

The impact of gold mining on the native communities, and forests of the department of Madre de Dios (Peru)

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Abstract. Gold was known in Peru before the arrival of the Spanish. European mining in the 16th century operated on the coast, and in the Andes, but not in the tropical jungle. The current Peruvian department of Madre de Dios was rich in rubber, and the search for this wealth first meant a great negative impact conducted by strangers, but they created social problems, ethnocides, and destruction in the tropical forest. In 1973 gold appeared on the river beaches, in the Laberinto region. Gold is always an attraction, and the strange population comes soon with the hope of becoming rich, but this is not easy. In this large Peruvian region, gold mining is conducted with traditional means that involve washing the sand with water, and the gold is separated with mercury. The high price of gold has implied informal, and extremely negative development for people, and tropical landscapes. Peruvian authorities have not been able to control the extraction areas but have tolerated illegal activities. The negative impact on the environment devastates, according to calculations, about 150,000 hectares each year, and about 50,000 kilograms of mercury are used to amalgamate the gold.

Keywords. Economy, legal and informal mining, mercury, destroyed tropical forest.

1. Introduction

As a whole and in relation to the country's economy, mining, in its various aspects, is the greatest lucrative support for Peru. This study will focus on gold mining in the Department of Madre de Dios. This territory is in the lowland jungle and borders similar others in Bolivia and Brazil. I am going to assess the negative impacts on the environment and on Aboriginal human societies. Other negative impacts that occurred in this region have already been previously evaluated in my publications from the last 45 years [1-9]. A mestizo family named Pacherez was lucky enough to find large gold nuggets in areas near the settlement of Laberinto in 1976, when they were conducting a hunt for *huanganas* or wild pigs (*Tayassu pecari*). This discovery raised many expectations and at once generated many social conflicts. Here I am going to look at the negative impacts caused on Aboriginal societies.

The Department of Madre de Dios is in the southeast of Peru, and all its territory is made up of what is called Low Tropical Forest, which is very weak in the face of external aggressions. Among the latter, as there are several detected by the history of the territory, this one is focused on gold mining, both by legal miners, who have authorization, and by informal or illegal miners, who act without authorization. Some jungle areas have gone from being forested, and green to disastrous, and gray due to the enormous number of tons of stones, and sand removed from the river beaches, the residue of which forms small stony hills. Many of these ecosystems will be sterile for centuries, and it will be useless to attempt any beneficial action to restore them.

The Department of Madre de Dios was created in 1912 by Act designated number 1782, and has three provinces: Manu, Tambopata, and Tahuamanu, whose capitals are Salvación, Puerto Maldonado, and Iñapari. The number of administrative districts has changed in recent years because the foreign population increased significantly after 1980, because of the search for gold on river beaches; However, this presence has been a reality since the times of rubber [8, 10].

The total population has not been easy to census either during the times of the rubber boom (1880 to 1920), or later. We can think that the figures offered as official are unofficial. Between 1960, and 1975, the population density was 0.2 inhabitants per km² for an approximate area of 85,182 km². The appearance of gold accelerated the arrival of foreigners from neighboring Peruvian departments, and at once Brazilians, and Bolivians also appeared, crossing the conventional border clandestinely, since the jungle protects this illicit act. Currently, the population density is set at 1.3 inhabitants per km². The national censuses supplied the figure of 141,070 for the year 2017, the last year for which reliable reports are available [11].

The Aboriginal societies living in the Department of Madre de Dios belong to two different ethnic groups: the Huarayos or Esse Ejja, from the Pano-Tacana linguistic family, and the Harakmbet, who have not yet been correctly classified. The former have had three permanent settlements in Peruvian territory, and others in Bolivia. The latter have always been settled in Peruvian lands.

Traditionally, these native societies were subject to a subsistence economy based on three activities: collecting tropical fruits, fishing in rivers, and streams, and hunting wild animals. This model of life was in force until the middle of the 19th century or so. The appearance of rubber stood for the beginning of a sudden, and violent change that has not yet ended, since the various national policies did not seek the integration or assimilation of these people. The natives were forced into forced exploitation without ethics or morals. The native societies of the Peruvian jungle are still waiting for redemption, and this is what Mario Vargas Llosa expressed in Stockholm (Sweden), when he received the Nobel Prize for literature in 2010 [12].

Catholic Christianity began its evangelization in 1902. Evangelicals began to arrive half a century later, at the end of the 1950s. The influence of Western culture comes from rubber tappers, missionaries, soldiers, teachers, doctors, nurses, merchants, etc. The appearance of gold guided many natives to become miners, since they had already known other capitalist aspects since the mid-19th century. As extraordinary activities before becoming miners, we can set them in two tasks: 1) felling precious wood, cedar (*Cedrela odorata*); 2) collect chestnuts to sell in Puerto Maldonado (*Bertholletia excelsa*).

2. Gold Mining in The Department of Madre De Dios

Gold has been present in social life in Peru since long before the Inca Empire appeared. This metal has been highly appreciated by the various Peruvian cultures, especially by the Mochicas of the Lambayeque area, in the north of present-day Peru. The conquistador Francisco Pizarro, and his companions had the clear intention of becoming rich in a short time, and, for this reason, they asked the aborigines to tell them where the gold reserves, and jewelry made with this metal were located so that they could appropriate them immediately and destroy them a heritage that worried them nothing.

Mining is an activity that involves many interests, and economic policies consider it a priority, since there is an international struggle to hoard raw materials. At the regional level, extraction operations have developed one of the greatest environmental disasters. The Laberinto region will hardly be able to recover its landscapes because the waste has been washed at least twice, treated with mercury on as many occasions; and, in certain specific places, the removal of land has been up to four times, as has happened in Fortuna where there are artificial stone hills.

The extraction of sand, washing it and obtaining gold was done with manual and rudimentary methods before the arrival of the Spanish, but mercury was never used, since it was used after the conquistadors arrived, who opened the mines to production. In pre-Inca and Inca Peru there was mercury, but it was applied to smear the human body and to paint ceramics. This task was detected in Huancavelica [13, 14].

The impacts that their employment has generated in the Laberinto region will not be cured for a long time if that health could ever reach the affected ecosystems. The reason is very simple: tropical forests are close to the geographical equator line, and any manipulation of the earth's surface, which reaches beyond one hectare, the same amount required to be able to rebuild itself after about 20 years of rest, the desert begins to appear, because the sun's rays fall perpendicularly, and penetrate without mercy. This topic has already received numerous studies, and contributions, so it does not require more now [15, 16]. In recent years, the contributions of biology, medicine, and health have multiplied by scientific institutions [17, 18] and are mostly aimed at presenting the negative impacts that it has uncontrolled use.

Gold mining has led to the disappearance of immense areas of tropical forest in the department of Madre de Dios. Rivers, even small tributaries, are saturated with this heavy metal, which has poisoned fish, affected the fauna that comes to drink, and depleted soils. Despite all this, extraction is a significant amount of foreign currency for Peru, which is why the governments of recent times, of different ideological nuances, have ignored respecting the environment, since the institutions are not committed. The countries that buy this metal are the industrialized ones, even those that also have open mines in their territories for the same production: the United States, Russia, China, the European Union, and Brazil.

Foreign investments in Peruvian mining activities come mostly from the United States, and Canada. It has been estimated, and when the amounts are indicated they may be approximate, but not real, since in the decade between 1997, and 2007, about ten million dollars were allocated by North American capital to be used in mining tasks. To this I add that production in tons between those dates was around ninety-three, and represented, for export, just over eight hundred, and fifty million dollars. This trade shows that gold is the main metal destined for foreign trade; what is more, thanks to the fertility in the Department of Madre de Dios, Peru became the first producer in Latin America. The last known data is from June 2023, although it refers to previous years, to the years from 2014 to 2018. Profits amount to a total of 158.4 tons [19]. Right now, it is in fifth place worldwide, and the Department of Cajamarca produces more gold than the rest of the Peruvian mining environments, displacing the Department of Madre de Dios.

It is good to add that, from a social, and salary point of view, the Department of Madre de Dios employed about 100,000 people informally, and between 60,000, and 80,000 those who have legal authorization. The figures may be approximate, but not exact. Most workers carry out their work in deplorable conditions, and with high risks to their health. We can say that they resemble Brazilian *garimpeiros* assigned to the same tasks, and that they have often appeared on social media denouncing their situation. Although we are in the 21st century, the quotas of dignity, and honesty are extremely far from being able to be applied by social policies, and even less so by businesspeople, and recruiters destined to hire labor from abroad [20].

The production of informal miners is destined for the illegal, and clandestine market, and this varies in line with supply, and demand, which appears due to smuggling. Regardless of how the precious metal is obtained, the activity takes place in the Laberinto region, in the Department of Madre de Dios, in Ananea in the Department of Puno, in Lampa, and in Pataz in the Department of La Libertad. In recent years, the activity has been established in the Department of Cajamarca, in the mining sector called Yanacocha.

During the administration of President Alberto Fujimori, investment was encouraged, especially in the second, and third terms. Land concessions in the tropical forest, in the Department of Madre de Dios, went from four million hectares granted to different corporations in 1992 to more than twenty-three million in 1999. These permits were granted to obtain gold. State legislation was relaxed, and permissive was practiced, and with-it dirty deals increased.

Curiously, the donations of land on a community basis to the various Peruvian Native Communities have not run at the same speed by any means, and the conflicts are permanent. President Alan García, Fujimori's successor, had an open

confrontation with Alberto Pizango, an Aboriginal leader, which gained importance between March, and August 2009, because the government at that time wanted to enact a new act on the Peruvian jungle. The norm was promulgated with the main argument of Alan García, which was since “twenty-eight million Peruvians could not be stopped by the wishes of four hundred thousand” [21].

In line with this reflection, I now pose a question to which every reader interested in these issues must answer: what would happen in Lima (not to mention other coastal cities in a similar situation) if any ruler seated in the Government Palace had the occurrence of ask congressmen to endorse an act that would allow the current owners of the lands invaded with government approval to be eradicated during the Juan Velasco Alvarado era, and return them to the owners prior to that time? Don't the people from a certain region, because they have been marginalized for centuries, have the right to a house, and a small plot of land to survive? Is it that only the powerful have the possibility of deciding about themselves, and others?

Returning to the central theme of this essay: that of gold mining, and the negative impacts it generates on the Aboriginal people. It must be recognized that, in recent years, attempts have been made to solve the problem by turning to an old issue: that of land concessions to Native Communities, and to conclude that issue once, and for all. For this, the Special Program for Land Titling, and Rural Cadastre (PETT) was established. Numerous Amazonian societies began to receive theirs starting in the 1960s, and with greater incidence in the following decade. In those years, these donations set up communal control over them. Land was never granted to individuals but to societies, and these areas were like islands on the regional map as they were disconnected. The lack of continuity was tried to be fixed with these concessions, but time does not pass foolishly, and in those places, let us say neutral, strange people settled, coming from distant areas to work as miners. In this new situation, the conflict was served, especially when miners appeared with legal permission granted by the authorities.

The reality of all this for Peru is that, of the nearly 6,000 aboriginal communities registered in the Special Program for Land Titling, and Rural Cadastre (PETT), more than 3,000 coexist with mining companies, or with small, and medium-sized companies' extractors. This neighborhood is not always good; rather, it is pernicious for native societies [22].

The Special Program for Land Titling, and Rural Cadastre (PETT) was promoted after being proposed by the Washington-based Inter-American Development Bank [22]. Immediately afterwards, the governments of the different affected countries, in this case those designated as Amazonian, prepared to apply the clauses. Despite the good will, certain lands remained neutral, and empty; and, in Peru, they were offered in international bidding starting in 2002, through the promulgation of a decree act known as Loan No 1340/OC-PE, or also as International Public Tender No 0001-2002-AG/PETT/PTRT2, which apparently requested support, and complementary investment to develop in situ the scheme proposed by the Inter-American Development Bank. The equivalent value was going to be processed through a concession for many years of the land so that it could be exploited to compensate expenses. However, during the second, and third terms of President Alberto Fujimori, it was discovered that prior licenses had already been given to foreign companies, mainly of Asian origin, and their identities were not provided.

The immediate antecedents to this situation are found in the Act enacted for Agrarian Reform initiated by President Juan Velasco Alvarado, which was known as Decree Act No 17716, and which saw the light of day on San Juan; that is, June 24, 1969, which promoted many changes regarding land ownership. Until then, that date was known in Peru as Indian Day, and from that moment until today it is now Peasant's Day, which shows a desire to adapt to Marxism, which is a philosophy unknown to the natives.

Apparently, the decision of the Peruvian military was the result of an anarchic historical, social, economic, and agronomic situation, since most productive farms were under the control of only 5% of the population, which included large landowners or owners. The peasantry was in permanent poverty, and none of the previous decisions had given desirable results. In this common thread, and to carry out their proposals, the military supported the formation of agrarian cooperatives or peasant communities, and to achieve this objective they created, and promoted an entity known as the National System of Support for Social Mobilization (SINAMOS). The doctrine of this organization began with the slogan that “the land should be for those who work it”; for this reason, the cooperative was first created, and provided with land with the criterion that ownership should be communal, and never individual or private; that is to say: pure, and simple communism.

As has happened on many occasions in the history of many peoples, and countries, the military proposal was a true failure, because things were handled judiciously from above, and without looking at those below, and even less so at those on the right, or to the left. The collapse came soon because the military leadership did not know how to address agrarian problems. It must be recognized that it was a brave decision, which sought to resolve an urgent social environment, to which the appropriate policies were not applied; what's more, the potential beneficiaries soon gave up on that ephemeral happiness, since they thought that the master's lands would be parceled out, and they would get a piece of land, but that was not the case, and the dream dissipated.

This military stage has two different moments: 1) that of Juan Velasco Alvarado, which was characterized by a turn towards utopian socialism; and 2) that of Francisco Morales Bermúdez, which was a return to the right. These two deadlines were exceeded when the military recognized their inability, and decided to call elections, which were won precisely by Fernando Belaúnde Terry, who was the president overthrown by them. But as the saying goes: second parts have never been good. Belaúnde Terry could not meet the messianic expectations for which he was again elected, and for what is considered here, with respect to land, he promulgated the Agrarian Development Act whose content in summary was that it allowed the conversion of large estates into collective peasant enterprises, which ended up becoming smallholdings, but with little chance of being promoted due to the lack of real investments.

In recent times, and so that we realize how the PETT is reached, the decisions that were made were to promulgate the Investment Promotion Act in the Agrarian Sector or Decree No 653, of July 30, 1991, which definitively repealed the Agrarian Reform Act or Decree Act No 17716. The intention was to revive the rural market. And shortly after, on September 13, 1991, the Rural Property Registry Act or Decree Act No 667 appeared, which established the procedures to formalize rural property, both on State land, and on private land.

These last two proposals represented the possibility of preparing Act No 25902, from which the Special Project for Land Titling, and Rural Cadastre (PETT) is derived with the objective of stimulating, fixing, and correcting ownership. Curiously, the registration of the lands expropriated, and awarded at the time when the Agrarian Reform was in force, as well as promoting the new reality through which the Native Communities had to allow access to possessions granted by the State on a community basis.

As a result of proposing this new legislative framework, innovative proposals arose from the international side, such as the one proposed by the Inter-American Development Bank, and from whose signature with the Peruvian Government the Loan Regulation No 906/OC-PERU emerged, awarding the regularization to the PETT, of the lands, and to register them, which is why it was necessary for the SUNARP or National Superintendence of Public Registries to enter the scene, and which was made *de facto* responsible for registering rural property. Likewise, the National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA) appeared, to which the management, and exploitation of tropical forests in their timber resources, and fruit crops such as chestnuts was transferred.

It is in this reality that we must evaluate the historical conflicts between native communities, and mining companies, especially as they affect the use of land, and the consumption of drinking water. The negotiation process on the use, and employment of water is complicated, but it must be considered from a fair development perspective. The Peruvian Government promulgated the Supreme Decree known as DS No 17-96-AG, which was regulated by Act No 26570, to establish the rights over mining activities, placing Indigenous communities in a situation of inferiority compared to them, and in marginalization. This rule stipulates that, within 30 calendar days, an agreement must be reached between the aborigines, and the extraction companies, with the aim of them purchasing the land on which mining works are carried out or paying compensation for the losses, random events that could negatively affect the natives.

The regulations also establish a regime of inequality by stating in their articles that neither the State nor companies are under the obligation to provide additional information to those affected. Now, if within this period of one month, which is given for negotiation, no agreement is reached, then arbitration is resorted to, with the aggravating factor that the extraction company can designate who should represent it in that dispute, for example, of course, paying him his emoluments well. I add that the dispute is settled in Lima, so that natives cannot access it, or have difficulties doing so. The natives have had money in recent years, but neither their culture nor their social level makes it easy to spend a month or more in an environment that is hostile to them.

The most frequent conflicts between native communities, and mining companies arise over drinking water, land use, and the pollution generated by the machines used in gold extraction. The legislation establishes the payment of a tax on land lost due to negative actions, and that amount must revert to the coffers of the local, and regional governments of those areas in which exploitation affects, and that do not have their own possibilities to establish a policy of landscape regeneration. Now, this amount corresponds to very small amounts, and they are even reduced because the State only compensates with 35% of what is obtained as a total. What does this mean? Well, a very simple thing: that the effects of this mining policy do not benefit the inhabitants of the territory in which the minerals are extracted in any way, unless they work in that sector as small businessmen or as employees.

3. Official Peruvian Policies in the Mining Sector

The Mining Bank was created in 1940, when the Peruvian Republic already had a long history in the extraction of all types of metals. Its appearance originated to stimulate small production. However, from the beginning fixed prices were not quoted, and performance was not controlled. On the other hand, the institution maintained its privileged relationships with large, and medium-sized companies.

Decree Act No 22178, promulgated to establish the extraction of gold, established the obligation that all productivity had to be commercialized through the Mining Bank. Subsequently, Act No. 109 stated that this entity was the representative of the State with the capacity to collect the quantities of raw, and semi-refined gold. It worked like this until almost after the 1980s. Supreme Decree No 05-91-EM/VMM, published during the Government of President Alberto Fujimori, authorized free marketing for gold. The most immediate result was that Mining Bank disappeared. This Decree was consolidated with Act No. 708, which indicated that the corporation disappeared because it was no longer operational.

Requests to request a plot (*denuncio*) of more or less meters, and excavate it can be made by a natural or legal person, defining the petitioner as an informant who offers, and indicates to the authorities where a deposit with potential riches is located, which he has discovered it, and requests, that the State grant him authorization to act on it as he deems best appropriate.

Applications that involve large territories, and not traditional mines are presented, and filed in the Regional Mining Offices of each of the Departments in which they are located, in our case in Madre de Dios. The State is the sole owner of the lands intended for productive activities and is the legal entity that has the capacity to grant the requested permit. It is assumed that, from beginning to end, a report executed by the beneficiary must be written, and must be considered by the authorities. In practice, these types of documents are nothing more than wet paper, as they say; that is, they are useless.

The State can give a credential to grant the status of temporary owner of that land to whoever requests it for a defined period, and establishes the conditions stipulated by law.

Applications (*denuncios*) must include the following points in the petition: 1) identification of the individual or company, 2) exact location of the place, 3) what type of mineral you are requesting to extract, 4) what area of land you claim to its purposes, etc. When a petition is filed, an activity time is established, which is usually about five years. Once the permit is obtained, a first phase of exploitation begins that is not interrupted until two years have passed, which is when a report must be prepared, and presented, and in that document, the beneficiary must demonstrate that it has made a minimum investment in the excavated places, number of trenches made, and other areas in which you have carried out work, and explain how you have done it.

Likewise, the report must state what type of secondary activities it has carried out: establishment of camps, paths to communicate internally, and externally, as well as news that we understand as geological, geophysical, geochemical, topographical, geodetic reports, etc., and proving everything that is notified with relevant studies. This type of report has two sections in the written text: 1) material that responds to the fact that the only people who obtain authorization for mining exploitation are those who have completed the documentation, and to whom the State has made a concession; 2) spiritual, which is another story because how can we explain the presence of a catastrophe carried out by humans when everyone has apparently complied with what was requested? How can we express that the environment has been respected when it will never be able to recover? What responsibilities have they requested, and applied to the guarantors to regenerate a landscape typical of the Moon while on Earth?

4. The Impact of Gold Mining

In Peru, the most common practice is to establish a process that includes a demarcation that ranges between one and one hundred hectares per person. The territory to be exploited is divided by the number of petitioners, and this situation lasts five years, which are usually granted to complete the permit (*denuncio*), although it can later be extended. The natural limits are not respected nor are the topographical difficulties, which disappear with the use of modern machines brought to the region by large capital, or by people who have the resources to invest in them. These data were described in detail by the Peruvian newspaper *El Comercio* on April 11 [23].

The disappearance of a piece of land's natural resources is not considered, even less so if there is an ancient occupation inherited from the aborigines. Likewise, it has not been evaluated whether they were lands intended for fallow and recovery, or whether any of these places was or could have been a spiritual zone, or a traditional hunting ground, or an area intended for fishing or gathering. None of this has been considered every time an economic boom arises in the Amazon jungle [4, 7, 9].

The rule stipulates that, to make concessions, these must be as many as squares can be drawn on the land to be granted. This practice has been very disadvantageous for the environment because it does not respect the banks of the rivers, which are one of the most notable resources in any tropical forest such as the Amazon rainforest.

Before authorizations for farms were granted, they had already been granted for years to settlers from the Andean mountains, who managed them as farmers and ranchers. Faced with this new situation, that of gold mining, and pressured by the new policies, the Agrarian Bank rewarded the invaders by granting them loans with which they could pay for the damage caused to the landscape and mitigate the prejudices they had caused in the plots destined for agriculture; Furthermore, since these places were already registered in the name of owners with specific identity, they were required to renounce ownership to immediately hand it over to mining activities and other temporary owners. Looting first and looting later.

With this attitude, all communal spaces came to be considered undermarketed, and this policy even included areas that had previously been given to a native community. The most immediate consequence of this practice, which involved a new demarcation, carried out by technicians, was that most corporations already registered as mining companies requested the expansion of their territories to begin exploitations to search for gold. At the same time, the creation of a forest reserve was also requested that never appeared, because bureaucracy is what it is everywhere in the world and once wrongdoing occurs in a place, the philosophy of “*faits accompli*” is immediately established.

The current Department of Madre de Dios has always known an economy with extractive nuances controlled from the outside. I point out this because it must always be understood that the hidden resources were necessary for the functioning of external markets, since marketing was planned with the criteria of capitalism. Foreign interests are those that have taken precedence when exploiting the required assets. According to the various times and needs, the historical development of this Peruvian jungle region can be divided into the following periods:

1) from the Inca Empire to the mid-19th century, with some concrete, and unsuccessful milestones such as the expedition carried out by Juan Álvarez Maldonado in 1567 to explore the region and find out what was concrete there. The failure forced a long period of about three centuries in which there was no interest in exploring it again [8, 9].

2) from 1850 to 1895 (we are already in the rubber stage) there were a series of scientific expeditions that were carried out to explore the geography of the region and evaluate and extract natural resources, particularly husk (*Croton eleuteria*). This stage includes the travels of Markham, Raimondi, Faustino Maldonado, and others. During the latter's expedition, the Madre de Dios River was largely known, and this helped establish a route for the commercialization of rubber [8, 9].

3) from 1890 to 1920, which coincides with the maximum splendor of the rubber boom [8, 9].

4) between 1915, and 1940 there was a time of stagnation and economic crisis, and as the issue also affected populations in the Andean mountains, the natives settled in this mountain range were once again favored to migrate to the jungle. To facilitate traffic, a new highway was planned that connected Cuzco with Puerto Maldonado passing through Quincemil. At that time and until today, the exploitation of rubber continued around Iberia and Shiringayoc, where the rubber workers provided rubber balls for export.

5) Starting in the 1970s, the gold boom began when the Pacherez family coincidentally discovered and obtained the first gold nuggets. It is a topic that is still valid.

Since it began until today, extraction has known three modalities to achieve it:

1) manual harvesting, which consists of obtaining gold without any type of technology or mechanization, using a wooden box attached to three sticks anchored in the water and into it, shovelfuls of gravel, and sand are placed, which are washed with the hands pouring buckets of water on it. The activity requires only two or three workers, usually family members, who carry out hard work, but with little investment, but they achieve production in record time, and this artisanal modality was developed from 1940 to the present, and there was no need for any permit, because the workers were within the water of any river, and did not need any fixed land to exploit it. This peculiarity has been used in the Laberinto area and employs more than 2,000 people to achieve quantities that are around 350 kg per year [24].

2) exploitation with bombs: this is the method that has normally been used on all beaches and exploitation sites. This singularity occurs in small pockets, where an average of ten people work and each one must carry about a hundred forklifts per day. Water poured through hoses supplied by motor pumps is applied to these quantities of stones, and sand. In the Laberinto area, the existence of some 870 camps has already been reported, which gives a population of about 8,700 workers, who achieve a productivity of more than 3,500 kg for their employers per year [24].

3) extraction with heavy machinery (*frontal*), which have the capacity to remove the earth, and transport it by itself to the front of each machine where it is washed. These machines have one advantage: they can produce day, and night and employ about 12 people in total. Tanker trucks are also used to transport water. This modality requires a considerable investment but employs few people. In the Laberinto region, there are about 450 *frontales* that employ approximately 5,000 people and achieve a production of about 15,000 kg. per year [25]. Likewise, there are dredgers operating on a piece-rate basis.

The Peruvian Ministry of Energy and Mines has made public reports that begin in 2006 and have not yet been completed. These reports indicate the prices that the precious metal has had, which fluctuates according to demand. Let's look at some simple data in the following table that I evaluate in some specific years that indicate the oscillation of the markets [26].

Table 1. Years, and fluctuation of the price of gold in American dollars

YEARS	Value of the ounce in US dollars
1900	18.96
1970	36.02
1980	615
1990	383.51
2000	279.11
2010	1 224.53
2020	1 769.64

Antonio Brack Egg, an ecology specialist, and minister in Alan García's government, wanted to put an immediate remedy to the ruin generated by gold seekers. The serious problem, which he encountered when he raised his good wishes, is that his government colleagues rejected his proposals. And business is business, and the mafia is the mafia. The *Caretas* magazine of November 5, 2009 [27], included an article by Thor Morante that reported that at that time there were more than 64,000 informal miners in the Department of Madre de Dios, and that they had destroyed some 150,000 hectares of forest. These destructions produced 250 million dollars abroad at that time, which is why, despite the ecological disaster, it has been understood as a positive action [27].

The same weekly, which has offered serious journalism since it was founded, includes an essay titled *Desmadre de Dios*, in number 2124, which provides data on gold mining in this department, as well as the clashes that occurred in Chala (Arequipa), where informal miners blocked the *Panamericana Sur* highway, leaving 6 dead and at least 25 injured. In the same article it is reported that those designated as informal are silently managed by the formal ones, who thus manage to expand the areas in which they first act illegally, and later will be requested as legal complaints to resolve the issue [28].

In line with what I have been stating, the newspaper *El Comercio* de Lima, in its edition of Sunday, April 11, dedicates to this problem various well-documented reflections on what was happening in the Department of Madre de Dios ; what's more, on the first page it states in a suggestive title: "Large capital finances illegal mining in Peru" and adds that "Russians and Brazilians have been identified in the exploitation of gold in Madre de Dios", clearly indicating that International mafias are already established in the region. They review other news, and indicate, with well-documented data, how the representatives of the local bourgeoisies also act as extractivists, as were then the mayor of Tambopata (Puerto Maldonado), and his relatives, who had invested more than a million dollars in dredgers; therefore, when I have stated

that taxes do not remain in the area, we must not forget that one of the reasons to be studied is precisely the role played by both the authorities, and the representatives of large industrial companies based abroad [29].

The same articles offer reviews of the foreign, and national companies present, and indicate that they are poor managers of the environment. The event crossed borders, and the newspaper *El País* (Spain), on Wednesday, April 7, 2010, published an essay by Jaime Cordero, correspondent in Lima, calling attention to the ecological disasters that were being caused in the Department of Madre de Dios [30]. Curiously, the Peruvian media inserted a piece of news that could be largely beneficial if the invention were applied soon. This invention, due to a Peruvian engineer named Carlos Villachica, has launched a device that would extract the gold dissolved in the sands without the need to use mercury [31].

The Peruvian authorities, and the political class in general know that they must confront the disasters generated by mining. The problem is more serious than it seems, since every time attempts have been made to reorganize gold mining, the result has been one failure after another. Rules, and decrees are promulgated that have been of no use.

Some mining companies have managed to control about a thousand hectares of land as a concession, but the most powerful firm only has about a hundred employees. Regarding gold production, even when the Mining Bank existed, only 10% of production was controlled, and the rest was acquired by large groups or smugglers. The reason was very simple, then and now, and the following example speaks for itself: “Banco Minero, which enjoys a monopoly in the purchase [...] 24,000 when on the New York Stock Exchange, it was priced at S/. 35,000; that is, 30% less” [32].

The greatest danger comes from the use of mercury. To this data we must add that gold extraction, with heavy machinery (*frontales*), destroys approximately 15,000 hectares of tropical forests per year; in addition, the dredges eliminate 36 km² of riverbanks, at the same time they widen the route of the river, leaving the beaches arid that can no longer be used for bean crops¹ (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) as was done in the stage before the gold boom.

There is no state or departmental plan to recover degraded areas, nor has anything been done or planned to be done regarding the negative effects that mercury has had and has. The fact that preventive measures have not been taken regarding the harmful effects of mercury is the same as saying that the human beings displaced there are digging their own grave without knowing it.

5. Criteria Used to Deline the Territories Granted to Native Communities

Indigenous communities must face many problems in Peru, but most of them can be grouped into one of the five sections mentioned below:

- 1) land and territory.
- 2) environment and natural resources.
- 3) education and health.
- 4) recognition of citizenship and provision of civil rights.
- 5) administration of justice and application of customary law.

The historical and present exclusion of native societies is evident in many ways. Some fit perfectly in whole or in part in any of the following sections:

- 1) lack Peruvian citizenship due to not having legal documentation that proves that one was born in Peru. This aspect has already been corrected in practice.
- 2) work and demonstrate that land ownership is held with community titling.
- 3) ignorance of Indigenous customs and traditions by government authorities, even conflicts are not resolved due to the ignorance of the authorities.

In the educational field, Spanish is the main language used in school. Education in two languages (bilingual) does not reach 3%. There is no mechanism that guarantees the participation of natives in local, regional, and national elections.

Land is vital for survival and with this possession many problems would be avoided. The agrarian disposition, together with the demarcation, and regulation of the territories of the aboriginals, has long presented a situation of permanent conflict. The Peruvian Government, regardless of its ideological character, must establish by law in what context the jungle resources must be managed, and then also state what extractions can be made, and under what conditions. Subsequently, it can grant titles to the land, authorize foreign investment, and decide how different payments should be made.

In the Department of Madre de Dios, agricultural investments, with obvious signs of speculation, have begun, and will increase in the short term, with the opening of the highway from Iñapari to Quincemil. This impact will increase with the union of the port of Santos, in the Brazilian Atlantic, with that of Ilo, in the Peruvian Pacific. The productive lands that remain on either side of this important communication route will increase their value, and speculation [16].

Currently there are 36 scattered areas labeled as provisional in the territories of Madre de Dios, and Cuzco, while there are dispersed native communities; but, in summary, 63.9% of them lack legal status, while 38.8% have not yet begun the process to regularize their territories [33].

¹ Bean crops, porotos in regional Spanish.

The context in which traditional societies, Harakmbet and Esse Ejja, live is now deeply marked by the gold rush. Starting in 1973, emigration to the department of Madre de Dios involves thousands of people in search of those potential riches, which curiously settle on native territories, and in this simple way we can say that the conflict is between Indigenous people, and invaders for a long time.

The construction of roads and bridges, as well as the opening of areas to exploit the land from a mining point of view, stimulates any system of enjoyment, and increases unbridled colonization. These aspects negatively affect the stability of native areas, fragmenting or eliminating them. The different, and the same are two fundamental pillars in the social life of most societies in the world, and to achieve peace among all, policies must be applied so that everyone finds accommodation, but it is not and will not be easy if identity is not achieved, individual, and collective. When a nation eliminates or marginalizes what is different about it, it not only denies it, but also rejects the potential it has, and from this attitude makes any process of social articulation difficult [35].

6. The Harakmbet

I have already indicated that two native communities are settled in the Department of Madre de Dios: The Harakmbet, who are the most numerous, and the Esse Ejja. The second has three communities, and others are dispersed in Bolivian territory [34]. I am going to focus on the first because they are the ones most affected by gold mining, even individuals from this society working in it.

What do we know about its history? The news about this people, as well as the region they inhabit, comes from various sources, all after the Conquest of the Inca Empire. The pre-Hispanic remains, studied by archaeology, are present, but not with the intensity that is required to be able to formulate working hypotheses, since they are concretized, today, to engravings, stone axes, pieces of ceramic, etc., whose contributions they are not exactly ideal for solving problems. You must wait for extensive excavations to be carried out.

The fact that the Incas extended their domains from Cuzco to the Maule or Bio-Bio River (Chile) in the South, and to the Angasmayo River, in present-day Colombia, in the North, invites us to think, logically, that, in the moments of greatest militarist rise, they would try to modify the borders of the East, at the cost of gaining ground in the tropical forest much closer to Cuzco.

We know from some chroniclers that during the reigns of Huiracocha (or Wiracocha), Pachacutec, and Topa Inca Yupanqui (between 1410 and 1493 AD), infiltration was intended into the Antisuyo region, as they called the entire tropical forest. For this reason, all the societies settled in it received the name Antis, but during the Inca Empire there was no control because the Incas did not have the ability to modify the eastern border.

It is beyond any doubt that an attempt was made to penetrate the jungle, but those from Cuzco never achieved their goals. The current city of Paucartambo (Department of Cuzco) must have served as a base of operations for these objectives and, in all probability, they gathered their armies here, as shown in the Nystrom Report [36], which provides geographical data and indicates details of the haciendas in that area and Cosñipata.

The infiltrations towards the Antisuyo left their marks in the most distant places they managed to reach. As things stand today, we do not yet know if what we can consider archaeological remains are Harakmbet or from another previous or disappeared culture [37]. The chronicler Garcilaso de la Vega narrates the Inca preparations and attempts to colonize the tropical forest. In a first text he offers “many details” about an expedition from the time of Inca Roca, who “determined to send his son to the conquest of Antisuyo, for which he ordered fifteen thousand men of war, and three field masters to be prepared [...] The prince went with good success to the Paucartampu river, and passed on to Challapampa, and reduced the few Indians he found in that region; from here he went to Pillcupata, where he ordered four towns to be populated with upstart people. From Pillcupata he went to Haisca, and Tunu, which are the first *cuca* farms that the Incas had [...]. The inheritance called Haisca was after Garcilaso de la Vega, my lord, of which he granted me a gift during his lifetime, and I lost it by coming to Spain” [38].

The same author, whose credit is still doubtful, recounts another expedition with the same purposes during the reign of Topa Inca Yupanqui (1471-1493 AD), but aimed at incorporating the Moxos region. Accepting the veracity of the narrative, the Inca “ordered a huge amount of wood to be cut (at the headwaters of the Carbón River) [...], and to make very large rafts with it [...]. There were so many that they held ten thousand men of war and the supplies they carried [...]. With this device the Incas went down the river, where they had great encounters, and battles with the natives called *chunchu*” [38].

The company was a failure and, consequently, the wonder factor evaporated. The disaster was due, according to Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, to the fact that the Inca troops were attacked by the *Chunchu*, who “lived on the banks on both sides of the river. Which left in great numbers by water, and by land (...); They used bows and arrows as offensive weapons, which are the ones most used by all the nations of the Antis” [38].

We had to wait until the middle of the 19th century for things to begin to change. At that time, the production of quinine (*Chinchona officinalis*) decreased considerably, and foreign markets could not be supplied, and Colonel Bolognesi was commissioned to explore the jungle, and look for trees of this species. The desired goals were not achieved but the review of it was good; in fact, it is known that he navigated the Inambari River, one of the most important tributaries in the course known as Upper Madre de Dios and reported news for the area we are dealing with here. At that time, in 1852, the British Sir Clemens Markham was in Peru, who was also in charge of collecting *chinchona* seeds to later plant them in the possessions of the Far East. He lived in the Kosñipata or Cosñipata valley, and there he met the Italian missionary

Bovo Robello, who provided him with news about the Chunchu, and these could not be other than the Wacipairi or Huachipari, one of the Harakmbet groups [39].

We know that, in 1851, the religious encouraged the authorities of Cuzco to worry about entering the tropical forest, since he had already made two trips, and on both occasions, he had left the city of Paucartambo. The fact of failing did not cause him to faint [10]. This missionary was the one who changed the name of the Amarumayo (or Boa) River to Madre de Dios. The event was motivated, and in this there is more legend than reality, by the fact that some natives, after having looted the estates of the Kosñipata valley, took an image of the Virgin Mary and, given its little use for they threw it into the river, and it appeared floating on August 15, 1851. This fact made it possible to sponsor the name change [10].

The geographical knowledge of the current Department of Madre de Dios, in modern times, was initiated by Colonel Faustino Maldonado, on February 5, 1861. His expedition was attacked by the Indigenous people several times, but it continued forward [10]. He began his adventure on the banks of the Piñi-Piñi River and achieved one of the proposed objectives: getting to know the terrain. The trip took them to the Madeira River and with this they were able to destroy the false news that there was about the Madre de Dios River, since it was not known if it was “the Purús, if the Yarúa, if the Ucayali” [10].

Faustino Maldonado, and some of his expedition members, found death in one of the *cachuelas*² of the Madeira River [10]. With them disappeared the Ship's Logbook, a precious jewel that can never be consulted. This military man aroused interest in both Peru, and Bolivia, since the jungle belonged to both countries, but there was no reliable border. Meanwhile, in 1865, the Italian Antonio Raimondi visited, and lived for some time in Marcapata, and made some trips through the current Upper Madre de Dios [40]. In this way, the scholar was able to collect ethnological, botanical, geographical material, etc., of considerable value since he soon supported another research [36].

Colonel La Torre, prefect of Cuzco, organized a new expedition in 1873 to continue and expand the steps initiated by those who preceded him and cited here. This attempt became a true failure in the current pongo of Ccoñec where they were shipwrecked shortly after beginning the trip and, shortly after, according to official news, La Torre “dies at the hands of the savage Sirineiris” [10]. Although he perished at the hands of the explorers themselves, who saw his desire for glory evaporate with the shipwreck [41]. Before the authorities of Cuzco, it was necessary to present oneself with “clean hands” and they found no better way than to blame the crime on the “natives” [9].

We owe the first firm news about the Harakmbet to the Franciscan missionary Cardús [42]. This missionary narrates some events about the Wacipairi, since this group, due to its traditional habitat, was called to have forced contact with Western culture, since the Keros or Queros river is relatively close to the point to which I have previously referred: Paucartambo.

We thus arrive at the end of the 19th century, a moment in which the Amazon jungle will experience, in its entirety, one of the most exciting and terrible adventures in its entire history. I am referring to the indiscriminate exploitation of rubber that grows wild. As a result, the tropical forest suffered demographic pressure of incalculable proportions, leaving noticeable traces. In 1894, the rubber tapper Carlos Fermín Fitzcarrald settled in the region and as a businessman, he looked for a new route to get his products out of the area and managed to discover an isthmus that bears his name. This discovery was achieved thanks to the reports provided by the natives.

To achieve his goals, he carried out numerous levies among the various native groups, since they knew the environment well and were cheap since he never quoted them salaries. It will be, from this date, when the term Mashco appears to designate the entire Harakmbet society. This word must be translated as murderer, since that is how the aborigines were described to justify actions against them.

The treatment given by Fitzcarrald to the natives was characterized by establishing stages already surpassed by history in those times; that is to say, he tried to subjugate by force all the societies he found in his path. At first, there was compliance, and small confrontations, but then it came to open war, with all the dire consequences that an event of this magnitude can entail. The Harakmbet bore the brunt, and in two clashes that occurred in 1894, along with other skirmishes that continued until 1900, they were more than decimated [43]. The few survivors looked for areas of refuge that would hide them from the rubber tappers [2, 9], and these correspond today to those that unfortunately know the direct work of the informal miners.

As a result of these events, tense relationships begin between each other. The 20th century is characterized, in this region, by beginning with bloodshed. Assaults, crimes, robberies, and any other negative aspect were attributed to the natives, and this was the image that reached the outside about them. Furthermore, the events served to confront the Harakmbet themselves in a civil war that lasted until the 1940s, and involved the Amaraeri, Toyeri, Sirineri and Zapiteri factions [6, 9].

The rubber boom passed. The industrialized countries of that time looked for other markets where they could supply themselves; furthermore, the British Empire had decided to produce in its colonies in the Far East and in Africa. These impacts passed, but not the action of those who had acted against the aborigines, who were the ones who later narrated what happened [45].

A series of events considered, I believe, to be fundamental, appear in the first years of the 20th century. In 1902, Peru began to think that the current Department of Madre de Dios was territory that belonged to it, and in this year a Delegation was sent to make political sovereignty effective. For this purpose, a first Commissioner was appointed in the person of Juan S. Villalta, who held the position until 1910 when he was replaced by a Special Delegate, who prepared the ground

² The word *cachuela* is used regionally to notify the existence of minor cataracts.

for the geographical area to reach the category of Department, a matter that was achieved on December 26, 1912, under the presidency of Billinghurst [10].

Also, in 1902, the first Catholic missionaries arrived who, penetrating through the Alto Madre de Dios, managed to establish contact with the group least hurt by rubber: the Wacipairi or Huachipairi. Going from one to the other was a matter of time; although, it is fair to say, some, like those of the Amarakaeri, resisted until the 1940s. At that time at the beginning of the 20th century, the San Jacinto Mission was opened in Puerto Maldonado, from which they contacted other societies, the Esse Ejja or Huarayos.

In the same year, the first two scientific expeditions arrived, that of Colonel La Combe, and that of the Villalta. Both penetrated through very different, and distant paths, at the same time with very different objectives [10]. Positive results were few; note that the second was the first political authority in the region.

In 1905, the Swede Nordenskiöld arrived, and made several trips to the area. The base of operations was established in the current Fundo Concepción, and, from here, it moved to Bolivia, and Alto Madre de Dios. The residence was long, and he had the opportunity to collect a considerable amount of ethnographic material that he took to his country. The Swede also collected notes on the languages of the area [9].

In the 1920s, American anthropologists were attracted to the Amazon rainforest. Dr. Farabee, and his assistants recorded data, and news about the Harakmbet [44]; but, during these years, the tribal society was very conflicted internally, and little was achieved. Around 1940, the Werner-Green Foundation appeared in the area, which organized some activities in the area with the help of civil, and military authorities, and Catholic missionaries. The missionaries were Dominicans, and those who knew the tropical forest best. Paul Fejos, director of this operation, had the support of José Álvarez, who acted as guide, and chronicler of the various events [45].

Considering that the internal struggle was still a sad reality, it was a success to get to speak with Pajaja, curaca³ of the Kareneris, and the Zapiteri party, who provided data on the sociopolitical situation in which those who resided in the Karene river found themselves: Colorado. The details have already been narrated [2, 9].

The rest of the expeditions were led by Dominican missionaries, highlighting José Álvarez, and Gerardo Fernández, who, between 1945 and 1953, made a series of trips to the rivers Blanco, Azul, Colorado, Pukiri, Nawene, etc. After many efforts they managed to establish contact with the Amarakaeri, who at that time were the most bellicose, as they had retreated to areas of refuge after the clashes with Fitzcarrald [2].

At the end of the 1950s, the first agents of the Summer Linguistics Institute appeared. This institution, controversial for some, and rejectable for others, placed its agents among the Harakmbet. Raymond Hard and Charles Peck began the work; but, for distinct reasons, they could not go beyond scarce, since the first soon returned to the United States, and the second died in 1960.

The tasks were continued by Robert Tripp who has resided for years in the headwaters of the Karene River studying the Harakmbet language. Between 1967, and 1968 he collaborated with Dick Hyde. In Yarinacocha, near Pucallpa, reading booklets, and various bilingual teaching materials have been published in Spanish, and the native language. Tripp has been the driving force behind Harakmbet.

The ethnographic, and anthropological data, published by the Dominican missionaries, starting in 1917, in the Revista Misiones Dominicanas del Perú, constitute first-hand material, as well as other additional publications. The importance of these contributions is that they are the basis of a series of monographs, articles, essays, etc. Those of Günther Holzmann [46]; Robert Carneiro [47]; Patricia Lyon [48]; Carlos Junquera Rubio [4, 6, 7, 9].

In terms of health, every Aboriginal family has lost at least half of its members to disease. Achieving good health in a tropical environment is not easy and given the difficulties in gaining access to the services proposed by the Ministry of Health, we have returned to traditional medicine that finds remedies in plants, thus promoting tradition, and shamanism [49].

7. Impact of The Search for Gold

The search for gold has attracted many outside influences on the Indigenous lands of the Amarakaeri party. Currently, the territories considered as reserves, and granted with community titles have two traditional towns: Puerto Luz, and San José, both on the Karene River. Settlements such as Barranco Chico, Villa Santiago, Kotsimba, Shiringayoc, Guacamayo, and others are in areas of permanent conflict between Indigenous people and miners.

The problem arises because the miners, who are protected, invade Indigenous lands, and begin exploitation tasks. And, in some cases, they even threaten the natives with death. On the other hand, this also poses a non-compliance with the requirement imposed by Act No 26505 and Supreme Decree No 017-EM, which indicate that it is necessary to request permission from the Native Community, while there must be a prior study that consider environmental impacts as stipulated in Act No 26786.

Since 1996, FENAMAD (Native Federation of the Madre de Dios River, and Tributaries) has asked government authorities that applications that include acting as miners on lands owned by the Native Community with title granted to the community should not be accepted. Likewise, they have requested that concessions be canceled to individuals and companies that do not obey Act No 26505, or that do not comply with the standards contained in Decree Law No 757, later modified by Law No 26786.

³ The word *curaca* identifies the local leader of a community.

On September 15, 2000, FENAMAD leaders met with technicians from the Ministry of Energy, and Mines, and this organization agreed to support the criteria of the Native Federation. Months passed, and no measure had been taken, and the consequence was that the natives of Barranco Chico, Tres Islas, Villa Santiago, and San José de Karene decided to protect their rights by expelling the miners who had invaded their lands.

The problems caused by the search for gold, and by the miners involved in this business have surpassed Peruvian borders. The Organization of American States (OAS) has published several reports warning of the many problems and impacts that this search has produced in human societies, and tropical forests [50].

8. Budgets for an Effective Dialogue

On July 18, 2000, Indigenous people from all the communities of Madre de Dios mobilized to begin a direct dialogue with the Government of Peru. They marched on the city of Puerto Maldonado, joined along with many others dissatisfied with Peruvian politics, and demanded that mining licenses, and concessions be stopped within the limits set for their ethnic territories. This protest allowed contact to be initiated between the natives, and the ministries involved, especially that of Energy and Mines. In August 2000, FENAMAD presented some problems to the Ministry of Agriculture, regarding the aborigines who were isolated in forested areas isolated since the times of rubber, and its representatives requested the protection of those places, especially in points where it was known there were people designated as not contacted, and that as a government institution abolished the contracts that had been granted in the sources of the Huascar River to avoid forestry activities.

The Peruvian Government has proposed a policy based on creating protected areas, or reserve zones as an environmental protectionist measure. However, when the Manu National Park, and the Candamo Tambopata Reserve were formalized, in the Department of Madre de Dios, in the ethnic territories of the Harakmbet, and the Esse Ejja, action was taken without having conducted consulting. What's more, no official thought to ask anything of the Indigenous people who have lived there for centuries, much less of any of their leaders. Experience shows that when the State adopts a specific policy on soils, it will in a brief time offer a long series of impacts, usually more negative than positive, that affect Native Societies.

The first harmful impact is related to how to access the use of natural resources on which they have always depended. The orientation of the policy is connected to the land, because traditional foods are found there, and this being true, it is no less true that there are other basic needs such as education, health, isolation, etc. Decisions made about third parties, without consulting them first, are often even harmful; especially, if it reduces the inhabitants of an area, condemning them to subsistence. FENAMAD has asked the Government, and the Special Program to Grant Titles on Land and Rural Cadastre (PETT) to grant titles as soon as possible for the settlements of Isla los Valles, Tayacome and Yomibato.

On May 9, 2002, the Government granted 400,000 hectares for the Amarakaeri Reserve Zone, through Supreme Decree No. OZ8-2000-AG. This decision was reclassified again, and was renamed the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve, based on Supreme Decree No. 031-2002-AG of May 11, 2002. This was due to the efforts of the Amarakaeri, and FENAMAD. On those dates, areas occupied by farmers or loggers who acted with the approval of the Ministry of Agriculture through INRENA, which had the proper powers, were excluded. In this context, FENAMAD considers it urgent to demarcate and in some areas review the limits of the territories, with due consideration to the historical heritage, the occupation, and the necessary resources so that these communities can reach an adequate standard to be able to live according to their traditional culture, economy, and own production systems such as gathering, hunting, and fishing.

Thinking that any economic activity generates employment, some foreigners believe that a part of the territory should be used for these purposes. The attack to achieve these goals focuses on proposing as free sectors, to act in them, those found between the Manu National Park, and the Bahuaja-Sonene National Park. Likewise, one of the objectives to avoid raising too many suspicions for the moment would be to preserve the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve. In this way, the areas destined for mining activities would be included among these three protected zones.

9. Analysis of The Situation and Useful Preventions

Daily politics in Peru has harmed Native Communities for a long time. The Aboriginal people must endure the trafficking of drugs, violence, forced displacement, plunder, and abuse of their lands, suffer the actions of terrorism, etc. These, and other impacts, have aggravated relations, and forced confrontation. They are currently working to defend their interests. In the Department of Madre de Dios, the most serious difficulties have been generated in recent years by the appropriation of the existing resources on the lands granted to the Harakmbet community, and designated as the Amarakaeri Reserve, because they are hidden there, as it is assumed, although false, the largest gold reserves in the country.

These problems arise because the State prioritizes mining, and the investment in it of foreign capital due to the profits that these two possibilities leave; for these reasons, the rights of the natives, prior agreements, and everything that affects what has been understood for centuries as human rights are ignored. To resolve conflicts, it is necessary to have legal status both in the Native Communities, and in their individuals in general, all based on mutual respect, which is what allows positions to be brought closer, and respect different visions. Only in this way can any dialogue, and negotiation be proved. In a sincere controversy you learn from others, from those who are considered different, since you capture their values, and cultures.

To overcome problems, solutions must be looked for through dialogue. Thus, mining actions must first be evaluated whether they are necessary for the development of the region and if some type of innovative activity should be applied since then the expectations it offers can be seen. In this framework of reference, the proposals of all the opinions present at a discussion table must be adopted before the negotiation begins, and the offers must be right, considering respect for autonomy, as well as rights and expectations of each group. At the other extreme, the possibility raised in the conflict will be aggravated by political, and social instability, without deciding whether mining investment could be compatible or not with sustainable development.

On the other hand, we must understand discrepancy as an important part of our daily lives, because we experience it in our homes, in our workplaces, in social organization, in the development that is called democratic, and that confronts people of different parties and ideologies. Problems are included in our relationships with other human beings but taking them into account is how we can learn to regulate, and transform them, while we can examine their positive effects through the participation of different actors and when they sit at a dialogue table leader of communities that are suffocated by pressure from outside.

Therefore, conflict should not be seen as something inherently negative; rather, we must think that any difficulty contains effective, and harmful elements, as components that are part of life, and specific to the needs that people, and societies have. Likewise, problematic situations between individuals are good for initiating changes; what's more, we must also understand them in their multiple positive, and negative dimensions, and not only consider them as a lack of union, tension, rupture, fights, lack of communication, and abuse.

A social, and environmental danger is one that relates certain use, and exploitation practices used in the exploitation of natural resources that damage ecosystems, causing irreparable damage to them. Poor management of Nature has been, and still is a powerful way to deteriorate environments, and everything they contain. This action leads to the confrontation of positions, and interests between the different actors that compete for natural resources, especially when they have a bad economy. The clashes include competing interests for native communities, and mining companies.

The development of Indigenous organizations, their relationship with other societies, and with NGOs, which support respect for their rights, has strengthened their positions, and this has allowed them to present concrete proposals to the government. There have been some positive actions, the development of which has been aimed at offering the study that allowed the elaboration of an Atlas of Native Communities, and a more realistic Census than those that were previously handled. Likewise, initiatives have arisen to enact State laws that encourage norms for coexistence, and resolve the problems faced by the different associations, or others have also been legislated that affect the Native Communities, granting them their rights, or recognizing the people who represent the weak part.

Some institutions have played important roles in supporting the Indigenous movement. Among them we can mention the following: Center for Amazonian Indigenous Development (CEDIA); Amazon Center for Anthropology, and Practical Application (CAAAP); Amazon Research, and Promotion Center (CIPA); Center for Theological Studies of the Amazon (CETA); Research Institute of the Peruvian Amazon (IIAP); etc. These, and other, institutions have disseminated information about Indigenous societies, and although they have made mistakes, the truth is that the aborigines improved in the eyes of Peruvian public opinion.

The natives have also associated at the national, and regional level. Highlights include the Confederation of Amazonian Nationalities of Peru (CONAP); Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Jungle (AIDSESP); Native Federation of the Madre de Dios River, and Tributaries (FENAMAD); Asháninka Emergency Commission; Regional Federation of the Asháninka People of the Pichis River Valley (ANAP); and the Federation of Native Communities of the Corrientes River (FECONACO).

10. Conclusions: Learning the Lesson

In conclusion, and regarding the aspects raised by the reflection in this essay, it must be stated that the prevention of a conflict implies previously recognizing the existence of an inconvenience that generates damage or irreparable losses, while at the same time giving a reaction on the part of the affected people, who also question the development to which the confrontation has led. A community can live with a certain ambiguity permanently if no action is taken against those who generate it. The way out of trouble occurs when the affected society begins to develop concrete actions to overcome the obvious damage, whether territorial or environmental, as noted in this essay.

The existence of territorial, and environmental problems does not mean that a conflict automatically arises; that is, water contamination, and misuse of land, for example, do not have to generate confrontations, but they appear when the affected communities, and people take a position regarding the issue to be discussed. It is not just about being aware of what there is, but it is also necessary to express a certain interest, a form, a specific position, and design a strategy. After putting in place the mechanisms, and only then is when antagonism appears.

Over the past forty years, the Amaraeris have learned some lessons that were difficult for them. The positive thing is that they have gained experience, and this should be valued mainly in the following five points:

- 1) to prevent conflicts, it is necessary to analyze the environment, and establish a new strategy to intervene. For this, the international, regional, and national contexts must be systematized, including social, economic, and political aspects. This must also include the elimination, and marginalization of the natives by providing them with educational, health, centers, etc.

2) relevant information must be provided to recognized Native Communities, and their representatives must be included in all projects that assess impacts.

3) it is important that leaders have enough time to consult and discuss problems with their people. Speaking, and listening to what must be said is a right that involves people.

4) sincere dialogue is what allows us to overcome any problem and integrate those who have been marginalized for centuries into the national culture; through dialogue, war is overcome, and peace is signed, but if a society continues to be denied, it remains in social exclusion.

5) the participation of Indigenous people must be reinforced, as part of Peruvian national citizenship. Acting in this way helps to consolidate democracy, since Peru is a multicultural country, like most of those that have representatives in international organizations.

Let us not forget that for us to achieve sustainable, and effective development, it is necessary to prevent conflict, and if it arises, we must have resources to neutralize it. The current panorama allows us to assure that there is not a good dialogue between natives, and miners. The situation of marginality continues even though the gold business is declining because much of the reserves have already been extracted.

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