980 marked the beginning of a two-decade era of Peru's internal armed conflict with massive human rights violations, starting with the Shining Path (SP) insurgency and developing into governmental political violence and internal terrorism. Alan García's first government (1985-90) was democratically elected and managed the insurgency while respecting human rights; but during the last years, it resorted to techniques of violence and terror against the SP. In 1990, Alberto Fujimori became president; two years later, he dissolved the congress and concentrated power in the executive with the backing of the armed force and economic elites. He instituted a new counterinsurgency strategy using the Intelligence Service and armed forces to combat terrorists while perpetrating massive human rights violations in rural areas and in urban collective centers (universities, unions, community organizations, church, media). In November 2000 the public exposure of an extensive network of corruption at the highest levels of government and the condemnation from civil society led to his self-imposed exile in Japan.

The fall of the Fujimori regime was followed by judicial and congressional investigations of corruption and human rights abuses. Fujimori had traveled from Japan to Chile apparently intending to return to Peru and try for a political comeback, but he was

² The Polity Score captures a three-part regime categorization: autocracies (-10 to -6), anocracies (-5 to +5), and democracies (+6 to +10).

arrested and Chilean Supreme Courts approved his extradition to Peru. The criminal investigations led to a sentence of imprisonment for 25 years for the ex-president and multiple trials for perpetrators at other levels. Since then and for the first two years of this decade, Figure 4 shows a steady increase, reflecting the return to democratization. From the last part of 2001 to 2009, Peru's government has been considered a fairly strong democracy. A transitory government was put in place in 2000; in July 2001, Alejandro Toledo was democratically elected and remained in government for 5 years. Since 2006, Alan García has presided over a second administration and maintained a fairly democratic environment for the majority of Peruvians. However, García's repressive campaign against specific groups such as human rights activists of former guerrilla members, union members, and indigenous groups weakens in some extent the democratic model he claimed to represent.

Democratization favors civil liberties, but it does not guarantee them (Mainwaring 2001, 56). Consequently, I have separately measured the status of human rights in the country using data from the Political Terror Scale (PTS) project, which reports overall levels of political violence and physical integrity rights abuses³ (Gibney, Cornett, and Wood 2008). Figure 4 shows the levels of political violence and human rights abuses during these twenty years. The general trend reflects a constant decrease in the level of political rights abuses, reaching relative effective protection of human rights by the end of this period. During the first 5 years of the 1990s, under the first authoritarian term of ex-president Fujimori, the country experienced the highest levels of political terror and

³ The PTS measures political violence and terror that a country experiences during a given year based on a 5-level terror scale with 1 meaning that there is a secure rule of law with no arbitrary imprisonments and 5 meaning that unlimited political terror has affected the whole population.

citizens' political rights were widely and intensively violated. According to Amnesty International and the U.S. State Department, during this period, the state went from committing political rights abuses towards a large population, including murder, disappearance, and torture of political activists, to unlimited terror extended to the whole population (Gibney et al. 2008).

In the following five years, levels decreased such that abuses were generally limited to politically motivated imprisonment and detention for political views. Later, in 2000, with the transitory government of Valentín Paniagua, the political rights guarantees became more respected and only a limited amount of imprisonment for nonviolent political activity was reported. Since 2001 these levels have decreased substantially. Excepting two short periods of increased detentions due to political scandals during Toledo's government and first year of García's second term, the country has achieved a state of relatively secure rule of law and low rates of political imprisonment in the last 10 years. In sum, urban citizens have been able to get involved in pro-indigenous mobilizations without significant concerns about risks to their lives or liberty as the more democratic government has been more tolerant and open to societal protest during the last decade.

1.2. Socio-Economic Conditions: Urban Trends

I suggest that better socio-economic levels in urban centers provide a favorable context for the occurrence of altruistic demonstrations. The basic assumption here is that individuals primarily mobilize against political authorities when their own interests and needs or the ones of their family are at stake such as food, housing, labor, education and health. In developing nations, where basic needs of the majority of the population are not adequately covered, a materialistic value system – emphasizing personal economic and

physical security – is prominent in the public (Inglehart 1995, 57). Research suggests that selfless concerns, which are related to a post-materialistic value system – emphasizing autonomy, self-expression, and quality of life –, could come only after economic needs are met (qtd. in Hochstetler 2000, 752). Under this assumption, some have proposed to bring materialistic concerns of people closer to altruistic or non-materialistic issues (Shellenberger and Nordhaus 2004). For instance, building a coalition of environmental, labor, business, and community allies whose interests in economic development are aligned with strong action on global warming would gain real supporters for the environmental movement (Shellenberger and Nordhaus 2004). In fact, in advanced industrial societies, better economic levels have led to a gradual shift from materialistic values toward post-materialistic preferences (Inglehart 1995, 62). Better socio-economic conditions provide stability and security in life, which gives more flexibility in the use of time and resources to support causes and engage in civil society activities.

As expected, materialistic concerns are one of the most important, if not the main, priorities for the Peruvian public. The fifth wave of the World Values Survey performed in 2006 by Instituto de Opinión Pública de la PUCP (IOP) assessed what value system was major in Peruvians (World Value Survey online database: Peru 2006). Based on a series of questions, 24% of the respondents were classified as materialistic, prioritizing personal economic security over anything, while 17.7% were considered post-materialists. For the 58.9% left, materialistic concerns were as much important as post-materialistic concerns (considered mixed), but the majority of them reported to have their basic needs fairly covered. In this way, the improvement of socio-economic conditions has allowed urban residents to secure their materialistic concerns to a certain extent.

Socio-economic conditions in Peru for the period under study are illustrated in Figure 5. The rise of national socio-economic indicators reflects a greater growth for urban centers due to fiscal centralization dynamics. Multiple indicators show steady improvement since 2000, which accelerates over the last 3 years. Comparing these trends with the timing and occurrence of urban mobilizations favoring Amazonian demands supports the hypothesis that improvement of socio-economic conditions of urban residents can allow them to participate more in altruistic civil society processes. First, economic growth at the national level was measured by using the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita growth data⁴ from the Inter-American Development Bank Governance indicators database (DataGov Peru). During the 1990s, the curve of GDP growth per capita at the national level in percentage fluctuates between periods of increase and decrease. This unstable economic situation was unfavorable for investment (INEI website). However, since 2000, aggregate GDP per capita has risen consistently, and even more rapidly over the last 5 years.

Second, data about urban population below the poverty line (poverty headcount ratios at urban poverty line) was obtained from two different electronic sources: DataGov and INEI (National Institute of Statistics of Peru)⁵. Consistent with aggregate growth, the percentage of the urban population living below the national urban poverty line has decreased, moving from 46.1% in 1994 to 42% in 2001 and dropping rapidly from 36.8% in 2005 to 21.1% in 2009. The efforts to reduce the poverty gap have been greater in urban

⁴ This indicator is the annual percentage growth of GDP based on constant local currency and divided by midyear population.

⁵ DataGov provided information for 1994-1997 and the INEI presented data for 2001-2009.

areas (INEI Website). Third, I collected information about human development⁶ for 1990-2007 (DataGov Peru). The human development index curve shows some improvement in health, education, and living standards (DataGov Peru). Based on a scale of 0 to 1 with higher values indicating higher levels of human development, this curve moves from 0.7 in 1990, through 0.76 in 2003, to 0.8 in 2007, reflecting greatest improvements in urban areas. Overall, improved socio-economic conditions in Peru over the five to ten years have provided a better quality of life, stability and security to urban residents, enabling them to devote more time supporting altruistic pro-indigenous mobilizations.

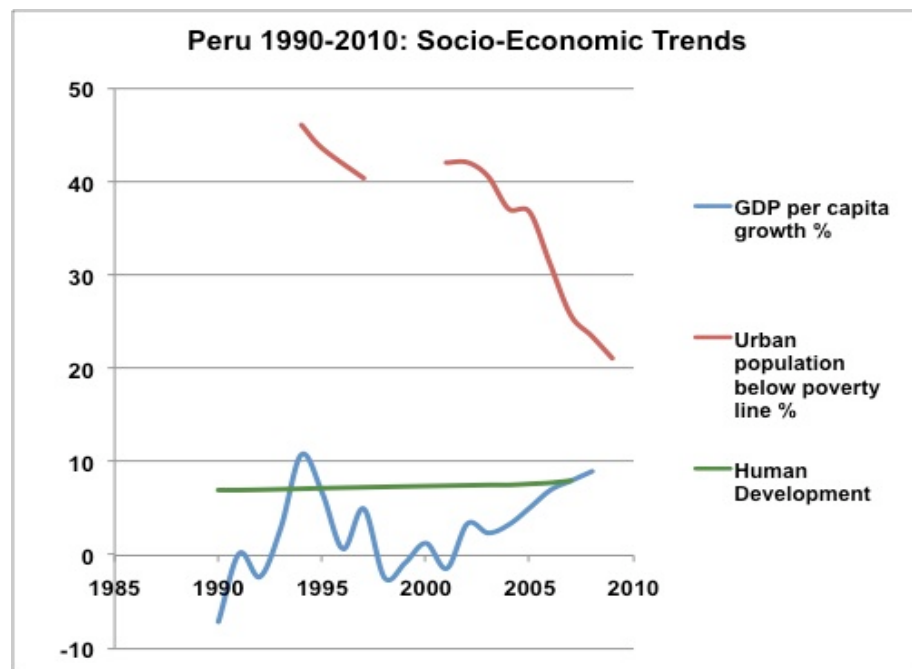


Figure 5: Socio-economic Conditions: National and Urban Trends.

⁶ This indicator measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions: a long and healthy life (life expectancy at birth), education (adult literacy rate and the combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools), and a decent standard of living (GDP per capita in purchasing power parity US dollars)

1.3. Networking and Influence of NGOs

I suggest that the networking and influential role of national and international NGOs can contribute to the appearance of these mobilizations. The growing network between international and domestic NGOs makes it easier for social movements to spread nationwide. Over the last decades, social movement has succeeded partly because of professional political organizers, brokers, and partly autonomous NGOs that took the lead in promoting and planning coalition-building and public performances to strengthen these movements (Tilly and Wood 2009, 13). Civil society mobilizations depend deeply “on political entrepreneurs for their scale, durability, and effectiveness” (Tilly and Wood 2009, 13). Dense networks between domestic and international NGOs offer financial, logistic, and human resources and provide communication channels, information and training for activists. All this allows them to support altruistic mobilizations, engaging people through persuasion and awareness.

Environmental NGOs have a crucial impact on raising support for Amazonian indigenous movements in Peru. The relationship between pro-environmental groups and indigenous communities and organizations has evolved from competition to strategic collaboration (Brysk 2000, 230; Guadalupe-Rodriguez 2000, 127). In 1989 the Amazon basin confederation COICA institutionalized the alliance with the environmentalism movement and formed a permanent working group with several environmental NGOs; in the same manner, the agenda of many sectors of the environmentalist movement has been transformed to incorporate social and cultural concerns of indigenous peoples (Brysk 200, 233). Environmental TANs concerned about tropical forest issues in Brazil and Ecuador changed the tone of the debate about environmental degradation and conservation to

integrate the human rights of indigenous groups that are violated in intensive extractive activities (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 161). Yet, “indigenist environmentalists” are not in all cases new social actors: Rain Forest Action has maintained close relationships for several years with Latin American indigenous organizations and serves as a network for local and international groups advocating for indigenous environmental and social issues (Brysk 2000, 230).

As expected, NGO networks have been especially active in the last 2-3 years and are likely to have been a factor in urban pro-indigenous mobilizations. Their actions have positively influenced the development of civil society values concerning this subject in urban zones. The analysis of NGOs networking has been entirely qualitative, using the protest event sources; the presence of NGOs dealing with indigenous issues in Peru can be traced from the institutions’ websites and annual reports. I was not able to conduct field research to obtain more detailed accounts of NGOs’ specific activities, so the number of NGOs reported as participants of these events will serve here as a proxy for the actual density of NGO networks. Since 2008, international NGOs such as Amazon Watch, Rainforest Action Network, Earth Rights International, World Wild Fund, Human Rights Watch, Wildlife Conservation Society, Articulation Regional Amazónica, AVINA, Rainforest Expeditions, 11.11.11 South, and IBIS South America and national NGOs such as Shinai, Instituto del Bien Común, AmoAmazonía, Foro Etnobiológico Perú, and Forum Solidaridad Perú have formed effective networks. They have been organizing cultural events, fund-raising activities, presentation and discussion panels, conferences, etc. and holding official meetings in main Peruvian cities (AmoAmazonía Website). For instance, these NGOs along with some IGOs (Oxfam and UNFICEF) have organized, participated

and sponsored the 2009 and 2010 AmoAmazonía cultural platforms in Lima and other important cities – Iquitos, Puerto Maldonado, Tarapoto (See Figure 6).

Furthermore, there is a consistency between the actions and members’ declarations of NGOs and the discourse of urban protests. The US-based NGO Amazon Watch called on US president Obama to raise the issue of indigenous rights during a meeting with Peru’s president García (LatinNews, Weekly Report, WR-10-22). On June 1st 2010, a group of protestors coming from Lima and American supporters chained themselves to the US White House to call attention to García’s mishandling of Bagua events and demand respect for indigenous rights (LatinNews, Daily Report, June 9th, 2010).



Human Flag of “Amo Amazonía”



Poster of AmoAmazonía Cultural Platform



Street Demonstrations



Discussion Panel: Amazonian Indigenous Rights

Figure 6: Images of different activities from the AmoAmazonía cultural platform. Source: Amo Amazonía organization website (AmoAmazonía.org)

1.4. Environmental Awareness and Values

I propose that the spreading of post-materialistic environmental values and the increasing awareness among urban people of the value of protecting Peru's natural ecosystems will likely contribute to altruistic mobilizations supporting Amazonians' socio-environmental concerns. Environmental awareness in Latin America has increased during the last decades. Since the UN Earth Summit of 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, local, national, and transnational social movements have shaped Latin American environmental politics (Jacobs 2002, 64). Significant support for environmental protection has emerged in countries with relatively severe objective environmental issues such as high levels of air pollution, as well as in societies with subjective post-materialistic values (Inglehart 1995, 57). Many low-income developing countries that maintain a materialistic value system happen to suffer severe environmental problems negatively affecting economic activities, basic sanitary conditions, and food supply. Environmental conditions are of important concern for some groups within the main urban centers of Peru due to their impact on health and the economy; both of these affect urban residents at a personal level. However, intensive exploitation in the Amazon per se does not impose direct nor significant environmental threats to urban residents. Still, several societal groups, including students, academics and social organizations have supported Amazon's environmental protection.

As predicted, public concern over environmental issues has increased in general for the period 1990-2010, with the greatest changes in the last decade⁷. A 47-nation survey found that the percentage of Peruvians citing pollution and environmental problems as a

⁷ For this factor, I used the same protest event sources and public opinion surveys from international and Peruvian public opinion research institutions.

top global threat increased from 37% in 2002 to 55% in 2007 (The Pew Global Attitudes Project 2007, 2). In a Grupo de Opinión Pública 2005 poll, 32.8% of urban participants reported that they were very informed or informed about the problematic of the environment; yet, 90.4% of them indicated being highly or very concerned about environmental conditions in Peru and more than 60% felt that both the population and the government were the main responsible parties for environmental degradation (Grupo de Opinión Publica de la Universidad de Lima 2005, 2-3). A 2006 survey delivered comparable results, with 39% of urban respondents claiming to be informed about the environment; of these, 92% favored action to deal with climate change, including 69% who said they support “doing something now even if it involves significant costs” (World Public Opinion and The Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2006, 5).

Additionally, a comparison between surveys in 2007, 2008 and 2009 in Lima shows that Lima citizens’ environmental concerns and civic participation has grown significantly over the last few years (IOP Jun 2009: Medio Ambiente). In 2008, 87% of the participants from different socio-economic levels deemed environmental conditions of both the city and the country to be highly important, while in 2009, 90% reported being highly concerned about these issues. In both surveys, these respondents agreed that issues such as water and air pollution, climate change, and ecological destruction were major threats in Peru. Furthermore, when asked about how informed they felt about environmental problems in Peru, 51% reported being very informed/informed in 2007, increasing to 60% in 2009. Connected to this aspect, the percentage of respondents that indicated having received some environmental conservation information in the last 6 months increased from 42% in 2008 to 53% in 2009. More importantly, whereas 18% of respondents in the poll in

2008 claimed to have participated in an environment-related activity in the last 6 months, 30% did so in 2009. When asked about the existence of any environmental program or activity in their local areas (districts), the proportion of people reporting this changed from 14% in 2007 to 28% in 2009. Last, a 2010 survey found participants skeptical about the mining, oil, and gas activities in the Amazon. Nineteen percent supported major hydrocarbon projects, whereas 48% indicated that the state should instead promote major environmental conservation projects (IOP Nov 2009).

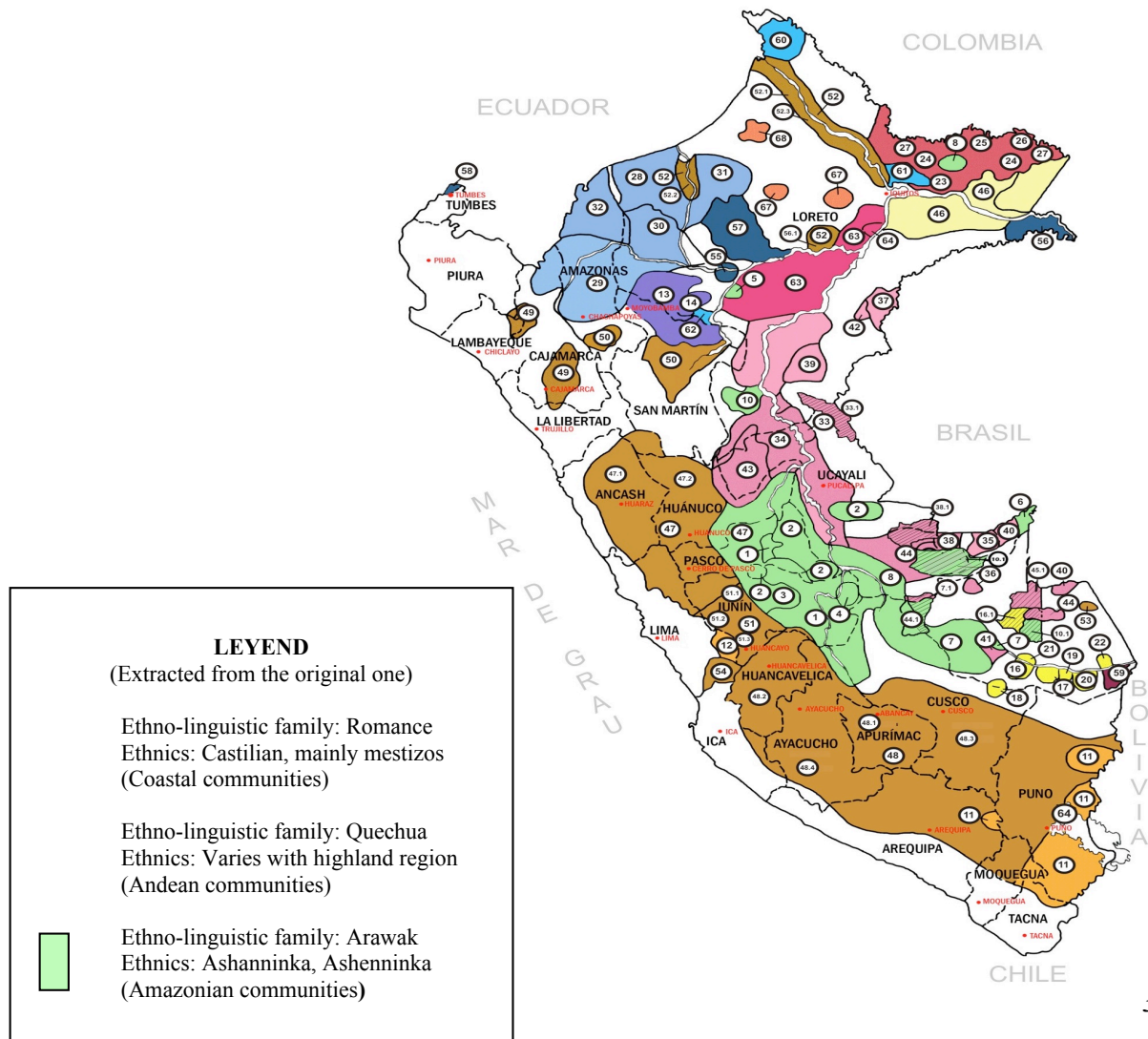
Urban residents were increasingly willing to bring formal complaints about environmental issues to the Human Rights Ombudsman Office during 1999-2009. In fact, a majority of urban claims involved violation of rights connected to environmental quality (Defensoría del Pueblo 2010, 151). Even if this last information does not show the concern of urban residents for environmental conditions in Amazon indigenous communities, it reflects the perceptions of the community with respect to the environment in general.

1.5. Pluricultural National Identity

I propose that the emergence of a pluricultural national identity represents a final likely conditioning factor. A pluricultural nation is one that gives social recognition to the distinctive existing cultures and enhances their cohabiting within the same territory (INDEPA 2010, 109). Peru is a nation with diverse cultures and ethnics, including mestizos, Andean indigenous, Amazonian natives, Afro-Peruvians and smaller groups of whites, Asian-Peruvians, among others (Figure 7). Yet, the majority of urban residents is mestizo and identifies with the “criolla” culture, which represents the traditions of Hispanic descendants of Spanish that established in the coast. Societal and state discrimination against indigenous and African-Peruvians is one of the greatest social

conflicts in Peru. Seventy nine percent of the victims during the political violence of 1989-2000 were peasant indigenous from the highlands and 75% of the mortal victims spoke Quechua or other native language (CVR Website). In a 2008 survey, while only 9% of respondents said that the human rights of indigenous peoples are “always/almost always respected”; 38% said so for mestizos’ rights; and 71%, for whites’ rights (IOP Jun 2009: Inclusión e Igualdad de Oportunidades). The concept “pueblos ajenos” describes this two-way reality of Amazonian indigenous: they alienate themselves from the society and do not identify as Peruvian citizens, but at the same time, they have been excluded by other Peruvians and by the government.

Figure 7: Ethno linguistic map of Peru. Source: Mapa Etno-lingüístico del Perú 2010 (propuesta) INDEPA



I suggest that pluricultural society, one that promotes social justice and inclusion of minority groups, will favor altruistic mobilizations. Other social movements have embraced the idea of pluriculturalism, showing solidarity among social actors. The Mexican Zapatista movement was mainly composed of indigenous; but many Hispanic leaders and Mexican mestizos that opposed neoliberalism joined their indigenous compatriots to protest against the government (Brysk 2000, 4). Also, in Bolivia, recent successful protests were characterized by the formation of a cross-class, cross-ethnic, cross-regional, and cross-generational collective identity (Arce and Rice 2009, 90).

As expected, evidence shows that for the last ten years, efforts to construct a pluricultural national identity have been paving the way for these pro-indigenous mobilizations⁸. The creation of a pluricultural Peruvian nation has been supported by specific projects developed from public and private institutions. For instance, the Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo de Pueblos Andinos, Amazónicos y Afro-peruanos (INDEPA) – National Institute of Development of Andean, Amazonian and Afro-Peruvian Peoples – has designed and implemented strategies for social inclusion and the recognition of a pluricultural nation under an intercultural paradigm. An intercultural approach acknowledges the right to diversity, to different forms of organization, relationships, visions of the world, and the valuing of different ancestral practices; it implies dialogue and interaction of different ethnic and cultural groups coexisting in relations of mutual respect, acceptance and tolerance (INDEPA 2010, 104). The INDEPA acknowledged

⁸ I examined this factor with same protest event sources. Besides reporting occurrence of protests, these sources identify important political events, identify the actors involved and provide examples of discourse. I also used public opinion surveys.

major contributions from the Grupo de Gestión Intercultural para el Manejo de Microcuencas, an inter-disciplinary group of professionals that developed a 2001 project on interculturalism in the Andean region with the sponsorship of the World Bank, as well as from Dr. Maria Heise's research for PROEBI, a program sponsored by the European Union and the Peruvian government to strengthen the preparation of teachers in bilingual and intercultural education (INDEPA 2010, 32).

Similarly, academic centers such as the Universidad Católica del Perú have supported social inclusion community projects and academic research on the subject. Additionally, Peru started to officially recognize cultural differences in the Constitution, laws and guidelines of public institutions in the 80s, giving some room for indigenous peoples legal and judicial systems and “derecho consuetudinario” (customary laws) within the limits of the constitutional principles (INDEPA 2010, 49). For instance Andean indigenous peoples have established community-based peasant associations known as “rondas campesinas” to function as local centers for governmental, judicial and security matters. These have effectively solved cases of cattle rustling while avoiding violent punishments used in the past by these communities.

These initiatives have led to some changes in civil society discourse. During demonstrations in June 2009 and October 2009, for example, urban participants chanted “Todos Somos Indigenas” (We are all indigenous) and during the Jornada Nacional de Lucha on June 2009, university students chanted “Soy awajun, andino, negro, indio, marxista, chino, quechuablante (...) soy diferente. Alan matame” (I am Awajun, Andean, black, Indian, Marxist, Chinese, Quechua speaker (...) I am different. Alan, kill me), acknowledging the cultural diversity of the country and protesting against existing

discrimination patterns (AIDASEP Website: News June 2009). Furthermore, leaders of urban social organizations and groups that participated in these mobilizations since 2006 have stated to the media their support for the recognition of Peru as a “pluricultural nation” (*El Comercio* Website, 5th June, 2010). Additionally, during the celebration for the anniversary of the independence of Peru (July 28th and 29th), the media and important private companies included for the first time in their marketing campaigns music, dances, gastronomic samples, and cultural expressions from Andean and Amazonian indigenous origin, as compared to the typical promotion of the criolla culture (Montoya Rojas 2009). In sum, it is likely that the construction of a pluricultural national identity in Peru have brought urban mestizo and white residents closer to excluded ethnic groups.

2. Triggering factors: catalyzing altruistic social movements in Peru

As explained, long-term conditioning factors have set the potential for the emergence of altruistic societal protests in Peru. On the other hand, some specific events interconnected to Amazonian indigenous issues have contributed to their occurrence in a short-term basis. These can be particular actions, policies, or conduct of governmental officials; lack of responsiveness and accountability from authorities or powerful groups; rapid enhancement of inequality and injustice; among others. These triggers have taken place within the last three years and received large national media and public attention, sparking off reactive protests. For most of the urban protest events, these factors are represented as the common main reasoning behind the mobilizations. For the case of Peru, I propose two major triggering factors, which were examined by using the same protest event sources. Most of the Latin American Monitoring Centre news reports present “timely and concise risk-oriented briefing” (Hochstetler 2006, 404) and state directly the aim of the

protest (LatinNews: About Us). Although these and the other complementary resources do not state the reasons for which individuals take to the streets, they provide assessments by journalists on the scene regarding the most likely drivers.

2.1. *Extreme Actions and Discourse by National Government*

I suggest that extreme actions and discourse by the government towards indigenous groups can catalyze solidarity within urban civil society in a short term. Society is expected to perceive social injustice and arbitrary political actions against a specific group as a threat to citizens' political rights and civil liberties. As a result, these threats can motivate social mobilization. Also, severe governmental measures to calm societal protest can generate a stronger response from civil society, reinforcing collective action based on multiple alliances. For instance, during the last three decades, some presidents facing street-based protests in South America have resorted to only minimal negotiations before sending in police or military forces to clear streets; these unnecessarily violent actions have reinforced support from other civil society actors and help to the success of the mobilizations for presidential falls (Hochtetler 2006, 411).

As proposed, the Peruvian government took extreme actions and exerted a violent repression against indigenous peoples. After initial Amazonian protests took place in June 2008, president García prepared a series of three articles published on *El Comercio* on the issue of Amazonian indigenous peoples' opposition to hydrocarbons exploitation. These articles helped to instigate the Bagua protests. In the first article, titled "El síndrome del perro del hortelano" (The syndrome of the dog in the manger), Garcia identified indigenous peoples as "the dog in the manger" because they are surrounded by natural resources that they cannot exploit, but at the same time, do not allow others to. For him,

Amazonians fighting against oil development prevent Peruvians from coming out of poverty (*El Comercio* Website, 28th Oct, 2008). Second, in “Receta para acabar con el perro del hortelano” (Prescription for ending the dog in the manger), García announced that he would present an executive decree to the legislature to privatize resources that are not been used as a solution for this problem (*El Comercio* Website, 27th Nov, 2008). In “El perro del hortelano contra el pobre” (The dog in the manger against the poor), the president said that indigenous peoples do not want rise out of intellectual poverty nor allow others – Peruvians – to rise out of material poverty. He characterized indigenous peoples as romantic and extremely ideological because of their opposition to the exploitation of Amazonian forestall resources (*El Comercio* Website, 2nd March, 2009). Furthermore, on June 4th, after 52 days of Amazonian indigenous protests, the government escalated the violence by ordering police troops to force indigenous out of the Curva del Diablo-Bagua zone and breach the non-aggression pact agreed to the day before between police commanders and indigenous leaders (Montoya Rojas 2009).

After Bagua’s clashes, the government engaged in a sequence of arbitrary actions and radical discourse against Amazonian indigenous. First, as illustrated in the first narrative section, the controversial government’s TV spot used to explain Bagua events depicted Amazonian natives as responsible of the human casualties and as violent individuals trying to impede Peru’s progress. Furthermore, within a matter of days after Bagua clashes, the Ministry of Transport and Communication suspended the license to the radio station “La Voz de Bagua” limiting the right to freedom speech to this media source. The timing of the revocation suggested that it was retaliation against the station’s coverage of the anti-government protests (Human Rights Watch Website: News, 6th Oct, 2009). Moreover,

García published another article titled “A la fe de la inmensa mayoría” (Keeping faith with the vast majority), in which he called upon Peruvians to prevent these violent minority groups from deceiving and convincing others to resist to his economic and political models (Montoya Rojas 2009). The government issued an arrest order against Alberto Pizango, president of AIDASEP, but he obtained political asylum in Nicaragua. On October 2009, the Ministry of Justice asked the Attorney General to disband AIDASEP on the grounds that Pizango called for the uprising in Bagua (LatinNews, Weekly Report, WR-09-43). Regardless of the government’s depiction of Amazonian indigenous as foreign actors opposed to national development and main party responsible of the clashes, civil society urban actors engaged in massive mobilizations to support indigenous groups.

A year and a half has passed since the episode in Bagua, yet we are still seeing extreme actions by the government against indigenous peoples. On February 2010, human rights groups criticized Minister of Interior Salazar’s intervention in the judiciary, preventing the prosecution of two police generals accused for the violence in Bagua (LatinNews, Andean Group, February 2010). In the same month, the Commission set up by the executive to investigate Bagua’s events released a report that did not explicitly recognize the responsibility of the executive and police forces. In a recent public appearance on the one-year anniversary of the clashes (Jun 5th 2010), Alan García characterized the incident as “an ambush and brutal massacre of police by indigenous extremists armed for war” (Common Dreams NGO: Press release, 5th June, 2010); even though he had previously said he misjudged the Amazonians’ actions. Recently on July 25th, García refused to ratify a law approved by the Congress under which the state would be compelled to consult indigenous communities about issues relating to oil and mining

projects in their territories. The lawyer of AIDASEP declared this a cynical strategy from the executive intended to allow the government to continue giving concessions to corporations since Congress will not be able to review the observed law until December (LatinNews, Weekly Report, WR-10-26).

2.2 Governmental policies and actions privileging MNCs

I propose that arbitrary policies and actions by the government to favor operation of raw material extraction material MNCs in the Amazon region are likely to boost these protests. Some Latin American governments have accelerated neoliberal reforms without seeking mechanisms to balance their harmful social impacts. Intensification of social protests has been a response to the increasing neoliberal changes in the region in a period of nominal democratization (Stahler-Sholk et al. 2007, 8). States have secured the rapid expansion of foreign firms regardless of public disapproval. Recent protests in Bolivia gathered different social actors that opposed the privatization of Cochabamba's water system favoring a multinational consortium (Arce and Rice 2009, 91). The extent of current and proposed oil and gas blocks in the Western Amazon leased by governments to MNCs have unprecedentedly increased throughout the last decade (Finer et al 2008, 2).

Unpopular policies are also associated with the lack or reduction of appropriate governmental regulations to protect the rights and living conditions of the most affected. For the last decades, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have pressed the state to reduce and eliminate subsidies, to cut social programs for indigenous, and eliminate credit for peasant agriculture (Perrault 2003, 69). Since reductions in regulation and austerity measures appear in combination with promotion of foreign investment, the public tends to view all this as a way to favor solely MNCs. In the Amazon, intensive

industrial development has been inadequately regulated or non-regulated by states. Oil and gas blocks overlap areas of peak biodiversity, protected areas, and indigenous territories, negatively affecting social and environmental conditions of the region (Finer et al 2008, 2). These activities are the “second conquest” of indigenous peoples; “this new conquest is not interested in Indian labor, but its focus is Indian lands” (qtd. in Brysk 2000, 7).

In addition, many governments have engaged in corruption to favor foreign investors’ interests. Civil society actors in Latin America have frequently staged demonstrations in cases of political scandals or governmental corruption (Hochtetler 2006, 407). Evidence of personal corruption seems to lead rapidly to low public approval ratings, triggering street protests. For instance, corruption scandals triggered presidential challenges and mainly presidential failures in South America during the last three decades (Hochtetler 2006, 406). In this context, protests are likely to intensify if the public identifies similar drivers between general stressors and indigenous demands. For example, public support to indigenous could increase if the government favors the interests of powerful groups over public needs in other issue-areas too.

Indeed, the Garcia’s government favoritism toward MNCs exploitation of Amazonian resources is a significant factor in adverse public opinion and anti-government protests⁹. Urban protesters reported to the media that they believed the government was committing abuses against Amazonian indigenous to promote extractive activity by MNCs in Amazonian territories. Ineffective regulatory power of the government and associated corruption were also given as reasons for taking to the streets (LatinNews, Weekly Report, WR-10-20). A rapid expansion of MNC concessions has taken place in the Peruvian

⁹ For this triggering factor, I have also used public opinion polls.

Amazon region. In 2003, the state reduced royalties to promote investment, sparking an exploration boom (Finer et al 2008, 2). Since 2005, the area of the Peruvian Amazon granted as oil concessions to corporations has jumped from roughly 15% to 72% (Figure 8). As of April 2007, PeruPetro (state oil-licensing agency) had signed 61 contracts mainly with MNCs; of which, 31 contracts were signed between 2005-2006 (ERI et al. 2007, 16).

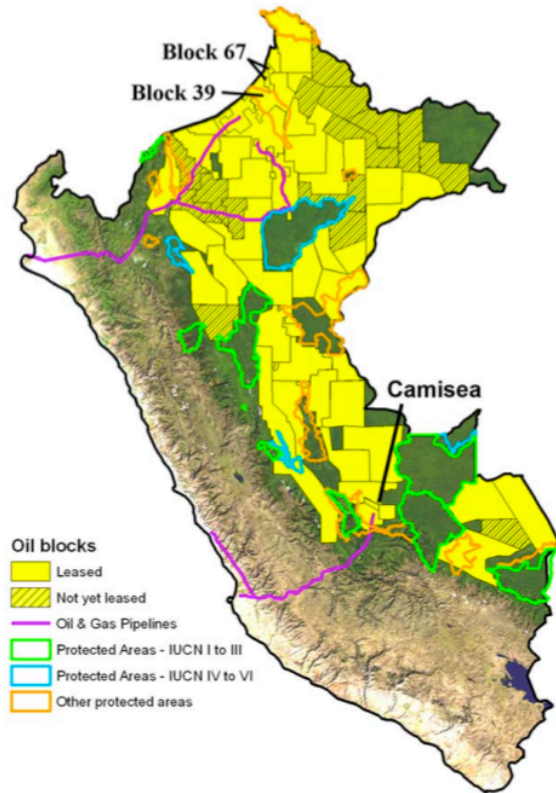
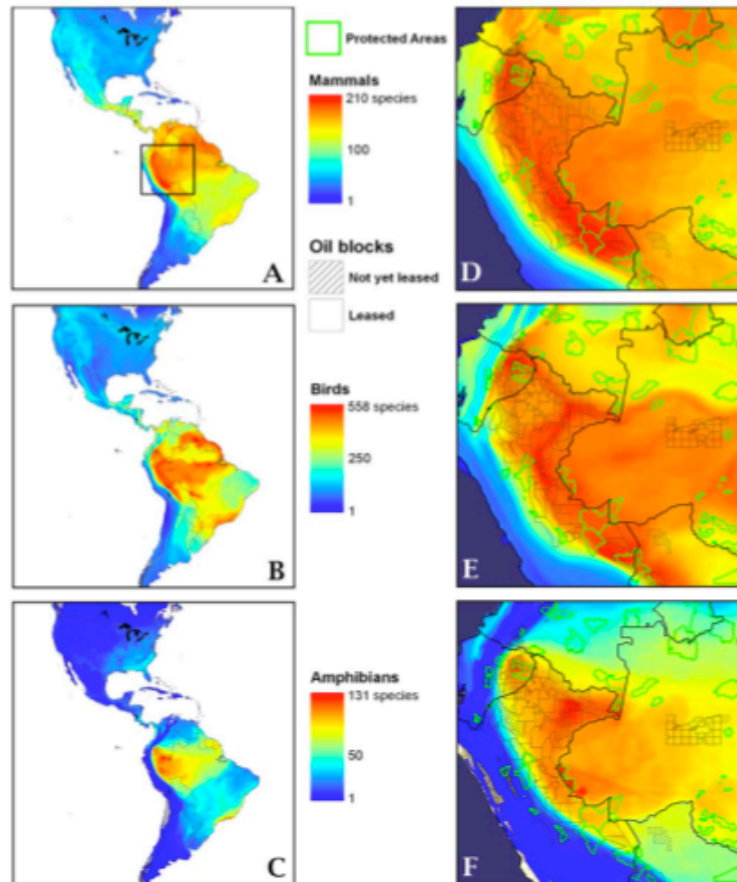


Figure 8: Oil Blocks in Peru by 2008 and overlapping. Source: Finer et al. 2008, 3

Furthermore, the government has pushed for reductions in regulations to safeguard the interests of indigenous peoples. First, the executive decrees were created with the purpose of simplifying the laws of expropriation and transferring of collective lands to allow massive privatization in favor of MNCs. The government has concentrated the authority to manage natural resources located on or below indigenous lands, while not respecting land and consultation rights of indigenous peoples, which are ostensibly protected by Peru’s ratification of ILO Convention 169. As of 2008, at least 58 of the 64 existing blocks

overlay indigenous peoples lands and about 17 blocks overlap areas that have proposed or created reserves for indigenous in voluntary isolation (Finer et al. 2008, 2). Also, these blocks intersect species-rich zones and protected reserves, destroying ecosystems that are crucial to the subsistence of indigenous peoples (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Overlap of oil and gas blocks with biodiversity (mammals, birds and amphibians species distribution) and protected areas in Peru. Source: Finer et al. 2008, 3 (Figure 3).



Moreover, MNC's activities have been largely unregulated and unmonitored by the government. For example, from 1971 to 2000, Occidental Petroleum's operations violated international and domestic industrial standards, causing severe health and environmental harms to the Achuar people, and the government did not respond (MINSAs- OGE 2003, 10). A study found alarming blood-lead levels on Achuar children in 2007 (Table 2). Although the state had issued a remediation agreement with Pluspetrol – the new

corporation that obtained concession over these blocks – in 2006, the government did not enforce it (ERI et al. 2007, 17). An element of corruption was also part of the process for granting hydrocarbon concessions to MNCs. In September 2008, the media uncovered a case of corruption and provided evidence that officials at PerúPetro accepted bribes to ensure that Norwegian company Discover Petroleum won 5 of the 7 oil exploration licenses it applied for this auction. This political scandal forced the Prime Minister to resign, but the president of the PeruPetro remains in his position. Formal investigations are still in process.

Table 2: Results of blood-level analysis in samples taken from Achuar children. Source: Earth Rights International et al. 2007, 31 (Chart 1).

Community	Number of Samples	Average Blood-Lead Level (ug/dL)	Blood-lead Level Range (ug/dL)	Number Below 10 ug/dL Limit	Number Above 10 ug/dL Limit
All communities	5	10.14	4.3-30.3	34	25 (43%)
Pampa Hermosa	4	15.70	14.7-16.8	0	4 (100%)
Sauki	6	10.43	6.5-14.1	2	4 (57%)
Antioquia/Jibaro	11	14.84	7.7-30.3	1	10 (91%)
Jose Olaya	16	8.46	5.6-12.2	12	4 (25%)
Nueva Jerusalen	22	7.92	4.3-12.2	19	3 (14%)

Ultimately, it appears that the public linked general economic stressors to the issues of Amazonians because they both are the product of similar governmental actions that favor MNCs and defend the economic interests of elites. This general feeling of dissatisfaction with Garcia’s administration has added to urban solidarity with Amazonian indigenous in a short term. Some unpopular neoliberal policies are perceived as mainly beneficial for political and economic elites and foreign groups, leaving out the poorest society members,

in the same way that policies that favor MNCs leave out indigenous peoples. In a recent 2010 poll, while about 70% of members from the highest socio-economic quintile supported the governmental economic model, more than 65% of people from the two lowest socio-economic quintiles disapproved its policies (IOP Nov 2010). Also, when the public was asked about the distribution of wealth in the country, 85% of respondents from the two lowest socio-economic levels deemed it as “unfair/very unfair”, and more significantly, 80% of all respondents indicated so (ibid).

Moreover, corruption in both public general matters and in mineral concession in indigenous areas enforces societal support to indigenous demands. A 2010 opinion poll put governmental corruption at the top of the list of public concerns, moving unemployment second; about 71% believed the executive to be very corrupted/corrupted and 18% considered it somewhat corrupted (IOP May 2010). The perception of the government as corrupted has increased dramatically in the last 2 years. The proportion of people deeming Garcia’s government less corrupted than its predecessors moved from 52% in June 2007, through 29% in 2009, to 26% in 2010 (IOP May 2010). Protesters argued that while the state benefits financially from large-scale mining, it does not channel this gains into local communities (LatinNews, Weekly Report, WR-10-14). It appears that high governmental corruption contributes to the disapproval of some neoliberal policies since the gains from economic growth is concentrated in political and economic privileged groups.

III. Preliminary effects: governmental responses to altruistic urban protests

What were the effects of these pro-indigenous urban protests? How are they significant for the Latin American indigenous movement? The indigenous rights

movement has struggled against the government for greater political incorporation, valuing of their cultures and identity, as well as the improvement of socio-economic status (Brysk 2000, 18). In order to evaluate if urban sympathetic mobilizations have positively affected indigenous peoples' goals, we should look for any change in indigenous peoples' legal status, dialogue with public institutions, and human rights conditions. Particularly, these changes should be reflected in their participation and ability to affect the decision-making of Amazonian extractive projects through a consultation process.

The unprecedented mobilizations following Bagua clashes produced a positive change in some governmental agencies with respect to social inclusion and political participation of indigenous peoples. The Amazonian indigenous organization AIDSESEP has signed inter-institutional cooperation agreements with public institutions such as INEI, the Human Rights Ombudsman Office, and INDEPA to work closely to coordinate a more productive dialogue with the government and other society groups and achieve an effective implementation of social programs in native communities (AIDSESEP Website: News, 15th Oct, 2009). Another significant effect was that Congress responded favorably to indigenous demands and urban protests. First, in August 2008, before Bagua clashes, Congress established a dialogue table with indigenous representatives to discuss their opposition to the executive decrees and the need of a legal instrument to regulate the right to consultation of indigenous (Montoya Rojas 2009). The legislature, including members of minority blocks and some APRA representatives, opposed the executive and abrogated the most controversial decrees. The efforts of president García to veto the decisions were in vain (LatinNews, Weekly Report, WR-10-26). After the Bagua clashes, most of the remaining decrees were either eliminated or suspended by the national legislature. Further,

on May 19th 2010, Congress approved “Ley de Consulta” (Law of Consultation), under which the state would be compelled to consult indigenous communities about oil, gas and mining projects or any other extractive activity within their territories (LatinNews, Weekly Report, WR-10-26).

In addition, in August 2010, the Peruvian Constitutional Tribunal ruled in favor of a suit brought by AIDASEP regarding the non-compliance of the Ministry of Energy and Mines with a previous ruling of this court. A judicial decision of June 2009 ordered this ministry to create specific norms that would regulate the process of consultation, but the ministry failed to comply within a year. The judiciary will now impose sanctions and enforce compliance. In the most recent ruling, the judiciary also urged the legislature to promulgate the Law of Consultation immediately (TC-AIDASEP 2010). Yet, the executive is resisting its approval, which may lead to a constitutional confrontation with the high court.

IV. Conclusion

Within the last years, a new form of societal mobilization emerged in Peru. Advancing similar goals to the ones of the Latin American indigenous rights movement, these collective actions constitute a phenomenon not seen, nor expected in the region. These are altruistic and non-materialistic demonstrations led by urban mestizo residents that, lacking the social and cultural capitals possessed by indigenous communities, have effectively brought Peru’s civil society members together in solidarity with Amazonian indigenous peoples. More importantly, these constitute the local equivalents among developing countries of the altruistic social movements characteristic of the wealthy democracies in

the developed world. It could be even argued that their role on the struggles of indigenous peoples has taken greater relevance than the role of foreign or global civil society in certain aspects. The analysis of protest events and the evidence presented for the twenty year-period allow us to conclude that the appearance of pro-indigenous urban mobilizations in Peru and their rapid evolution after the Bagua clashes can be explained by a combination of two different, but complementary, kinds of factors.

On the one hand, a group of conditioning factors have facilitated the emergence of a favorable environment of civil society values and opportunity to build altruistic social movements in Latin America: a context of democratization and human rights protection, improvement of urban socio-economic conditions, greater networking by NGOs in the country, increased environmental awareness levels, and the construction of a pluricultural national identity. And on the other hand, triggering factors have catalyzed a prompt selfless response by urban publics: extreme actions and discourse by Alan García's government and its consistent tendency to favor MNCs over indigenous and other popular preferences. These two sets of factors have made possible the development of unprecedented support by non-indigenous urban residents for the socially excluded Amazonian indigenous communities, generating more pressure on governmental institutions to meet indigenous demands. The observed responses from the legislative and judicial branches in regard to the passing and implementation of a Law of Consultation emphasize the effectiveness of these protests.

This exploratory process allowed me to generate a basic theory that can potentially be applied to other similar cases in Latin America in a further research. A preliminary glance at other cases suggests that Peru's urban mobilizations may not be unique. In 2009, a

cross-national and cross-organizational coalition was formed to protest against the Mining Law and the presence of Multinational mining corporations disadvantaging indigenous communities in Ecuador (LatinNews, Monitoring Center-Ecuador, 9th Oct, 2009). In May 2008, Bolivian local authorities and regional social organizations joined the Indigenous federation CIDOB to protest against regulations that left out the participation of Amazonian indigenous in some political processes of the department of Beni (CIDOB Website: noticias, May 2008). During the first years of this decade, national NGOs and human rights social organizations joined mobilization efforts of Colombian indigenous U'wa (Amazonian groups) demanding land rights, a consultation process and to cease violence against their communities perpetrated by Occidental Petroleum operations and military and paramilitary forces in the area (LatinNews, Monitoring Center- Colombia, May 2001). In the late 1990s, outrage over an indigenous land decree that endangered indigenous people's lives and lands in Brazil motivated protests from a coalition formed by members of the CIMI religious block (Catholic church mission), the left political side, and domestic NGOs (LatinNews, Monitoring Center-Brazil, 5th Jan, 1996).

Insights from the Peruvian case can be used in future comparative analysis of other Latin American, although the factors and background conditions will need to be generalized to apply in other countries. Comparative analysis can help clarify which of these multiple factors are most crucial. For example, can we see similar mobilizations in the absence of conditioning factors, or conversely, in the absence of triggers? Would they still happen in a country with declining urban socio-economic conditions, or lacking NGO networks, or missing provocative extreme actions by the government? It could be argued that in countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia, indigenous peoples have been more

politically incorporated and have greater presence in the public life; the politics of persuasion by exploiting indigenous peoples' social capital and identity-based mobilizations has allowed indigenous groups to successfully appeal to other civil society groups. Yet, this seems to explain indigenous protests joined by mestizo civil society members, but it does not justify well altruistic protests led by non-indigenous members. A comparative analysis can help us to answer these questions and refine the hypotheses drawn from the Peruvian case.

A comparative analysis should focus on Latin American Amazonian countries to make an effort to keep similar social dynamics between the national civil society and the group that is supported (Amazonian native communities). The period of study in some cases will be extended to the last 30 years since the timing of similar political and socio-economic processes such as democratization and neoliberal economic development has varied among Amazonian basin countries. Primarily, a comparative study would look for the occurrence of demonstrations in other countries that share the main characteristics of the Peruvian protests: altruistic, non-materialistic or non-individualistic, with non-indigenous participants acting in solidarity with indigenous demands. Moreover, I would analyze whether similar conditioning factors and triggering factors have taken place or whether the discourse and claims in the protest point to different drivers. In addition to the comparative analysis, further research can analyze in depth the effects of pro-indigenous urban protests on governmental responses to indigenous demands.

Other studies can assess the repercussion of these altruistic mobilizations for the development of pluricultural nations in both law and practice. Recently, in Ecuador and Bolivia, constitutional reforms have been passed to officially describe these republics as

pluricultural nations. Other projects could also attempt to understand what political implications this new social phenomenon brings for the strategies used by indigenous movements and NGOs to achieve greater responsiveness and accountability from the national government. In sum, this new phenomenon can potentially expand the research on the Latin American indigenous rights movement, trying to understand how indigenous communities have started to interact more with other society members, thereby reshaping national civil societies and the political affairs of the region.

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