Producing leaders:
An ethnography of an indigenous organisation in the Peruvian Amazon

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Abstract

Producing leaders: An ethnography of an indigenous organisation in the Peruvian Amazon
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This thesis is based on fieldwork undertaken in a multi-ethnic indigenous organisation, the Native Federation of Madre de Dios and tributaries (FENAMAD), in the Amazonian region of Madre de Dios in Peru. I explore the question “what is a good leader?” and offer a contribution to the literature on indigenous movements by focusing on the significant role that indigenous communities play in the development of leaders. Alterity is at the heart of the Federation as the leaders, who are elected to represent the communities, have to deal with various “others” on a daily basis, both indigenous and non-indigenous. The main focus is on how alterity is managed and made productive by the leaders. By analysing the instrumental use of the term hermano (brother) in indigenous politics I try to understand the way in which the “outside” is constantly defined and redefined in an attempt to produce a stable “inside” space in which indigenous politics can take place. I look at how the native communities affiliated to the organisation actively work towards establishing leaders who fulfil certain roles and expectations, which may at times be different to those promoted by the state.

My ethnography shows that communities expect good leaders to be consecuente (consistent, trustworthy). I look at the process of “becoming a leader” and how the experience of these new leaders is understood as both performative and authentic, as an expression and outward display of their values and identity. By problematising authenticity, I explore how leaders not only tap into indigenous discourses, as performance of an identity for Western audiences, but use strategic markers (such as indigenous dress) and discourse to establish themselves as legitimate representatives in their own communities, as the base from which they draw power. Llegando bien a la comunidad (doing right by your community) is seen to be a motivating factor in a leader’s actions and choices, and this highlights the importance given by leaders to being seen in a good light by their home communities. In analysing the importance of presencia en las comunidades (presence in the communities), I show how this helps to embed leaders in community life, both during their time as leaders and afterwards. I also relate the leadership role to its function in “producing people”, as empowered and able to act. The role of the Federation in the production of knowledge is explored to uncover the links between power and knowledge, whereby knowledge becomes significant for constituting power in leaders and communities. An analysis of the language used during important events such as the triannual congress offers insight into how both leaders and communities are producing each other. It is through language that leaders work to produce a trustworthy, reliable social body, necessary for the continuance of the Federation and for furthering its aims of indigenous autonomy and self-determination.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

I first came into contact with the Federación Nativa del río Madre de Dios y afluentes (Native Federation of Madre de Dios River and Tributaries-FENAMAD) in 2006 as a result of my work in an Ese Eja native community, Palma Real, as field coordinator for a Peruvian NGO, ANIA (Asociación para la niñez y su ambiente). I had seen FENAMAD leaders coming to the community to undertake meetings and workshops and had sometimes sat in on these meetings. This ignited my interest in indigenous organisation and particularly indigenous resistance. At the time FENAMAD was informing the communities about the oil concessions in the region and contesting the exploration work being undertaken by the Chinese company Sapet. I approached the Federation offices to ask to accompany the leaders on some of their trips to indigenous communities and as a result attended meetings in the communities San Jacinto, Puerto Arturo and El Pilar. It was later in December 2007 (upon my return to Peru), whilst walking through the market in Puerto Maldonado that I bumped into Antonio Iviche, a prominent Arakmbut leader, who suggested that I come to the FENAMAD office to talk about work. This thesis is based on fieldwork in FENAMAD, which has its main offices in the city of Puerto Maldonado, located in the lowland Amazonian region of Madre de Dios in south-eastern Peru. I conducted fieldwork from September 2012 to September 2013. I also draw on some data collected when I worked as an anthropologist with the Federation between 2008 and 2010.

Founded in 1982, FENAMAD has an Executive Committee with members elected from the 34 native communities from 7 ethnic groups: Yine, Matsiguenka, Harakmbut, Ese Eja, Kichua Runa, Shipibo-Conibo, and Amahuaca. These communities are affiliated to it and FENAMAD works towards representing the collective rights of all the different indigenous peoples in the Madre de Dios region. The founding principle was land consolidation through promoting indigenous territorial rights and much of the work involved securing land titles through the legislative framework of “comunidades nativas” first introduced in 1974 in Peru. FENAMAD’s work extended to include territorial remediation, promoting attention to health issues and intercultural bilingual education as well as supporting economic activities in the communities. Currently a main activity is the

Since the time of my fieldwork two new communities have been affiliated, La Victoria and Nueva Oceania.
protection of the rights and territories of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and processes of initial contact.

The thesis focuses on the work of the indigenous leaders within FENAMAD and explores the question “what is a good leader” by looking at how a specific type of leader, called dirigente, is produced through dealings with indigenous communities and through the Federation. Various authors have focused on how indigenous leaders develop themselves through their interactions with the state, NGOs and others (e.g. Brown 1993; Conklin & Graham 1995; Conklin 1997; Gow & Rappaport 2002; Jackson 2002; Graham 2002; Turner 1991, 2002; Warren & Jackson 2002; Ramos 1994; Jackson & Warren 2005). While Hale (2004) introduced the idea of the indio permitido (permitted Indian), which he describes as a type of leader who is given a privileged position in state dealings due to their ability to “substitute protest with proposal”. In much of the literature primacy has been given to the state, NGOs or international audiences in affecting leadership choices in terms of behaviour, dress and discourse. In this thesis I shift the attention away from the influence that these actors have on leadership styles and trajectories, whilst noting their significance, in order to focus on the role of the indigenous communities in shaping and influencing these leaders to fit with their own expectations of acceptable behaviour. Brown (1993) noted that many questions still remained unanswered with respect to Amazonian leaders “facing the state and facing the world” and suggested that there was a need to return to the local. Susanne Oakdale (2004) also suggests that more attention should be paid to local frames of reference and local concepts about the appropriate conduct of politics in order to fully assess the significance of cultural performance. In particular questions such as “how do Amazonian people think about and experience and achieve authority?” and “in what ways is power created, used, negotiated and thwarted by individuals in their daily lives?” (Brown 1993: 318) hold particular relevance to my data and I shed light on some of these aspects of Amazonian leadership through this thesis.

I look at the role of the dirigente in their interactions with the different communities, and how they develop themselves based on the expectations that are placed on them by these communities and their particular understanding of what a good leader is and does. The Federation is seen as a specific space of sociality in which the different ethnic groups of the region come to interact and the role of the leader here involves overcoming differences between communities and ethnic groups in order to emphasise unity and shared goals. The way that this space is organised has grown out of the need to work collectively against common threats to territory. I argue that Federation leaders are
embedded in community politics and maintain firm links with their own and other communities during their time as dirigente through the enactment of presencia en las comunidades (presence in the communities). They work to establish a coherent, stable social body out of the various communities through discursive practices emphasising unity and the collectivity which aims to surpass actual community and territorial boundaries (see also Sawyer 2004 for a discussion of indigenous organising in Ecuador). Through this action they are able to extend the social boundaries to create inside and outside spaces for political interaction. The inside space is maintained through recourse to kinship ties and place making and therefore comes to include all the indigenous peoples of the region. The outside is maintained as separate, and dangerous, although useful and necessary for continued survival. Othering in this multi-ethnic context is selective and the indigenous leaders’ main task is the management of alterity by establishing and maintaining the social boundaries for interaction.

The leaders who appear in this thesis complicate the binaries so often used to describe them – they are both traditional and modern, authentic and inauthentic, permitted and non-permitted, political and non-political, depending on who is referring to them – and they provide new ways of looking at what these concepts mean and how they are used in the different spheres in which they interact. The leaders place an emphasis on aspects of their culture to provide the context for their discourse and practice and, while giving them symbolic capital vis-à-vis the state and others, they also use this internally to position themselves before their communities. In particular leaders use myth, cosmovision, dress and language as tools to frame their engagements with each other and then use these same tools strategically to gain political spaces to further their possibilities for collective action (Conklin & Graham 1995; Conklin 1997; Graham 2002). Their engagements with each other within the indigenous political space and with others outside of this, contributes to their understanding of their particular reality and works towards the construction of their subjectivity as indigenous peoples (for related themes see Toren 1999; Turner 1991).

Concepts such as traditional and authentic, or their opposites, which are often used to describe leaders in the press and exist in the public imaginary of them offer an interesting angle from which to analyse indigenous leadership. As Peter Wade suggested it is “what remains hidden or is made visible by reference to [these dualisms]” (Wade 2007: 60) that will help me to unravel what new Amazonian indigenous leadership has come to entail in the case of Federation politics. What do references to the binary oppositions tradition/modernity and authentic/inauthentic tell us about past and present indigenous
discourses and about wider discourses relating to indigenous people? How are power relations manifested through references to these binary oppositions and how do indigenous peoples engage with them to serve their own purposes? (see also Rubenstein 2004: 140; Graham 2002). Rubenstein (2004) argues that the existence of these binaries is in fact an effect of power and he urges us to reflect on the production and operation of this effect (Rubenstein 2004: 152).

With reference to the concepts of tradition and modernity, these can be seen as “ways of reading or construing processes of change” (Wade 2007: 55; see also High 2015: 10). So what of the modern traditional leader who uses knowledge and practices based on tradition to position himself locally and in his home community, where ancestry and traditional forms of leadership are recognised, whilst at the same time using these discourses to anchor himself in wider debates internationally where culture and heritage offer avenues to secure land rights and rights to other specific legislative concessions based on ethnicity? Such a leader is able to develop himself in the modern context of globalisation, capitalism, neoliberal reforms, forms of democratic governance and nation states. This involves placing leadership practices in a traditional frame within a modern context, but does that make him traditional or modern? If this dualism has come to be understood as a linear progression from traditional to modern, by putting them together I can upset the timeline that this is supposed to refer to, as modern and traditional are acting at the same time, in the same person and in the present. A deeper analysis questions what both traditional and modern mean for these leaders and how they create and recreate the traditional through interactions with their own communities, and in dealings with the state and the international community.

This position makes sense when we consider the history of Amazonian peoples, who in myth, oral tradition and practice, have had long and varied relations with different others and have developed ways of dealing with alterity through shamanism (Brown 1988; Townsley 1993; Gray 1997; Langdon & Baer 1992), incorporation of others through marriage and kinship practices (Gow 1991; Overing 1981, 1983; Riviè re 1993; McCallum 2001), borrowing and appropriating practices (Townsley 1993; Alexiades 1999; Santos Granero 2009; ) or “customising” culture (Greene 2009). The result is that the idea of a fixed, immobile tradition, which modernity is able to act on from outside, becomes a difficult proposition to sustain. Rather indigenous people are constantly creating and recreating themselves in the present, albeit with reference to the past and myth, which help to frame their interactions (see High 2015 for a discussion of how the Waorani draw on social memory to define their relationships with each other and with others). This is
especially so if we consider that history may be viewed as cyclical rather than linear, as attested to by Harakmbut conceptualisations of myth (see Gray 1996; Moore 2003). Therefore “the past” is not only something actually in the chronological past but is constantly created in the present to give meaning to present interactions.

So the dualism tradition/modernity can be useful insofar as it urges us to focus on processes of change and specifically changes in leadership form and style over time. In many ways indigenous leadership is all about dealing with change and this has always been the case. Shamans, who because of their privileged knowledge often took up leadership roles within villages, had to deal with changing relations with spirit beings to ensure the survival and continuance of conditions optimal for reproduction both physically and culturally (e.g. Gray 1997; Alexiades 1999). And present day leaders, although in a different context and dealing with other types of unknowns, have a similar task.

So new types of indigenous leader can be seen as “constitutive of modernity” (Wade 2007: 64). Their position, as forming a part of modernity, removes the need to think of them in terms of traditional or modern. They have grown out of the interactions that modernity made necessary, interactions with the state and others such as extractive industries and NGOs, but have developed their responses in distinctly indigenous ways. Modernity can further be understood as an expression of peoples’ attitudes to and aspirations for change (Wade 2007: 65) and in this way indigenous communities and leaders are swept up in this very moment, aspiring to change things in order to be able to remain the same.

**Producing leaders**

The title “Producing Leaders” derives from my attempt to understand the complexity of the construction of the position of leader within FENAMAD, which invariably involves processes of learning and teaching, listening and speaking, which converge in a new subject position that is then embodied, enacted and developed through interactions within the Federation. In this way FENAMAD can be likened to a school for leaders and becomes significant in the production of a specific type of leader charged with the task of managing interethnic relations, and establishing and maintaining social boundaries. The activities undertaken in the Federation such as trips to communities or other cities, meetings and workshops all serve as important learning opportunities, which help in the
development of a specific subject position with a specific discourse. I use the term “production” in order to highlight the dynamic nature of leadership and to shift away from the idea of reproduction which implies some degree of consistency over time. I hope to grasp the dynamic nature of interethnic leadership where it is constantly changing and adapting to the new demands placed on these leaders by both their communities and the state or the various others who have an effect on indigenous issues (such as NGOs, international bodies, extractive industries, etc.).

Production also serves to highlight the role of individual agency of the leaders in modifying and adapting their own behaviour and practice through adopting new strategies, discourses and tools to help further the aims of self-determination and autonomy for themselves and the indigenous peoples. It is by creating their own discourses and practices about indigeneity that these leaders also importantly disrupt dominant discourses produced by the state and international community about indigenous peoples. This allows us to look at power and its different manifestations in indigenous affairs. I wish to stress the agency of leaders who, through their use of dress and other cultural markers, manifest a transformation, which can be understood as a new way of being indigenous (Santos Granero 2009; Turner 1991). A change in dress therefore represents their understanding of and commitment to their role as this relates to them “becoming a leader”. This new identity position can then be used instrumentally in their dealings with both internal and external others. From this privileged position they are able to contribute to the production of knowledge about others and specific types of knowledge about indigenous peoples, as empowered active agents of change, which can be used to position the indigenous movement in wider discourses and feed back to the production of this reality for the indigenous communities. This double process, of producing knowledge about themselves for others and also for themselves, is particularly interesting as it works to create their understanding of what it means to be indigenous. This itself is not fixed but internally debated and contested through Federation politics and especially during events such as the triannual Congress.

Before going on to explore these themes further I provide some context through a discussion of social movements and the state more widely, as these are the two main themes running through my work.
Invisibility and the state

The indigenous movement forms part of the broader current of social movements that have gained strength by giving a voice to people who felt excluded from the political arena. It has been argued that “social movements have developed in continual and intimate interaction with the state” (Foweraker 2001: 842) and it is by phrasing their demands in the “language of rights” (Foweraker 2001: 844) that they have been granted significant space within political debates both nationally and internationally (Brysk, 1996). The movements’ demands for change were directed primarily towards the state as this alone was seen as capable of delivering the rights in question. The social movements also offered an alternative to state imaginings of the nation by questioning the parameters of inclusion and exclusion of marginalised groups and by placing alternative agendas on the table. The legal and political rights of the marginalised were presented as a challenge to state powers of encompassment (Trouillot 2001) as these people claimed citizenship but with specific rights which other citizens did not have. Additionally, the claims for collective rights “challenged democratic liberalism’s focus on individual rights and responsibilities of undifferentiated citizens” (Jackson & Warren 2005: 551).

In the Peruvian case the eruption of regional and local social movements from the mid to late 1970s helped to put on the political agenda the institutionalisation of regional government, which formed part of the neoliberal reforms aimed at decentralisation, and in so doing opened up new political spaces for radical democratic struggles for recognition (Slater 1994b: 26; Jackson & Warren 2005; McNeish 2008). Also the land reforms enacted by the military government of Juan Velasco Alvarado resulted in the establishment of a new legal framework under which “comunidades nativas” (native communities) were born, with title deeds being granted communally to land ancestrally or presently occupied by indigenous groups. The Ley de Comunidades Nativas (Decreto Ley Nº 22175) of 1978 with its amendments meant the legal and judicial existence of native communities was recognised by the state and it provided a legal framework for exercising collective rights to land and resources. This scenario was instrumental in the formation of native organisations and federations which saw the need to unite indigenous groups with the aim of presenting their demands before government and especially in establishing mechanisms for undertaking the institutional requirements needed for land titling. Many of the indigenous organisations were established in cities in the Amazonian regions of Peru, and leaders were elected or chosen to represent and channel the demands of the newly formed native communities, as the “the law sets down the
comunidad nativa as the only legal entity under which formal recognition of indigenous peoples in the Peruvian Amazon may be granted” (Veber 1998: 394). As a result land has been a priority for the indigenous movement since the creation of AIDESEP (national indigenous federation with a base in Lima) and FENAMAD, two well-known Peruvian indigenous organisations, formed in the late 70s and early 80s, respectively.

What the state is and how it comes to be conceptualised are questions that have been studied from numerous angles. Some authors, such as Max Weber, understand the state in terms of its organisation and deployment of means of coercion and use of physical force, which lead to it being viewed as an apparatus of control. Others such as Abrams (1988) have abandoned the notion of the state as a “thing” by arguing that what expands is the state idea and its organisational forms. Within this view, the state exists because people act as if the state existed “orienting themselves to the image constructed of it. Thus insofar as the state exists, it exists in the ideas we hold about it” (Hay and Lister 2006: 14). This led to the study of the state in terms of sets of practices by poststructuralists, in order to emphasise that “the political’ is the dimension of social existence in which social relations are constituted and contested and as such a cause and not merely an effect of social phenomena” (Finlayson and Martin 2006: 155).

Foucault’s (1980) ideas about governmentality help to further our understanding of the state as he was interested in the “operation of power as a positive force dispersed throughout society, one that does not repress or limit behaviour but creates and encourages certain forms of it. State and government activities are not self-contained, but derive from a series of power networks” (1980: 122). Thereby notions of the state can be thought of in a new light as a heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory ensemble of practices and processes (Trouillot 2001) and as “new managements of life and death” (Aretxaga 2003: 395), which involve the training of citizens’ behaviour.

Whether it be through national social and economic policies or action within the international environment, states govern by defining the field in which they are thought to act, thus making their environment governable by holding off alternative ways of defining the situation (Finlayson and James Martin 2006: 170), whilst simultaneously making society more “legible” in order to simplify the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, prevention of rebellion and the like (Scott 1998: 2; Trouillot 2001; also see Weber 2010: 51, 55-56).
One of the main projects of the state has been to define citizens and create imagined communities (Anderson 1991), based on ideas of nationalism. One becomes part of the state only when one is recognised as a citizen. So if the state is a collective idea we need to focus on the functional character of the state and how citizens are created through practice. This is an interesting project as the state presence is felt differently by individuals, and individuals create their own imaginings of the state through practice. As Aretxaga (2003) observes:

[T]he fantasy of a unified, imagined nationalist community clashes with internal differences and power struggles. Differences in class, gender, ethnicity and status create de facto differences in citizenship. The impact of state power is felt differently at various levels of the national community. (Aretxaga 2003: 396)

The state project is also challenged at a local level by ambivalent state practices which make it difficult to achieve a unified understanding of the state and citizenship. These processes that are becoming ever more complicated through globalisation whereby “aid organisations, NGOs, private entrepreneurs, security companies and warlords are often seen to take on the role of the state producing the same powerful effects” (Aretxaga 2003: 398; see also Jackson & Kay 2005; Trouillot 2001: 130). This is particularly the case in difficult-to-reach regions such as the Peruvian Amazon where state-like presence is commonly felt through these various others who have predominant interests in extractive activities, or the management of resource use within a conservationist frame. Thus the state takes on an ambivalent form resulting in much of the discourse of social movements revolving around inclusion, reacting to the feelings of exclusion caused by perceived abandonment by the state. The discourse also centres round the legitimate (or illegitimate) appropriation of resources by the state. As Aretxaga noted: “The nationalist discourse of citizenship remains attached in the social imaginary to the state but clashes with the actual experience of marginalisation, disempowerment, and violence” (2003: 396). How the state is conceptualised at a local level through discourse and practice affects how the indigenous movement chooses to express and channel its demands on the state and the language which is used to do so. Relations with individuals in local authority positions (which may sometimes be favourable) and the often time restricted powers of regional governments have further added to the ambiguity of the state’s position as is felt locally (e.g. see Ferguson and Gupta 2002 for analysis of how state presence comes to be felt locally). This situation has influenced the move to place indigenous demands in international arenas.
Since the birth of indigenous organisations they have worked at placing their demands in the language of law and have acted to modify laws which were deemed detrimental to their collective and individual indigenous and territorial rights. This move has gone hand in hand with both national and international legislative reforms as these relate to indigenous peoples or the environments in which they live. Some of the key legal frameworks used to place indigenous demands before the state have been international treaties such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention 169, ratified in Peru in 1994 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007. Both these documents place territory as the basis for asserting a series of fundamental human rights and rights relating specifically to indigenous people, and they have been significant for indigenous peoples’ claims to land and decision making powers.

At the same time, both nationally and internationally, indigenous peoples are often intricately linked to legislation as this relates to the environment and protected areas such as National Parks or Reserves. This is due to indigenous claims to rights over these areas based on past or present and continued use. Also various international initiatives dealing with conservation or those promoted by the United Nations such as the REDD+ programme (Reduction of emissions from deforestation and environment degradation) or the IUCN guidelines for participatory conservation involve indigenous peoples as this relates to forest resources and land. It is not coincidental that one dominant perception about indigenous peoples links them in a timeless fashion to nature, naturalizing their position as marginal in society, and as such needing protection in the same way that the environment does (Valcuende & Ruiz, awaiting publication; see also Ramos 1994). This becomes manifest in the language of these conservation laws and serves to secure their exclusion from decision making and resource use or management. A further dualism comes into play here, and that is the nature/culture binary often used to frame conservation initiatives and legislation, where only those indigenous people considered closest to nature and untainted by the modern world are able to continue living within natural protected areas (Valcuende & Ruiz, awaiting publication). In this way not only are they denied a culture, but also both a history and a future (Murtagh 2012). As Rubenstein noted “‘nature’ and ‘culture’ is [an] epistemological stance that Europeans have used to legitimate a variety of forms of power, including power over conquered and colonised indigenous people, often thought of as living in a state of nature” (2004: 151).

It has been argued that social movements do not seek to overthrow the state but to contribute to the “creation of a new political culture manifest in a broader concept of
democracy” (Slater 1994b: 11). In many respects the indigenous movement has been seen to express a form of nationalism and patriotism, which seeks to draw attention to the corruption and incompetence of government (Jackson & Warren 2005). This position becomes apparent when in resistance to the government selling off national resources to foreign companies: as one slogan from the indigenous protests in Peru in 2009 said “Alan vende patria” (Alan sells the nation) (see Figure 10). Therefore it is through social movements that differential meanings of democracy are established, negotiated and voiced to a wider public. Indigenous movements seek reforms to state actions through inclusion and recognition of their decision making powers over indigenous territories, voiced in terms of autonomy and the right to self-determination (see also Sawyer 2004). This challenges state control and management of a bounded national territory and pushes for differential citizenship.

Ethnicity has long been used to express difference and articulate and engage with that difference: “Ethnicity is a social construction that is centrally about identification of difference and sameness” (Wade 1997: 16), which has come to be a powerful tool in making indigenous demands on the state. It is also the language employed in national and international spheres, in which indigeneity occupies a particularly powerful place in discussions of citizenship and rights. As Wade observes, ethnicity tends to use a language of place as opposed to that of wealth, sex or inherited phenotype. So “cultural difference is spread over geographical space by virtue of the fact that social relations become concrete in spatialized form” (Wade 1997: 18). This is particularly significant when thinking about indigenous discourses of indigeneity which are intricately linked to claims to specific territories located within nation states where they assert that they have preceded the formation of these states. At the same time that indigenous leaders have developed strategies for engagement with the state and others, they have also developed ways of disrupting these in order to preserve their autonomy.

Not all authors have seen social movements’ capacities for influencing change in the same light: some have argued that their possibilities for action are inevitably limited as the state maintains control over the parameters for their inclusion and defines the fields in which they can act. It has been argued that indigeneity is always about relating to the state, since it is states that give or deny indigenous rights (see Canessa 2006). Therefore indigeneity as a category comes to be mobilised against an opposition. So whilst indigenous peoples have the potential to redefine indigenousness (Omura 2003: 396), it “may well reinforce the very structures of discrimination that disadvantage these people in the first place” (Suzman 2003: 399). Indigeneity as a term has thus become “a rights
and resource bearing identity through neoliberal multicultural reforms” influencing indigenous peoples to fit into “government sanctioned identity boxes” (Weber 2012: 1; cf. Povinelli 1998). Similarly Rubenstein suggests that “what is from the Shuar perspective ‘inclusion’ in a larger entity, is from the Ecuadorian perspective an ‘extension’ into new geographical and social spaces” (Rubenstein 2001: 264). This is not to say that indigenous people are unaware of the ambiguities in their position that result from the use of ethnicity to frame their interactions (Weber 2012). As Terence Turner observed about the Kayapo in Brazil, they had an “awareness of the ambivalent import of their ‘ethnicity’ as a pretext for subordination by the dominant society, but also as a potential basis for the assertion of collective autonomy and communal self-determination” (Turner 1991: 293).

In FENAMAD, there was a constant oscillation between struggle (lucha) against, and accommodation of, state agendas, based on the different types of activities which the state undertook in communities or the new legislative demands placed on indigenous peoples. Sometimes these had to be contested and strikes were undertaken to show disagreement and in order to press for reforms, whilst at other times they were incorporated and leaders worked closely with the state to further state agendas. At different moments FENAMAD actually took on the role of the state due to inefficiency, lack of funds and notable state absence, particularly in the case of the protection of the Territorial Reserve of Madre de Dios or negotiating the hiring of intercultural bilingual teachers through the Catholic Church. The territorial reserve is a large area designated by the state for the protection of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation in 2002 but until very recently it has been unable to ensure adequate protection of the area, leading FENAMAD to seek funding from international NGOs to set up a surveillance post and hire protection agents (agentes de protección) from a local Yine community to monitor the boundaries. Actions such as these undertaken by the Federation have real implications for how the state is felt and conceptualised by indigenous communities but also significantly for how the Federation comes to be conceptualised and the types of demands which indigenous communities then place on it (see Chapter 2 for further discussion about perceived and actual role of FENAMAD). This highlights a situation where indigenous peoples’ “interactions with the state [can be seen] in terms of both dependency and struggle” (Turner 1991: 298) sometimes even simultaneously in relation to particular issues or when dealings with different state departments.

Steven Rubenstein noted that “at the same time that the Federation [Shuar Native Federation in Ecuador] has defended the rights of Shuar, it has also promoted their
incorporation into the national economy” (2001: 280), converting them not only into a well-defined ethnic group but also into Ecuadorian citizens (2001: 282). He notes that colonization, consisting of “new forms of socio-political organisation” (2001: 288), which are hierarchical in structure, reproduce “the form and function of the state” (ibid. 283). Therefore the Shuar Federation is instrumental in promoting private property, a complex division of labour and class differentiation, whilst acting as intermediary between the state and local people, performing the dual role of “representing the state to the Shuar and the Shuar to the state” (Rubenstein 2001: 281). He goes on to argue that:

Although individual leaders claim legitimacy on the basis of democratic elections, the legitimacy of the Federation itself rests on the state’s grant of territorial control. In effect, the formation of the Federation and Shuar ethnicity, territorially as well as institutionally, is “state formation.” (Rubenstein 2001: 285)

Hale (2004) gives further insight into the interactions between state and indigenous peoples through the idea of the “permitted Indian” (indio permitido). These are indigenous leaders who are recognised by governments and play a role in furthering national agendas. Using the concept of indio permitido he suggests that governments use cultural rights to divide and domesticate indigenous movements through the novel spaces offered by multicultural reforms. In this way the “permitted Indian” is offered a degree of empowerment but with limits, which Hale contrasts to the “Other Indian”, who is seen as unruly and increasingly relegated to the side of the indigenous “terrorist” (2004: 20).

The indio permitido has passed the test of modernity, substituted “protest” with “proposal” and learned to be both authentic and truly conversant with the dominant milieu. The Other is unruly, vindictive and conflict prone. [...] governance proactively creates and rewards the indio permitido, while condemning its Other to racialized spaces of poverty and social exclusion. (Hale 2004: 19)

Through a discussion of the indio permitido we are able to refer back to the theories of the state as it is through these interactions that some forms of indigenous identity are rendered more “legible” than others, or are seen as more authentic, as the state influences what is deemed acceptable cultural expression. Indigenous leaders aware of the limitations that are placed on them by the state try to push the limits of the permitted Indian and may oscillate their practice between permitted and unruly as the situations demand in order to further their aims. Ramos (1994) argues that a hyper-real Indian has been created, one who is more real than the real Indian and can be used by NGOs to
further their agendas. I will refer to the idea of the permitted Indian and the hyper real Indian in the thesis by demonstrating the ways in which the communities who these leaders represent play a significant role in determining what is considered acceptable behaviour from leaders. Leaders therefore are balancing the different expectations placed on them from all sides.

**The indigenous movement**

The indigenous movement is characterised by indigenous organisations on a local, regional, national and increasingly international level making claims related to the right to autonomy and self-determination, in representation of various indigenous populations (Brysk 1996; Conklin & Graham 1995; Graham 2002; Sawyer 2004). Self-determination here refers to the right to decision-making powers, control over their lands and natural resources and the right to use these as they choose (see also Conklin & Graham 1995; Gray 1997b; Jackson & Warren 2005). These organisations are led by indigenous leaders given powers to represent collective interests and mainly take the form of legible, state-recognised organisations which, in Peru need to be inscribed in the Public Registry Office. They also take a hierarchical form with the selection of an executive committee, with a President, Vice President, Secretary and so forth. Institutions such as these often rely heavily on NGO funding for projects, which has led Foweraker (2001: 855) to observe a gradual conversion of social movement organisations into NGOs in what he calls the “inevitable institutionalism” of Latin American social movements (see also Ramos 1994). He relates this to the shifts in funding agendas which have forced social movements to develop their own NGOs or to adopt and adapt NGO styles and strategies in pursuing their goals. By focusing on the role of the indigenous leader within these organisations it is then possible to explore the dynamics of new leadership types and forms and how these are created by and relate to interactions with both the state and the communities involved. It also allows a differential analysis of how power comes to be understood and employed in these contexts. This presents an opportunity to analyse the intricate ways in which resistance is articulated despite and even often because of NGO involvement.

The idea of a “shifting middle ground” was put forward by Beth Conklin and Laura Graham (1995). They based it on Richard White’s use of the term middle ground, referring to “the construction of a mutually comprehensible world characterised by new systems of meaning and exchange”. This middle ground becomes “shifting” due to the
different points of negotiation, differing contexts and agendas between indigenous leaders and various others such as NGOs, media and the state. A system of communication and exchange is thus created in which both sides perceive their goals to be achieved (Conklin & Graham 1995: 695). Strategic alliances create a space for interaction between these different groups based on sometimes contradictory arguments or what they refer to as disjuncture and dissonance (see also Appadurai, 1990). The idea of the middle ground is useful in understanding the ways in which leaders actively negotiate a middle ground between communities and the state/NGOs through the workings of FENAMAD. In order to articulate and connect the different conceptions and demands of the communities with those expressed by the state and NGOs, the leaders need to develop a language which is intelligible to both parties. Conklin and Graham argue that in Amazonian eco-politics in particular the middle ground was “founded on the assertion that native peoples’ views of nature and ways of using natural resources are consistent with Western conservationist principles” (Conklin & Graham 1995: 696). In the thesis I wish to revisit the middle ground by looking at the strategic ways in which leaders use the new spaces for interaction to further their own aims and those of the communities. In their dealings with these others leaders are often fully aware that they may be using the same words as the Others in their encounters with them, but not meaning the same thing.

It is useful here to reflect on Viveiros de Castro’s idea of “controlled equivocation” (2004). He uses this to situate his argument that, for the anthropologist, it is invariably through the act of translation that the differences in understandings between people (or different species) are unearthed. He proposes that instead of trying to translate and unmake the misunderstanding or equivocation, it is necessary to situate oneself in the equivocation to really get an understanding of the differences between what the actors are seeing. This argument is extended from his thesis about perspectivism, where he asserts that Amazonian peoples say that different species see themselves as human, so the differences in ways of seeing relate to the fact that the different species actually see different things but interpret them to be the same. For example, the jaguar who sees himself as human, would see blood as manioc beer whilst a human in the position of

2 In Chapter 4, I discuss how the distinctions between the different others who leaders and communities have contact with become blurred as their agendas are often interlinked in such a way that NGOs and the state, or the state and oil companies work together. In this way I argue that the others, become one significant Other, which is used in the creation of inside and outside spaces for interaction in indigenous politics. In this way the Other, can be relegated to the outside and considered potentially dangerous and divisive. I will use a capital “O” for Other when referring to the combined NGO, state and extractive industries and a small “o” when this includes other actors as well (e.g. gold miners, farmers, colonos, etc.).
jaguar would see that it was in fact blood (Viveiros de Castro 1998). This leads him to suggest that equivocation is not so much about a failure to understand but rather a “failure to understand that understandings are necessarily not the same, and that they are not related to imaginary ways of ‘seeing the world’ but to the real worlds that are being seen” (Viveiros de Castro 2004: 11). I would argue that leaders, as translators, are in fact dwelling in the equivocation and using this to their advantage, aware that they are not necessarily meaning the same thing as the NGOs/state due to their different ontological perspectives but maybe using the same words. Their different understandings of the situations stem from their different ontologies, epistemologies, cosmovision and lived experience. They are also active in recreating their reality and reinforcing their ways of seeing. Often when the differential understandings come to the fore, then either the indigenous leaders’ discourses (or their actions) are charged with inauthenticity by the state/NGOs (for some examples see Ramos 1994; Conklin & Graham 1995; Graham 2002) or the leaders choose to discontinue working with these actors. Particularly for the indigenous organisation there is a kind of sell-by date for alliances which are no longer useful or overstep the limits placed on their powers for action, meaning that in the absence of a middle ground the interactions become surplus to indigenous agendas and as such the indigenous leaders and communities no longer feel bound to continue with the relationships.

Based on their mediatory role, indigenous leaders have been referred to as bridges (Alexiades 1999); mediators (Turner 1991; Turner 2002; Graham 2002), culture brokers (Graham 2002) and boundary leaders (Gray 1986: 107/108). Most often the leaders are young men (although certainly not always, as this also varies across ethnic groups), with a knowledge of the national system having studied, been conscripted into the army, or held other positions within national society which attest to their ability to speak Spanish and relate to the cultural norms of the dominant society (e.g. Brown 1993; Warren & Jackson 2002, Rosengren 2003; Greene 2009; Virtanen 2009, 2010). The majority of indigenous organisations are located in cities far from indigenous territories and the leaders have to relocate in order to take up their office in the organisation. These particularities of the leadership have led some authors to analyse the role of leaders in

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3 In 2013 in FENAMAD there were 2 women who had been elected as part of the Executive Committee. There were also women representatives in the two previous FENAMAD committees and others voted into positions in the other indigenous organisations in the region. Often the demands of this kind of job in terms of constant travel (local, national and international), life in the city and long work hours tends to dissuade women from getting involved. More recently there have been specific projects related to género (gender) included in FENAMAD with activities undertaken in communities and collaborating NGOs were keen that attention be given to this issue.
terms of “becoming-other” (Jackson 1991). This also reflects the dangers inherent in spending too much time, interacting with and eating the same foods as these others (see Santos Granero 2009; Gow 1991; on becoming other see also Taylor 2007; Fausto 2007). Distance from community politics has also been seen as a problem for these leaders in terms of maintaining their powers of representation (e.g. Gow & Rappaport 2002; Jackson 2002; Virtanen 2009). These arguments place the new forms of indigenous leadership in contrast to more traditional leadership types that may be found exclusively in a community setting (Jackson 2002; see also Dumont 1978; Kracke 1978). This opens up the possibility for a discourse around authenticity, with new leaders being seen as less authentic than older, more traditional, community based leaders, because of their daily interactions with others and their physical distance from their home communities.

The dualism authentic/inauthentic tells us more about our own conceptions or the dominant discourses in Peru than it does about indigenous ones, as I argue that the new forms of leadership are necessary adaptations to specific cultural contexts (see also Brown 1993). Different leadership styles have grown out of new indigenous needs to develop knowledge about and articulate with various others. What could be seen as more traditional forms of leadership co-exist with these newer forms, but they serve different purposes (e.g. Virtanen 2009 and Rosengren 1987). I see the emergence of a new type of leader as an extension of the indigenous practice of getting to know the other, and particularly when this other is seen to hold powerful knowledge (Kracke 1992; Pollock 1992; Brown 1993). Stories of contact situations where young children were sent to study in missionary schools in order to bring back knowledge about the white people are often recited by leaders in the Federation, which serves to demonstrate a continuity of practices based on obtaining knowledge and goods from powerful others to satisfy present needs (see also Killick 2007; 2008; Taylor 2007; Greene 2009; Grotti 2013; Colleoni 2016). Townsley (1993) refers to the way that shamans incorporate Western items considered to be powerful into their practice (see Alexiades 1999 for a discussion of adoption of knowledge about plants). Therefore getting to know the other and the incorporation of power through knowing and adapting come to be seen as neither strange nor new for indigenous peoples. The result is the creation of a space for a new type of indigenous leader.
New indigenous leaders

As part of their role as mediators between communities and the Other these leaders have learned techniques for gaining attention and demonstrating their otherness as this relates to greater visibility for their claims. The use of specific cultural markers such as headdresses, body paint, nakedness and spears (Rival 1996: 158) have been studied in terms of a strategic move to gain visibility in national and international arenas based on the symbolic values that environmentalists and others identify with ‘authentic Indian-ness’ (Conklin 1997: 712). Indigenous leaders have at the same time learned to use concepts like “respect for mother earth”, employing Western visual codes to position themselves politically (Conklin 1997; Graham, 2002). What interests me here is how these cultural markers come to signify something more than just a strategic use of culture to further political aims in a global sphere (see also High 2015). I look at how these items of dress come to form part of the new identity of the leader, demonstrating a commitment before the communities to the cause and by extension an allegiance and accountability to one’s own community. The choice of indigenous dress also shows a new found pride in one’s culture. I analyse how the term consecuente is used by communities in order to define a good leader, as this entails congruence between thought and action and accountability. Leaders wear headdresses or paint themselves as a way to show to their communities that they are consecuente during big inter-community meetings such as the Regional Congress or during meetings with the state and during public events. This practice also is a way of legitimating the power given to them by communities and demonstrating their ability to speak for their communities. Now, by returning to the idea of the middle ground, it is possible to look at how different meanings are inscribed into these leaders’ actions. So for the national audience these markers say one thing and their symbolic power is harnessed by savvy leaders to ensure visibility, but at the same time, their use has resulted in new meanings being created by the communities and the leaders themselves. In both cases it legitimatises their right to speak for or represent both their natural resources (place) and their peoples’ struggle for autonomy – this being the message which forms the middle ground and is understood by both sides.

These examples highlight the need to analyse the transformative power of these new modes of self-reflection (Turner 1991) by paying attention to the significance afforded these practices locally. Oakdale (2004) analysed the interpretation given by two leaders about their different ways of negotiating with outsiders. She reflects on their own understandings of their Indianness and its significance in the local context. Recounting
their stories formed part of the leader’s self-presentation in the context of their community and were used as a way of pursuing positions of authority locally. So the meanings assigned to the encounters with others and their presentation publicly are tailored to these local structures of authority suggesting that the cultural display for outsiders, when interpreted at home, are used for different ends (Oakdale 2004: 61).

Through an analysis of the oftentimes very personal project of becoming a leader I suggest that this forms part of a process of autopoiesis, or the self-creation of a subjective position developed through intersubjective relations (Toren, 1999). Individual leaders draw on their tradition in order to make sense of their world, so history becomes a very personal lived experience gained through their interactions in their individual communities, with their parents, grandparents, and others. This then becomes a part of how they position themselves before others, as revealed in the discourse which they employ in their dealings with both communities and the state. They are constantly creating meaning through links to history and myth, which “both can be made to manifest the present and reveal the past” (Toren 1999: 63). Therefore “culture-specific notions of tradition govern responses to historical change” (Toren 1999: 45), as interpretations of the past come to relate not to what happened but to how what happened is understood in the present (Peluso 2014).

Through looking at the types of discourses developed by indigenous leaders we get insights into their ideas about power. In particular these discourses work towards the production of knowledge about themselves and the reformulation of their history which places them as active rather than passive agents of change. These practices form an integral part of their resistance to state power. Indigenous leaders assert their power as historical agents, capable of making and writing history. This production of knowledge feeds back into communities who are then influenced to develop their own discourses about themselves. One interesting aspect of leaders in the Federation was their work in the production and control of anthropological knowledge about themselves. They placed great significance on mapping their ancestral lands and collecting and documenting oral histories from older community members. These are new tools which are simultaneously used to place indigenous demands on the state and situate indigenous peoples within the nation.
The role of communities and resistance

By emphasising the role of the indigenous communities in the development of these leaders, as opposed to focusing mainly on the state, I offer an alternative way to engage with the topic, as often the power of the communities has been overlooked in the literature. In addition, stereotypical understandings of these communities emanating from national political discourses portray them as ignorant of wider political debates, easily misled and gullible, being peripheral; with the space of indigenous politics being reserved only for the indigenous leaders (who in turn are seen as corruptible, inauthentic and unrepresentative). Again this reflects a dominant understanding of the power of leaders, as individuals who are able to convince and manipulate followers into supporting their own personal ascendance to realms of power. The emphasis is on power held by one person over others. Through a discussion of the role of communities in the leadership trajectories of specific leaders in the Federation I aim to contribute to the literature by focusing on what is expected of a good leader and how the leaders work towards ensuring that they fulfil these expectations in order to remain in office and maintain their powers of representation. The communities play a vital part in decision-making and the significance of the Congress, which is held tri-annually, comes to the fore. Additionally, the internal politics in any one community dictates which leaders are put forward to participate in the Congress and this can limit individual leaders’ ambitions. These dynamics relate to particularly indigenous conceptions of power and the role of the leader. It is precisely how these new forms of leadership develop and are sustained through involvement with communities that interests me. So whilst these new leaders are often accused of inauthenticity by the state and NGOs and the communities criticise them for being distant in both time and space, it becomes possible to see the ways in which they have developed and inscribed responses to these particular problems, which allow for the continued presence of leaders in the communities, for differential significations given to indigenous markers and for new ways of being authentically indigenous and representative which are recognised by communities.

Referring to communities as a whole in this way runs the risk of seeing these as homogenous entities with similar ways of being and dealing with leaders. However this is not the case. In the Madre de Dios region there are 34 native communities affiliated to FENAMAD, which belong to 7 different ethnic groups and who speak just as many languages; there is diversity not only culturally but also in terms of peoples discourses about and expectations of their leaders. The internal politics in particular communities
(and Pueblos) have an influence on Federation level politics. It should therefore be noted that none of the communities can be seen as “a coherent political unit and several groups [within any one of them] may strive to further their own particular interests” (Rosengren 2003: 236; for further discussion of multiplicity of indigenous voices see Gow & Rappaport 2002; Jackson 2002 and Sawyer 2004).

There are intense internal debates about what the role of the Federation and leaders are, what being indigenous means and what form interactions with the state and others should take. It is precisely in interethnic spaces such as the Congress that this fragmentation and difference comes to the fore when these issues are debated and contested publicly. What is significant is how these debates are handled to maintain an overall unified resistance, one voice as it were, against the appropriation of their lands and resources by others. Here resistance has to be understood as multi-layered as there are both internal and external levels of resistance – internal in terms of the ways resistance plays out in community level politics and external in terms of Federation-level politics and interactions with others (cf. Turner 1991). Through their interactions with the state and others, indigenous peoples are in the process of “actively debating and revising the meaning of their own culture” (Turner 1991: 308). During the Congress held by FENAMAD in 2013 there were significant debates about what being able to speak an indigenous language meant for internal recognition of leaders’ powers of representation whilst in the Congress in 2012 the debates centred on the terms of engagement with the state and oil company. As noted by Turner, indigenous political engagements are “not homogeneous, internally oriented, closed systems of ‘collective representations’ but active processes of political struggle over the terms and meanings of collective accommodation to historical situations involving interaction with external conditions, including other societies” (Turner 1991: 308). This highlights the everyday forms of resistance that complex processes of negotiation of identity and deployment of identity open up for indigenous people.

With resistance there is also invariably some level of complicity, as these two aspects are dynamically interlinked and interwoven in indigenous politics, sometimes leaning more towards one or other end of the spectrum. One example comes from dealings with the United Nations REDD+ programme, which on the surface seems like indigenous

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4 I use *Pueblo*, with a capital “P” to refer to nation or peoples and *pueblo* to refer to a village or community.
5 In Chapter 2 I undertake a description and analysis of the native communities in the Madre de Dios region.
compliance and complicity with dominant narratives about climate change. However, the development of the Amazon Indigenous REDD+ version of the programme can be seen as a subtle way in which resistance continues to operate and indigenous peoples are able to further their own agenda, because of and despite this programme’s aims (see Chapter 5). So what might seem like complicity is also a matter of leaders’ being able to negotiate the position of the indigenous people in order to maintain their own powers of representation and satisfy the needs of their communities. The significance of internal debate and the role of leaders vis-à-vis the varied communities which they represent highlights that the wider context in this case “is not always one of global capitalism” (Wade 2007: 57), but relates to their own frames of reference, their own understandings of change, development, dealing with others, etc. The wider context, understood in this way, relates to being able to live well in their communities, being autonomous and having the power to make significant decisions which may affect their ability to do so (Gray 1997b). The result is that they are able to “Control the reproduction of themselves as social persons and their community as a social universe” (Turner 1991: 293).

Leadership in Amazonia

One reason why these new types of indigenous leader are particularly interesting relates to Amazonian leadership more widely and specifically the different conceptualisations of power and its limits. Lévi-Strauss (1974) sees the chief as someone who is able to create groups out of people based on their capacity to fulfil the basic needs of the group. If unsuccessful then the followers will abandon him and affiliate themselves to a more successful rival group. He suggests that reciprocity is a fundamental attribute of power manifest through the giving and receiving between chiefs and followers. He found that the Nambikwara word for chief meant “he who unites” or “he who joins together” and this dynamic of creating a group of followers has been noted by others in lowland Amazonia (McCallum 2001; Kracke 1978; Rosengren 1987). This means that a “chief’s power [is] derived not from imposition of authority on an already constituted group but is an expression of a group’s desire to constitute itself as a group” (Lévi-Strauss 1974). Likewise Clastres (1987) argues that in Amazonian societies the “space of the chieftainship is not the locus of power” (ibid. 206), as the power of the leader is based on consent rather than compulsion or coercion. Dumont (1978) noted in his fieldwork with the Panare in Brazil that,

The Creoles assume that there must be one and only one headman per Panare local group. Projecting their conception of coercive power onto
the Panare, they always wish to deal with the capitán. In fact, although the Panare do make a distinction between shaman (tukuraxtey) and headman (iyan), the political authority of a headman is legitimised by a religious sanction: shamanistic initiation. As a result, there are local groups in which there is no headman, that is, groups where nobody has gone through the shamanistic initiation. (Dumont 1978: 38)

The role assigned to an Amazonian leader then needs to be understood in this context, with the characteristics of leaders not being based on their ability to control others. McCallum (1990) compares the relationship between leaders and followers to that of parents and children suggesting that “just as parents enable their children to grow into adults capable of producing sociality, so leaders try to enable their followers to produce it on a larger scale in communities” (McCallum 1990: 412). She also suggests that a leader should be able to feed all those with whom he lives and works; this being one of the signs of a true leader (McCallum 1990: 70). Brown noted that the Amazonian headman’s role is to guide their supporters towards collective action through persuasive language (1993: 310), a point which McCallum (1990) and Oakdale (2004) also emphasise. It is through language and particularly moralising speeches, that community is made and people are enjoined to live correctly. Other authors have emphasised the role of chiefs or leaders in the mediation of conflicts (Clastres 1987), with them often acting as peacemakers (Rosengren 1987). It has also been suggested that a leader sets an example and serves as a moral model for the communities to follow (Lévi-Strauss 1974; Rosengren 1987; Brown 1993; Kracke 1978). Since Amazonian societies are for the most part egalitarian, people are suspicious of power and tend to move away from leaders who are considered to amass too much power (Clastres 1987). The tradition of criticism has been identified as a way to limit the aggrandizement of any leader (Brown 1993), which further emphasises the centrality of egalitarianism.

A helpful distinction is made by Kracke (1992), who differentiates between the “power over” and the “power to” in his analysis of leadership in the Kagwahiv people. He discusses the verb ipaji, taken to mean “is empowered”, which is used by the Kagwahiv not only in relation to a named role, like chief or headman (ñanderuviháv), but as a quality that inheres in certain individuals: one is empowered as one is generous or tall, angry or beautiful. The powers attributed to such empowered individuals are varied but mostly involve the power to transform or to bring something into being (1992: 130). This is similar to what Campbell (1989) describes as the Wayäpi concept of paye, which is used to refer to someone who possesses a certain power, a quality or attribute rather than to the role or office (Campbell 1989: 106). These varied understandings of power help to illuminate
how power can be cultivated, as part of the process of becoming a leader (see Chapter 5).

This literature is useful in understanding the kinds of power associated with leaders in FENAMAD. The leader’s ability to provide for and fulfil the needs of the communities is ultimately the determining factor in his success. A leader who has the “power to” fulfil those needs is able to maintain followers and work towards the establishment of unity of the group. In contrast, leaders who were considered to display tendencies towards domination and authoritarianism or to have too much of an appetite for power did not fare well (see also McCallum 1990; Killick 2007; Rosengren 1987). The qualities associated with a leader can therefore be cultivated and are not specific to the office or position held. So leaders work at cultivating their power, as demonstrated by their ability to transform or bring things into being. A demonstration of that power comes from the leader’s ability to motivate his kin and allies to follow his lead (see also Greene 2009).

During my fieldwork, I noted that two different words were used to refer to leaders: líder and dirigente. Líderes were often said to have been born with specific qualities which were then developed by their parents and the community. Líderes were also associated with ways of knowing the other, as were dreamers and shamans. Sometimes líderes were noted for their ability to be generous in the community (see Gray, 1997; Moore, 2003). Dirigente was used only to refer to leaders given positions such as President in the community or in the Federation. It is possible to be considered both a líder and dirigente, although this is not often the case, but many dirigentes strive to become líderes, highlighting a processual understanding of becoming. The qualities needed to be a good dirigente must also be cultivated and learned and this aspect was referred to often in political spaces within the Federation with reference to maturity or being consecuente (see Chapter 4). So one can develop leadership skills over time and through learning from others within particular spaces: in this way leadership relates more to cultivated qualities of the leader than to the specific office held.

On the other hand, Amazonian leadership has been linked to “mystical means of reproduction”, the control of life-giving knowledge, ceremonial techniques and ritual paraphernalia (Santos Granero 1986). This allows us to focus on a separate aspect associated with leadership, which is knowledge. Rosengren (1987) suggests that knowledge, when seen as a “scarce resource”, can be used to control people and maintain power and influence. In many Amazonian communities the person considered to be most powerful would be the shaman or ritual healer (Langdon & Baer 1992), due
to his access to specific types of knowledge (most often through interaction with non-human spirit beings), or to ways of knowing which ensure the health and social reproduction of the community. So the shamanic system is concerned with wellbeing, understood not only as the absence of illness but also as nutritional, economic and social wellbeing for the community and the individual (Langdon 1992a: 16). Townsley (1993: 449) suggests that we should “focus on shamanism as a set of techniques for constructing knowledge from visionary experience of shamans in the course of their ritual. It emphasises ways of knowing rather than a system of things known”. This is particularly applicable to indigenous leaders as well, whether or not they are shamans, as they draw on ways of knowing others which have been developed over time in their communities and in the Federation, to be applied to new contexts in which these people find themselves. Rather than being a static system which is reproduced and unchanging, indigenous leadership can be seen as a dynamic set of practices, which allow leaders to learn how to engage and interact with various others.

Whilst new leaders within the Federation are not shamans and do not undergo these types of training processes, it is interesting to note that these two institutions are not always clearly demarcated. In FENAMAD, I observed leaders who did seek to access privileged forms of knowledge through the use of an ayahuasca brew (Banisteriopsis caapi mixed with Psychotria viridis). The aim was not necessarily to become shamans or to effect personal healing (although this sometimes was the case as well) but rather to work towards the healing of the social body, which is an aspect of shamanism often overlooked in its new formulation and increasing use among people from Europe and the USA (for example, Labate et al 2014). Therefore it is about the social body and politics, rather than the individual body and curing (Brown 1988). So when problems arose with particular communities or between communities, or in relation to resistance to extractive industries, some leaders would participate in shamanic ceremonies using ayahuasca to gain advice from ancestors, or powerful spirit beings to guide their decision-making or to see the future (and sometimes the past). These sessions were significant as leaders could also see their enemies and develop strategies either during the ceremony or afterwards in conversation with other leaders. Both ayahuasca sessions and informal sessions of drinking and sharing of alcohol were significant occasions for discussing and planning strategies and analysing problems to be overcome.

This internal aspect to accessing knowledge from shamanic practices differs from the focus by Conklin (2002) on the global sphere where increasingly these types of
She posits “a redefinition of knowledge as the core of indigenous identity, with a corollary recognition of shamans as the bearers of privileged forms of valuable knowledge” (Conklin 2002: 1050). Interestingly the ayahuasca sessions undertaken by leaders in FENAMAD were often done in secret and visions were not shared in the political arena of local indigenous interactions; the leaders did not use ayahuasca to gain power, symbolic or otherwise, in communities or more widely. This may be related to the fact that ayahuasca use and usefulness is contested between communities with some seeing it as dangerous and associated with brujería (witchcraft or sorcery).

So whilst the Federation is a hierarchical, state authorised, legible organisation it is managed in a distinctly indigenous way, which ensures that the leaders do not maintain power over the indigenous people, despite it having a hierarchical structure with a President at the top. This presents particular problems for the state officials, NGOs or companies who expect to find a powerful leader who is able to make decisions for the communities in their absence and coerce them into action. Rather they find that individual leaders need to discuss issues continuously with the communities and are unable to force communities into action, meaning that leaders are often unable to follow through on plans or agreements (for a discussion of a similar dynamic in the Manchineri see Virtanen 2009).

**Speech and the production of people**

Part of the role of Amazonian leaders can be understood to be in the production of people, through the production of a social body, by means of the management of relations between people and the push for unity. Language and specifically the ability to speak well are significant, as this is how people articulate expectations in terms of the good relations needed for the community to be able to live well (McCallum 1990, 2001; Turner 1995). Ahearn (2001: 111) refers to language as a form of social action stressing that discourse both shapes and is shaped by sociocultural factors and power dynamics.

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6 Buchillet (1992) discusses the shamanic practices among the Desana, who traditionally recognise several ritual specialists representing different concepts of power and who exercise the functions of preventing and curing illness. In particular the curing sessions undertaken by the kūkū are done in silence with them saying that “Nobody is there to hear”. This serves to highlight that the knowledge which this shaman has learned is available to only certain individuals (and linked to descent) and so the others should not hope to receive training by simply attending curing sessions. He also suggests that the session is in no way expected to fashion the shape of the mind (ibid. 225). I draw your attention to this shamanic system as it relates to the personal acquisition of knowledge, whether or not others are there to hear.
It is precisely through speeches that leaders are able to “build people’s knowledge of the social nature of his or her own actions” (McCallum 1990: 425). Amazonian ideas of personhood stress the social construction of the body and the individual, whereby the body as an “entity is being continuously fabricated out of an environment by the agency of others” (McCallum 1996: 348). This is significant for understanding the effect of the leader’s words on people. Children are “made to grow” by external intervention and others play a vital role in influencing that growth (McCallum 1996: 348). Peluso (2015b) refers to this in the Ese Eja by looking at the use of the terms eyaya tiimeeña and ekwe tiimee, which both refer to causing action. In this way the bodies of children are taught to know so that they may act socially (McCallum 1996: 357, see also Turner 1995). The fabrication of individual bodies relates to food production and preparation, inculcation of certain knowledges and the training of the body through language with the aim being the construction of a knowing body and sociality (McCallum 1996: 364; Pollock 1996; Santos-Granero 2009).

These understandings of the person and personhood allow us to see how leaders can be instrumental in developing the bodies of their followers, while drawing our attention to the social nature of the person. It is through an analysis of the discourse employed by leaders that I argue that they are able to work towards the production of a united social body capable of combined action towards shared goals. This is what I am referring to when I speak about the production of people, in the sense of Pueblo or a people. The communities, in turn, influence the growth of leaders. Here McCallum notes that “Cashinahua make a series of connections between exterior matter and certain kinds of speech, their transformation into knowledge in the body and the exteriorization of that knowledge in the form of value-laden, potentially social action” (McCallum 1996: 348).

It is precisely through the speeches given by leaders and various community members that the social body can be seen to be constructed and efforts are made towards the production of certain kinds of people with agency to act. So “in the meal, sociality is made through food; in the meeting it is made through words. Both act upon peoples’ bodies in different and complementary ways” (McCallum 1990: 425). Further, as Graham (1994) notes, it is “through performance that the individual experience and identity are transformed into collective experience and identity” (ibid. 739). This highlights the “Cultural emphasis on the person as collective social product” (Turner 1991: 287). Here connections can be made between the production of people (in the sense of the individual body) and Pueblo (the collective social body), as language and discourse are employed in both cases to mould socially acceptable behaviours.
The speeches given by Federation leaders are also significant in forming a political consciousness in community members, as part of the role of teaching communities about the others and how to navigate the interactions with them. Here the connection between knowledge and power and its reliance on speech and language need to be highlighted, as human speech has the capacity to mould through its directive qualities (Pollock 1992; 1996). This has become more important as communities are increasingly dealing with so many different entities and organisations. As Rosengren noted,

In the case of COMARU [Matsigenka regional indigenous organisation], however, the rhetoric is not merely a political strategy for eliciting sympathy from the outside, as it is also directed toward the Matsigenka with the aim of mobilizing and raising the ethnic consciousness of the organisation’s proper members. This pedagogical moment of the rhetoric is considered important, as Matsigenka in general are seen by the organisations (and the NGO) as unaware of their rights and therefore allowing themselves to be fooled and exploited easily. (Rosengren 2003: 237)

I too wish to move away from seeing speech as purely about rhetoric by looking at how these speeches play a role in the formation of the individual subjective positions of the leaders and by extension work towards the production of people more widely. It is especially through language and exchanges that meanings are co-constructed (Ahearn 2001: 111). Laura Graham notes that the “creation and expression of subjectivity is intimately linked to surrounding discursive practices and expressive practices” (1994: 724) and that subjectivity is “socialised through its dependence on public discursive practices, while those same publicly circulating discursive formations are constantly renewed and regenerated through each expression of subjectivity” (Graham 1994: 725).

I see various aspects to speeches given by Federation leaders, in guiding correct behaviour, creating unity and imparting information about the others, but also in creating a leader’s own subjectivity.

While Turner suggests that speeches are used to highlight the important role of the leader as mediator of the encounter (Turner 1988: 211), I would argue that the significance of the leaders’ speeches lies in the fact that both leaders and community members are involved in an exchange and both sides are simultaneously engaged in creating each other and creating the reality in which they live. This is especially so as individual communities increasingly manage their own engagements with outside entities and Federation leaders are not the only ones with the power to mediate these encounters. It is for this reason that their work in teaching the communities is seen to be
so important, as they impart tools which are needed to reduce the danger that
engagements with the outside are disadvantageous or contrary to indigenous rights.
Their role in the construction of persons then relates to moulding them to be agents of
meaningful action, able to influence their reality precisely through the acquisition of the
necessary knowledge.

During the Congresses and other interethnic meetings in FENAMAD, both leaders from
the Federation and those representatives sent from the communities are able to voice
their opinions. I noted similarities in the way they presented their discourses at a crucial
moment when there was the very real possibility that the Federation might split into two
separate organisations. Collective similarities were stressed, as was the need for unity
and working towards the shared aims of the Federation. I argue that it is through
language and speeches that inside and outside spaces for political action are negotiated.
An inside space is created which includes all of the indigenous peoples of the region
whilst the outside is defined by the Others which come to be seen as the state, NGOs
and extractive industries, at different moments in time. In this way the use of the term
hermano (brother) in interethnic interactions, while signifying equality, also emphasises
a shared inside space which is created and recreated constantly with reference to the
outside.

Dan Rosengren looks at identity construction in the Matsiguenka and puts forward the
proposition that there are two ways in which this is developed: taproot and rhizome. Here
the taproot model of ethnicity stresses “origin as unique and culture as identified with
ethnicity” which he compares to the rhizomic model “in which identity is formed in a non-
bounded and expansive relational identification process with multiple points of rooting”
(Rosengren 2003: 223). He suggests that identity comes to be formed on the “level of
local community where common interests are generated and [through] processes of
actual daily interaction, rather than at the level of the ethnic group” (Rosengren 2003:
224). He sees ethnic groups as being constructed in discourses coming from indigenous
organisations in their relations with national society. The taproot and rhizomic ways of
constructing identity are thus oftentimes conflicting. His observations support my
argument as this relates to the wider conception of indigenousness suggested by the
way leaders refer to each other as hermanos, which is an attempt to move past the
difference and fragmentation that a focus on specific ethnicities serves to accentuate.
So for internal indigenous politics, while ethnicity is important (as it is defined by kin
relations), there are steps to override the divisiveness that this may generate with a move
towards unity on a regional level. Rosengren further argues that ethnicity is defined by
the state and various others, which he sees as a taproot type of identification which differs to how indigenous people conceptualise their relations with each other. Suggesting that “While the use of the taproot model results in categories created through exclusion, the use of the rhizomic model results in inclusive and open categories. The emphasis on inclusive or exclusive solutions corresponds to egalitarian and hierarchical political strategies, respectively” (Rosengren 2003: 237). The usefulness of the taproot model comes across most sharply in dealings with the state, where bounded ethnicities are necessary for furthering specific aims within the Federation such as ancestral land rights for specific groups, but otherwise the rhizomic model helps explain the inclusiveness of the Federation and its ability to encompass all ethnic groups in the region. Additionally, the practices adopted by leaders, such as travelling to the communities regularly and sharing in community activities, aim to further these close associations between leaders and the various communities in the region (see Chapter 3).

**FENAMAD and visibility**

Through the preceding discussion I have placed FENAMAD within the wider context in which it operates, stressing both its role as part of the indigenous movement more widely, as this relates to interactions with the state and others, as well as its role as locally understood and influenced by the indigenous communities affiliated to it. The leaders are at the forefront of this balancing act and are transformed by their role, as both sides influence and attempt to create a specific type of leader, one that is permitted by the state but also representative of the communities. At the same time the Federation itself undergoes a similar transformation, being a state-granted institution with legal powers as well as a school for leaders, which is itself instrumental in the production of people, as a united social body that supports the institution’s functions. I use the notion of the school as a theoretical device which resonates with the workings of FENAMAD and through the ethnography I aim to shed light on how the situationally understood meaning of the institution works towards transforming those who come to be assimilated into it. The Federation then comes to serve a dual purpose, undertaking its state-assigned functions while mediating social boundaries and defining inside and outside spaces for political action. In both respects the main work of the Federation comes to be the production of knowledge. This relates to the new modes of self-reflection and critical engagement which come out of interactions with the others.
In addition, FENAMAD offers leaders and communities a platform from which to turn the knowledge gained back on itself through the production of information about the communities; using this to gain political ground in the struggle for self-determination and autonomy. Millar’s description of relational autonomy is useful as it sees autonomy to be about a distancing from certain forms of power (Millar 2014). New identities and leadership styles are emergent as relational processes embedded in indigenous practice. FENAMAD performs the role of making indigenous peoples visible, with a physical, political and symbolic presence. FENAMAD articulates this visibility on different levels, as manifest through meetings, dress, discourse, petitions, marches, publications and pronouncements, and participation in national events and displays of citizenship. FENAMAD leaders locate themselves as a specific type of Peruvian person who is indigenous and autonomous, and demanding their inclusion into the nation state on those terms, in what Slater refers to as “the politics of becoming” (Slater, 1994a: 7).

My fieldwork and me

I spent one year undertaking fieldwork within FENAMAD as part of the doctoral programme at the University of Manchester from September 2012 to September 2013. I was able to insert myself in the Federation due to having worked with FENAMAD from 2008-2010; first undertaking socioeconomic studies in two separate indigenous communities, one Ese Eja and one Yine and then going on to work on an investigative project relating to indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation. During that time I worked as anthropologist and advisor to the leaders as well as undertaking fieldwork in the communities and neighbouring areas to collect data about the movements of the “uncontacted” indigenous peoples presumed to be living within the Bahuaja Sonene National Park (which shares its borders with the Madidi National Park in Bolivia). This project was funded by Rainforest Foundation Norway and some of my time was spent helping to manage the overall project, write reports and plan activities and events.

During fieldwork I re-established my work on this same project undertaking an updated report including information in the form of testimonies about new sightings of indigenous groups in isolation. The aim of the report was to push for state attention to the presence of these groups in the hope of modifying the zoning of the national park to take into consideration their possible areas of use. I worked closely with one leader, César Augusto Jojaje, an Ese Eja man, who was in charge of coordinating the activities within the Federation with regard to the peoples in voluntary isolation in the whole department.
We shared an office and undertook some activities together, such as trips to the communities, meetings with NGOs and state officials in Puerto Maldonado, Puno and Lima. I also contributed to other activities undertaken in the Federation such as meetings related to indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation, workshops, press events and other engagements as required and had interactions with the other leaders through these activities. I helped formulate rough drafts of letters to be sent to communities and state officials as this related to the overall aims of the project or to coordinate meetings or disseminate information. My activities formed part of the auxiliary team work undertaken by lawyers, other anthropologists, communications specialists and forestry engineers, and often we worked collaboratively. All our work had to be checked and edited by an indigenous leader, often the President or project coordinator, and all letters would need to be signed by a leader before being sent out. This in itself provided an interesting insight into how the leaders saw their role as they would often spend time correcting and revising the letters so that they would reflect “an indigenous view” and they would lament that I was too technical and so unable to formulate their arguments in the way that they preferred.

In this respect whilst the majority of my fieldwork was undertaken in the Federation it could be said that I undertook a multi-sited ethnography as I spent much of my time following the leaders. The value of the multi-sited approach to fieldwork, as discussed by George Marcus, lies in the possibility it affords to follow the thread of cultural processes (1995: 97) and observe the participants in different sites and contexts (ibid. 106), especially as the life of an indigenous leader invariably involves movement between sites and situations as well as being based in the Federation offices (on multi-sited ethnography see also Hannerz 2003 and Hage 2005).

Initially, upon planning for my fieldwork I had hoped to be able to be free to dip in and out of FENAMAD and spend extended periods of time in one or two communities, especially as I had the advantage of funding and so felt that I would not need to work. The reality, however, was very different as I found that not working for the Federation excluded me from many, if not all the opportunities for interaction. I was not invited to meetings and could not accompany leaders on any trips. I could only attend open workshops, and even then, only when I was aware that they were being planned. I was no longer useful to FENAMAD as my role within the Federation had been to assist leaders in their activities. Also significantly, during the run up to the Congress at the start of my fieldwork, there was a lot of controversy (which I will discuss more fully in the thesis) and internal conflicts related to the choice of date and venue proposed. Alliances
were being identified and two distinct sides seemed to be emerging, the divide being between communities from the lower and upper region of the Madre de Dios river. The Federation President at the time was a Wachipaeri (Harakmbut) man from the upper region, and it was the lower region communities contesting the date and venue, and since I was not working for the Federation my allegiances were thus questioned. The tension was accentuated due to the very real possibility that the disagreement could result in the division of FENAMAD into two separate regional indigenous organisations. For all of these reasons I felt that it would be better for me to start working again for the Federation and I was lucky to have had the possibility to do so. Although this was the best course of action, it did not necessarily protect me from internal accusations of meddling in indigenous affairs despite my very great efforts to maintain a neutral stance, as separate and objective observer.

In hindsight the situation offers me the possibility to reflect on my position within FENAMAD, as advisor, as insider but not completely inside. The real inside space can only be taken up by indigenous people as was manifest at the height of the controversy when an internal meeting was held and all auxiliary staff were removed from the building. Reference at the time was made to “cosas de nativos” (native peoples’ things), further delimiting the boundaries for interaction and reiterating who is and isn’t allowed access to the inside space at specific moments in time (I discuss the construction of inside and outside spaces further in Chapter 4).

By way of an analysis of my fieldwork experience, I found that I was intricately linked to the Federation tasks as these related to the production of knowledge about others and about themselves. The leaders use allies to gain insights into the working of others, they want to understand what the oil company may or may not mean, what the state laws refer to and the implications for them, what the NGOs mean by using certain terms and the like and so my role was as cultural translator and facilitator. I found myself to be part of both the business of knowing and inversely the production of knowledge about the others. Rather than being just a neutral observer, I was studied, my intentions analysed and scrutinised and the limits of my utility determined. I thus came to form a part of the

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7 The communities in the region are often referred to as *parte alta* and *parte baja*. This relates to their location along the Madre de Dios river, upper part or lower part, but also serves in emphasising the ethnicity of the groups as the *parte alta* is home to the Harakmbut, Matsiguenga and some Yine communities whilst the *parte baja* has the Ese Eja, Amahuaca, Shipibo-Conibo and Kichua Runa communities. These sections of the indigenous population are also represented additionally by intermediary organisations which are affiliated to FENAMAD, namely COHARYIMA, for the *parte alta* and COINBAMAD for the *parte baja*. In Chapter 2 I will discuss this further.
techniques used by leaders for knowing the others. Dumont (1978: 60) suggests that not only are the “natives” anthropologized but they are also anthropologizing, in order to reflect the ways in which the people who we study may also see us as their focus of study.

As a result of my work in FENAMAD I found that I was part of the very activities I was trying to observe. I played a role in influencing leaders’ opinions about these entities and was called on for my opinion on how to manage situations. I also produced information about indigenous peoples and helped to formulate these and transpose their demands in letters, articles and pronouncements for the public. I presented FENAMAD and their work to the communities during meetings and to the state and NGOs, and explained the role of the Federation to community members informally. My position, as part of FENAMAD, in turn may have affected the types of responses I received to the questions that I asked in communities.

There was a double reflexive project going on within FENAMAD, whilst I was reflecting on my position within the Federation and learning from the leaders, the leaders were also reflecting on their position with respect to the dominant society and discourses and working to place themselves reflexively in these spaces. So “[o]ne becomes part of the process one is trying to record but directly affects it in numerous ways, some intended and some not” (Turner 1991: 305). Turner suggests that there is a “shift from participant observation to observant participation” (Turner 1991: 309), and in many ways this reflects my position within the Federation as I was unable to untangle myself from the very politics which I was trying to study. Not only is the anthropologist not seen as a passive participant observer but also is not allowed to be so (see Sawyer 2004: 20-23, for discussion of a similar engaged fieldwork experience with an indigenous organisation in Ecuador). The anthropologist working in the Federation needs to be useful and participate in actively working towards the shared, stated aims, otherwise no access is granted. There was a distinct distrust of anthropologists who come to study the communities and take knowledge away without giving anything back, made manifest by leaders in conversation. Also there was a distrust which came from previous dealings with anthropologists (or those who were part of NGOs) who had attempted to influence leader’s opinions too much and meddle in indigenous affairs. This meant that leaders had learned that limits needed to be placed on auxiliary staff’s powers within the Federation.
These observations reflect an understanding of the powerful role of the anthropologist in representing culture, a role that in many respects is now being taken over by the indigenous peoples themselves. They want the power to control the terms of their representation and this can be seen through their move towards collecting and analysing data on themselves. Various leaders have now undertaken cultural projects which involve conducting interviews, collecting life histories, myths and oral histories in communities and working to develop maps of their ancestral lands. The power of culture has been internalised by these leaders. The ability to use this power is manifest in the fact that anthropologists are sometimes excluded from significant events or discussions. So taking back these powers of representation has become part of indigenous peoples’ struggle to assert indigenous rights to control the terms of their own representation.

Reflection on the role of the anthropologist and its complications highlights more widely the danger of insiders who are not completely inside. So whilst one may be allowed a privileged space inside, limits need to be placed on this as one is never completely considered an insider. In many ways leaders are most suspicious of these types of insiders (e.g. anthropologists, indigenous people working for state or oil companies) due to the powers that they have to represent indigenous peoples’ voices and influence internal and external politics. Motivations are understood in indigenous terms and this can be questioned, as were my allegiances in the dispute over the congresses. The relationship between anthropologist and leader has implications for anthropological involvement beyond simply studying and describing culture, as it is a reflection of an understanding of the dynamics of power. I was unable to abstract my role as PhD student-cum-anthropologist from the processes which I was involved in staging and contributing to, as well as my structural position as outside-insider, which placed me closer to the Others, and therefore made my motivations questionable.

There are two additional points which are worth mentioning. The first one relates to gender. As the majority of the leaders in the Federation during the time of my fieldwork were men, there is inevitably a male bias in the thesis, although I have made efforts to counter this by referring to comments made by female delegates during the Congress and in other meetings. In addition I found eliciting comments about FENAMAD from women in the Ese Eja communities very difficult as many of them had very little contact with the Federation and even those whose partners worked in the Federation were reluctant to comment, rather preferring to offer me the names of people who might know more. Being female myself may have also affected my access to information and to
spaces for interaction, particularly as some important discussions were undertaken during extended drinking sessions between men.

The second point relates to my analysis of the role of the leaders in Federation politics and community politics. My aim is to present an understanding of how indigenous leaders create the spaces in which they interact, engage with communities and formulate responses to the state. As my work was based in the Federation and with leaders, I had limited possibilities to obtain a deeper understanding of how communities come to see the Federation in everyday life. The principal times when I was able to observe Federation leaders and community members interacting together was through the Congresses and meetings in FENAMAD. While I am aware that communities have different understandings of the role of the Federation and are often critical of the leaders, I use this to develop my argument around how the communities are therefore able to influence leadership styles and leaders’ behaviour both through direct accusations and rumour. I have a lot of respect for the leaders who I was able to work with and gained an appreciation for the very difficult position which they have to manage through occupying a space in-between that of the communities and the state, while spending extended periods of time away from their families and also their communities. They have to grapple with the complex problems this situation generates and have demonstrated strength and resilience in the face of it all.

I have spent a lot of time reflecting on whether or not to use actual names of leaders in the thesis in order to protect their privacy. Given the nature of the topic of the thesis which discusses agency, knowledge and power, I decided that many of the leaders would want to be associated with their role in the indigenous movement and are extremely proud of their achievements. I am also aware of the public nature of the organisation. In some cases though I have refrained from naming people where I have felt that their comments might affect the development of their relationships with each other and the organisations with which they work, or my relationship with them.

Along with participant observation I used other methodologies such as structured and semi-structured interviews of different Ese Eja community members, leaders and ex-leaders from FENAMAD, various state officials and the public ombudsman. I am aware that indigenous politics is a topic which is felt differentially depending on the individual’s personal experience of the Federation, the city, extractive industries and NGOs, and is also informed by history, gender and position in the community, so I do not attempt to speak for everyone. Each individual has a different opinion and experience of FENAMAD.
and politics more widely as can be found when discussing politics anywhere in the world. My research focuses on my own experience of politics within the Federation, and as such reflects my own position within FENAMAD, my gender and my history. I do not attempt to speak for all of the leaders or the communities through this ethnography, nor to account for the diversity of experiences which people may have, rather I comment on the opinions and positions which I encountered through my work with specific leaders and individuals within some of the communities in the region, and significantly at a specific historical moment. The Ese Eja use the same verb, bakue, for “to see” and “to know”, which was frustrating in the field as individual Ese Eja people were unwilling to comment with authority on things such as federation politics of which they did not have first-hand experience (i.e. they did not feel they “knew” unless they had also “seen”). This serves to emphasise that knowledge is seen as experiential and so similarly the specific knowledge which I gained was the result of what I had the opportunity to see and this is what I attempt to present in the thesis.

**Outline of chapters**

This brief outline of the chapters gives an overview of how I came to understand the workings of FENAMAD and elaborates on some of the observations made in the preceding sections.

**Chapter 2 – Regional and Political Context**

In Chapter 2 I describe FENAMAD, its history, its stated aims and how communities come to perceive what it is and understand what leaders in the Federation do. I look at information produced by the Federation about itself and what the daily activities are. I also present a brief history of the region and the local political context. The leaders who were working in the Federation are introduced, as is information about the communities, with a discussion of the significance of the “native community”. I analyse the difference between dirigente and líder and discuss the significance of the Congress as highest decision-making power of FENAMAD.

**Chapter 3 – The interplay of power between leaders and communities**

This chapter deals with the important role of the communities in influencing leadership styles and the expectations of what is a good leader in the Federation. I analyse the
significance of two demands placed on leaders, the need to “llegar bien a la comunidad” (do right by the community) and to have “presencia en las comunidades” (presence in the community), which work in complementary ways to ensure that leaders maintain strong links to their own home communities (and kin) and develop alliances in other communities from different ethnic groups. This also works to create an extended sense of belonging and place in the Federation. It is at these times that leaders can share with communities, during meetings and social activities. It also highlights how the expectation of leaders to have presencia en las comunidades allows those leaders to at the same time llegar bien a la comunidad. Being mobile is discussed in terms of indigenous practice in an attempt to demonstrate how this works to re-establish leaders in their communities in order to counter the possibility of “becoming-other”.

Chapter 4 – Producing leaders, producing people

Chapter 4 discusses the significance of discourse and its role in leaders producing people (united and equal) and the people producing leaders (consecuente and mature) through an emphasis on what is expected of a good leader and a united social body. The need to be consecuente is expected of indigenous leaders and this separates them from other political leaders. I discuss the significance of being consecuente, what it entails and how it serves to create inside and outside spaces. A brief look at the role of rumour helps us to understand the mechanisms through which communities can influence leaders’ behaviour.

FENAMAD is analysed in its function as a school, to emphasise its role in teaching leaders and communities. Becoming a dirigente is a process and involves a transformation, which is marked by a change in dress. This signifies the internalisation of the role. Here I highlight the role of agency, as leaders engage in autopoiesis, a reconceptualization of themselves and the formation of a new identity position with its own discourse. A leader’s role is to establish social boundaries, and mediate those boundaries at the interface between communities and the state. To undertake their role leader’s work to create an inside space through the use of the term hermano and this conversely ensures the outside space is created in relation to this. Communities cannot be seen as homogenous but rather differentiated and autonomous. The space of FENAMAD is not related to the internal spaces of the communities, but rather is a specific space and place where indigenous politics is undertaken. Internal debates about what indigenousness means and the space of the Congress is significant precisely because it
offers the opportunity for communities to influence how FENAMAD positions itself and what types of leaders enter.

Chapter 5 – Producing knowledge and constituting power

In this chapter I reflect on the role of FENAMAD in the production of knowledge: production of knowledge about others and the production of knowledge about themselves as a means to empower the communities. I argue that leadership is about establishing ways of knowing rather than being a system of things known (cf. Townsley 1993), as the agenda, demands and contexts within the political arena in which FENAMAD interacts are always changing. It becomes about shapeshifting and learning to shapeshift. I analyse the spaces of equivocation in terms of the establishment of a middle ground (Conklin & Graham 1995), where both sides feel like they are being understood. I use two case studies to bring out how leaders actively use knowledge gained about the Others to establish a middle ground as this relates to adapting to the opportunities provided by the state (or resisting these) in order to further their own agenda to secure land rights. Through these examples I show how leaders work at producing and articulating knowledge about themselves to the outside. This also allows us to reflect on the different meanings that the various actors give to territory, as this is the prime example of where equivocation takes place.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

The aim of the thesis is to shift our attention away from the state, capitalism and globalisation by making visible the wider context of the indigenous communities in determining what is expected from a good leader. Here I look at the other side of the permitted Indian (Hale, 2004) where those that do the permitting are the communities. The leaders strive to develop a recognised form of indigenous leadership with all its contradictions and difficulties. The effectiveness of this for maintaining unity is attested to by the fact that FENAMAD has worked for 34 years in developing collective strategies in the defence of the rights of the indigenous peoples in Madre de Dios.

The mechanisms which have developed through the institution of the Federation enable the leaders to maintain links to communities and indigenous allies which ensures their powers of representation, at the same time that this is what is demanded by communities. Travel to the communities is an integral part of the work of the leaders and I have analysed mobility in terms of indigenous practice. The discourse employed
between leaders and communities aims to maintain equality between leaders and their communities through the use of the term *hermano*, creating a wider social boundary than one’s own community or ethnic group, encompassing all groups in the region. Despite the hierarchical structure of the Federation, leaders never have complete power and power is not seen in terms of power to coerce. I analyse how the leaders manifest their power in terms of the *power to*: effect changes for the benefit of the communities, empower the communities through knowledge transfer, unite people. When coercive leaders emerge there are internal mechanisms which reduce the possibility of their gaining significant power, thus the role of communities in pulling up or bringing down leaders through the Congress. The internal politics in individual communities is defended as part of their autonomy.

Communities play a role in forming leaders through influencing expected behaviours, and leaders form communities through moralising speeches. Both work to create a social body able to remain united when necessary to overcome obstacles. Leaders produce themselves – autopoiesis – through incorporation of various discourses, and a change in dress marks the transformation into *dirigente* and signifies the ability to be *consecuente*. Leaders are schooled to be a *dirigente* in the Federation which serves to highlight the role of FENAMAD in generating knowledge, offering opportunities for learning and it is through this that leaders are engaged in a process of becoming, creating themselves as indigenous leaders. Permitted by the state, yes, but also permitted by the communities.
Chapter 2

Regional and Political Context

This chapter provides background information about the context in which FENAMAD operates.

The Madre de Dios region of Peru

The Madre de Dios department is a lowland rainforest region located in South Eastern Peru and shares its borders with Brazil, Bolivia and the internal departments of Cusco, Puno and Ucayali. The biodiversity it harbours led to its being declared "The Capital of Biodiversity of Peru" in 1994. The region is made up of tropical rainforests with an elevation of between 183m and 500m above sea level. The weather is characterised by two principal seasons based on rainfall distribution: the dry season and the rainy season. The dry months are between June and October, with the most intense rainfall experienced between November and March.

The region has been characterised by relative geographical isolation due to difficulties with access until the recent construction and completion of the Interoceanic Highway which links the coasts of Peru and Brazil. The main economic activities relate to tourism, wood extraction and gold mining (both legal and illegal). Incidentally, the expansion of illegal gold mining in recent years correlates with the construction of the road and links to the processes of increased migration to the region. Agricultural activities are also undertaken and many people, including indigenous people, work in Brazil nut collection. To the north of the department and closer to the Brazilian border there are some cattle farms.

The city and department are growing rapidly and it is estimated that Madre de Dios was the single department with greatest population growth in Peru according to National Surveys. There was an increase from 36,555 in 1985 (Gray 1986: 55) to 130,876 inhabitants in 2013 (INEI). Madre de Dios differs from other Amazonian regions of Peru due to the high percentage of people from other parts of the country, and especially from the Andean highland regions, and the relatively low proportion of autochthonous indigenous population. The indigenous population was estimated to be 4000 in 1985, according to Gray (1986: 55) and the National Institute of Information and Statistics.
(INEI) registered 4500 people who self-classified as indigenous in a 2007 survey. According to estimates by FENAMAD the indigenous population in Madre de Dios is 10,000 (Huertas 2010: 61). Despite the rapid increase in population in the region this is still an extremely small total population considering that the department is the third largest in Peru with a surface area of 85,301 km², representing 6.6% of the national territory.

**Brief history of the region**

Within the Madre de Dios river basin and specifically on the river Karene (Colorado), the presence of ceramics and stone axes has been documented as from the late period of 1000AD to 1500AD, which are thought to have been manufactured by Harakmbut people (Aikman 1983 in Huertas & García Altamirano 2003: 21). At Lake Valencia, close to Puerto Maldonado they have discovered archaeological evidence (pieces of clay pots and stone axes) in an area historically occupied by the Ese Eja (Gonzalez del Rio 1973 in Huertas & García Altamirano 2003: 21; Ordieres & Gonzáles 2008: 445).

The river Madre de Dios was known to the Incas, as the river Amarumayu or Tono (Ordieres & Gonzáles 2008: 86) and called Eori by the Harakmbut people. The Inca Yupanqui proposed to conquer the region and with that intention organised an expedition (Miller et al 2006: 119; Fawcett 1911: 379). They arrived to the Madre de Dios river with only a few thousand men as the imperial army was reduced en route by “fierce tribes who attacked them from the river banks” (Miller et al 2006: 146). There was no permanent colonization of the area for some time and most entries were temporary to take advantage of the natural resources, principally gold (Moore 2006). It is only in the last century that there has been large scale colonization, with the first settlements of permanent colonial populations along the lower regions of the Madre de Dios basin and as a consequence of the exploitation of rubber (Castilloa elastic).

The first explorer who managed to travel the length of the river Madre de Dios till it reached Cayari or Madeira was Faustino Maldonado, who lost his life by drowning in a part known as Calderon del Infierno (Barriales 1973: 8). It wasn’t until 1894 when Carlos Fermin Fitzcarrald found the isthmus that today takes his name, between the Mishagua

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1 Source: http://proyectos.inei.gob.pe/web/biblioineipub/bancopub/Est/Lib0902/cap10.pdf (Date access: 14/7/2016).
and Manu rivers, that the problems of access were resolved. He came in search of what was referred to as “oro negro” (black gold) or caucho (rubber) (Barriales 1973: 4). In the Prefectura in Iquitos in 1901 a report was presented by Ernesto Rivero, which provoked an “avalanche of rubber barons”, and at this point Madre de Dios was officially incorporated into the nation (Barriales 1973: 8). As a result Madre de Dios was transformed by the presence of rubber barons distributed throughout the region, and especially along the rivers Tambopata, Manu, and Las Piedras. The first commissioner of the region Juan Villalta founded Puerto Maldonado at the meeting point between the Madre de Dios and Tambopata rivers on the 10 July 1902 (Miller et al 2006), although there was already a small village there with this name (Vera et al 1986 in Huertas & García Altamirano 2003: 25).

This new scene of extraction of resources brought with it the introduction of illnesses not known before to the indigenous populations, adding to this the inhuman conditions to which many of the populations living along the Madre de Dios, Tambopata and Inambari rivers were submitted. In particular the correrías (raids on indigenous populations by colonists) undertaken during the rubber boom presented a particularly difficult period for the indigenous population. Here are two quotes which make reference to the experiences, one from a missionary account and the other from the First Commissioner of the region.

[C]ontinuous battles were sustained with the salvajes, where they lived, who defended their zones hand to hand, from the invasion of the men, who in search of oro negro, comb the forest to find it, with nothing that can stop them (P. Pío Aza, in Ordieres & Gonzáles 2008: 52, my translation).

As has been the custom of some of the industrial houses on the lower Madre de Dios to traverse the tributaries of this river, forcibly removing the chunchos that inhabit them, to trade those who are left alive, selling them at a price of 200 to 400 soles per individual. This approach has naturally caused panic in those referred to (referidos naturales) which is why they live in the upper parts and headwaters of the rivers Tambopata, Inambari and others (Primer Comisario de Madre de Dios, Juan Villalta, 1903 in Fernández 1952: 212, my translation).

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2 Chuncho is a generic word used to refer to indigenous people but has derogatory connotations. It is still in use today. Lyon (2003: 38) suggests that chuncho was used to refer to any indigenous group who resisted the incursions of the white people.
These correrías and abuses were perpetrated by the rubber barons and their employees, who were looking for a cheap labour force at any cost, killing and enslaving the original populations (Ordieres & Gonzáles 2008; Fernández 1952; Barriales 1973). These incursions into the area forced indigenous populations to redistribute themselves, fleeing these conditions. Lyon (2003) refers to the process of redistribution of indigenous populations in the region as “tribal dislocations”, to account for the presence of groups outside of areas traditionally occupied by them. The result was increased inter and intra tribal conflicts. Many indigenous groups chose to escape to the higher ground and headwater regions, where due to their geographic isolation and difficult access, they were able to find refuge. Thomas Moore (1975) refers to indigenous migration processes in terms of “elastic frontiers”. He suggests that in the past indigenous peoples were not fiercely territorial, rather the traditional spaces occupied by certain ethnic groups, once abandoned, became occupied later by others or with a return of the same groups (in Moore & García Altamirano 1993: 4). This dynamic changed with the rubber period as a result of the unprecedented displacement of indigenous groups in the region and the conflicts that ensued.

During this time the basins of the Tambopata, Inambari, Madre de Dios, Piedras, Amigos and Manu rivers had 100 concessions, with a total of 62,500 hectares (Moore & García Altamirano 1993). The rubber was transported via the river Tambopata and a bridle path opened up by the Inca Mining Company which led to Astillero in the headwaters of the river Tambopata (INRENA 2000: 35). This route served for 60 years as the principal axis for economic articulation between Madre de Dios and the external world, allowing movement of people from Arequipa and the Andes zone for work and also offered the opportunity to commercialise products from the jungle, thus overcoming the previous access difficulties.

The Ese Eja (Takana linguistic family) and Arazaeri indigenous groups (Harakmbut linguistic family) on the rivers Arasa and Tambopata were not very involved in the rubber work, with the exception of those enslaved and taken to Bolivia by personnel working for the company of Nicolás Suárez. The peoples mainly affected were the Arasaeri and

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3 It is suggested that some of these groups are the indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation who had remained in these regions until recent advances in extractive activities made the wider population aware of their existence.

4 A similar dynamic was noted by Rosengren (1987) in the Matsiguenka. He suggested that the “local group is not defined by fixed territorial boundaries but by the network of social relations maintained by the members of the community (ibid. 158).
Toyeri (Harakmbut linguistic family) situated on the Inambari and Madre de Dios rivers. At the start of the rubber boom other indigenous peoples such as the Shipibo, Conibo, Kichwa Runa, Ashaninka (and others) were brought from the central and northern jungle regions of Peru to work (see also Huertas & García Altamirano 2003: 25).

The department of Madre de Dios was created on the 26th of December 1912 (Law No. 1782), along with the three provinces Tambopata, Manu, Tahuamanu and the eight districts. However, the name had started to gain currency between 1825 and 1848 due to a legend collected by Father Aza, which refers to the figure of the image of the Virgin Mary appearing on the banks of the river Madre de Dios (Fernández 1952: 172).

The first missionary arrived in 1902, and it was the Dominican missionaries who had the most influential presence in the region. Father José Álvarez, arrived in Peru on 21st January 1917 and describes his first encounter with the region and its inhabitants in the following way.

The circumstances of my first encounters with the natives who were in a state of belligerency, hostility and persecution since time immemorial with the rubber tappers and industrial houses; clashes and hatred to the death of some tribes with others; a situation which has created a state of fear and fearful abhorrence in them, and the very idea of going into the jungle, home of the tribes, to bring a Christian message was, if not utopian, considered very risky (Barriales 1973: 3, my translation).

The Dominican Missionaries from the start of their work in the region denounced the inhumane treatment of the indigenous populations and made frequent incursions in the region documenting populations and making contacts. It was in 1910 that Father José Pío Aza established the mission of San Jacinto in Puerto Maldonado and constructed a school later in 1913 with the aim being to bring Ese Eja from the river Tambopata and especially children to the mission to receive an education (Fernández 1952: 244). Some Ese Eja later settled in the Dominican mission of Lago Valencia established in December 1929 (Soria Heredia 1998: 277), whilst others remained living along the Tambopata river (and its tributaries), the rivers Heath and Madre de Dios. Upon the closure of the mission those people returned to the areas which they had been occupying previously and the missionaries then turned their attention to the Harakmbut along the upper Madre de Dios river.

Between the period of 1914 and 1918 there was a noted rapid increase in the population of the region, which is explained by the intensification of the exploration for rubber and
the opening of new access ways. The colonization was principally along the rivers Inambari and Tambopata, especially in the higher parts like Yanahuaya, San Juan del Oro and Cuyo Cuyo (Martínez 1969). However, this rubber boom was short lived. After the fall in rubber prices the two principal industries which grew in the Madre de Dios region were the extraction of Brazil nuts (“castaña”, *Bertholletia excelsa*) and the sale of animals skins obtained from hunting. Many times it was the same companies and individuals, which used their infrastructure and already cleared paths to undertake these activities (Alexiades 1999). The extraction of Brazil nuts started around the 1930s, and in the 40s they introduced the first machines to shell the nuts. In the 1960s one of the first exportation companies was set up allowing sales to external markets. This was facilitated by the presence of air transport between Cusco, Quincemill, Puerto Maldonado and Iberia which was opened in 1943 (García Altamirano, 2003: 30).

The rise of gold exploration started with force in the 1930s, first in the region of Quincemil, close to the Arasa river, and later along the Inambari river, and since those times till today there has been strong migration to the gold mining areas along the Arasa, Nusiniscato, Inambari and San Gaban rivers.

In particular, the upper parts of the Madre de Dios, and specifically the Colorado and Inambari rivers, were considered rich in alluvial deposits but inaccessible due to the presence of the Harakmbut people, who were feared. This led to discussions in Puerto Maldonado about a way to civilise the “Mashcos” (the name given to the Harakmbut by the missionaries) in order to open up access to the region for gold exploitation, agriculture and mining (Fernández 1952: 654). The first contact which the Dominican fathers had with the Harakmbut people was with the Toyeri and Arasaeri in the 1930s, the Sapiteri and Wachipaeri in the 1940s and the Arakmbut and Kisambaeri in the 1950s (Gray 1996: 12).

In 1940 there was an expedition organised by the missionaries in search of the Harakmbut groups known to live along the river Colorado and they used a small plane to drop presents and locate their villages (Fernández 1952: 624). They observed about 100 houses between the river Colorado, Blanco and Chilive as well as others along Piñi, Pilcopata, y Pukiri (Barriales 1973: 49). In 1943 the mission of Caichihue was established on the confluence between the Madre de Dios and Palotoa rivers and a number of these Harakmbut groups were settled there along with other Harakmbut groups such as the Jiptaperis, Kipundirinieris y Kisambaeris who came from the upper Karene (Colorado) river. Due to flooding the mission was later moved to river Shintuya and given the name
San Miguel de los Mashcos. The mission still exists today in what is now a native community of mixed Harakmbut groups called Shintuya. During the 1960s the majority of the Arakmbut (Amarakaeri) and Wachipaeri lived there but between 1969 and 1973 various Arakmbut groups escaped from the mission and established themselves in what are now the native communities of Barranco Chico, San José del Karene and Boca Inambari. Those groups that settled in the location of Puerto Alegre (later to be called Puerto Luz) were contacted by the Summer Institute of Linguistics in 1957 after only a short time in the mission of Shintuya (Gray 1996: 12).

The indigenous population was greatly affected by illnesses during this time of increased contact (Alexiades 1999: 103; Gray 1996: 14), with Harakmbut groups such as the Toyeri, Iñapari y Sapiteri being almost completely eliminated. The Toyeri and Arasaeri seem to have been assimilated through marriage into the Ese Eja groups from the Tambopata, other Harakmbut groups or riverine communities due to drastic population reductions at the turn of the century (Chavarria 2003: 200). Some estimates calculate that there may have been as many as 30,000 Harakmbut people, with around 10,000 Ese Eja before this turbulent period in history (García Altamirano 2003: 24/25).

The construction of the road from Urcos towards the Madre de Dios region started with the Government of Leguía, arriving in Quincemil in 1943 and to Puerto Maldonado in 1965, which converted this into the primary articulation axis between the highlands and Madre de Dios (Moore & García Altamirano 1993). As a result Cusco replaced Puno as the commercial point and work force migration commenced, leaving the bridle path of the Inca Mining Company in abandon. The colonisation pressures, gold mining, wood extraction and merchants are located primarily along the route of the road.

**Current land distribution**

The region to the north and closer to the border with Brazil is given over to state designated forestry concessions (logging and reforestation concessions) while areas along the lower Madre de Dios river and Las Piedras river have parts which are segmented into Brazil nut collection concessions (refer to Figure 1). There are also significant gold mining concessions and a “mining corridor”, was established by law in February 2012, to allow for the formalization of the exploitation of this valuable

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5 The native communities who are actively involved in gold mining and have been since the 1970s are excluded from this corridor which has been a constant theme for meetings in FENAMAD due to the
resource. These measures were promoted by the state after a lot of controversy related to the extensive degradation and devastation that this activity has produced in the region. Madre de Dios made headlines in Peru and abroad over the last few years due to the upsurge in illegal gold mining facilitated to a large degree by the newly completed Interoceanic Highway. The road was built in order to encourage and facilitate trade relations with China, a priority on the agenda, as well as to encourage the “development” of the Amazon regions as part of the grand IIRSA project. The construction was mostly financed by Brazil and a Brazilian company, Odebrecht, was involved in the construction of the Interoceanica Sur which cuts through the Madre de Dios region, connecting it with Cusco in the highlands. The road passes directly through the city of Puerto Maldonado via one of the longest bridges in the country (completed in 2011).

The Madre de Dios region is also divided up by the state according to conservation interests and large expanses of land are given over to varying classifications of reserved area such as National Parks, National Reserves, Communal Reserves, and a Territorial Reserve, some of which serve the dual purpose of conserving the biological diversity of the region (one of the biodiversity hotspots of the world) and providing a protected space in which voluntary isolated peoples can continue the thrive. There are also interestingly two recognised native communities found inside the Manu National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, which presents an interesting scenario in terms of land use and resource rights which is too extensive to go into here. Additionally there are private conservation concessions and ecotourism lodges which aim to conserve tracts of land for ecotourism purposes.

There are two specific categories of area which imply a direct interaction between the state and the indigenous peoples: the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve (RCA) and the Territorial Reserve of Madre de Dios. The RCA is co-managed by the state National Parks Service (Servicio Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas por el Estado-

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8 Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America
SERNANP) and a democratically elected committee of representatives from the ten communities (labelled as the beneficiaries) who share their borders with the Reserve. This committee is called the *Ejecutor de Contrato de Administración* (ECA). This area obtained its legal title in 2002 (Decreto Supremo Nº031- 2002 el 09 de mayo 2002).

The Territorial Reserve of Madre de Dios was also designated in 2002 (Resolución Ministerial Nº 427-2002-AG) and is a protected area for the indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation to enable them to continue in that condition until such time as they decide (with free will) to make contact with the rest of society. This area should be administered by the state, currently via the Vice Ministry of Intercultural Affairs (Viceministerio de Interculturalidad, which is part of the Ministry of Culture). The reality though is that protection of the area is undertaken by FENAMAD who have constructed a *puesto de vigilancia* (surveillance post) on the Las Piedras river (which is the main access route to the area) and hires *agentes de protección* (a type of park guard) with the help of a project funded by Rainforest Foundation Norway.\(^9\) FENAMAD was forced to take over these state activities due to the lack of adequate state attention to the problem and insufficient funding to carry out the necessary work.\(^10\) Despite FENAMAD taking over this task the state refused to officially recognise the labour of the *agentes de protección* meaning that they did not have any authority to detain or prosecute invaders of the area, mainly loggers. This made comprehensive protection of the area difficult. It is only recently that the state has begun diligently working in coordination with FENAMAD and has taken over payment of the protection agents.

There is one active oil-drilling concession made in 2004, Block 76, and owned by Texas-based Hunt Oil since 2006. This overlaps the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve almost entirely. More recently there are also four newly assigned concessions which are up for licitation, blocks 190, 157, 191 and 187 (see Figure 1), although the region has had various interventions and explorations by oil companies since the 1960s. One of the more sustained involvements came from Mobil in the 1990s who worked in the area now known as the Bahuaja Sonene National Park (as well as in other areas of the department) and it is claimed that only once the company had left the area could it be opened up for

\(^9\) There has been much debate over what these specific types of park guards should be called in order to distance them from the traditional park guard who is involved in protecting the biodiversity of a national park as these guards are working to protect the lives of the indigenous peoples.

\(^10\) FENAMAD has denounced the Peruvian state before the Inter American Court for Human Rights in Washington, DC for failing in their responsibility to protect the territories of these people and for placing them at risk due to inaction. The case continues and Special Measures have been issued and the state has made some progress towards assuming their responsibility in the last few years.
the creation of the national park and the national reserve. Mobil deemed that it was not cost effective to exploit the large reserves of oil and gas known to exist in the region at that time, although in recent years national interest in this possibility has been re-ignited with a bill proposal that aimed to cut the national park in order to open up areas for oil exploration again. Incidentally the Bahuaja Sonene National Park covers what is largely considered to be the Ese Eja ancestral territories. The Ese Eja have recently filed a case in the Inter American Court for Human Rights against the Peruvian State, claiming to have been excluded from their ancestral lands due to conservation. The situation has been complicated by the State and a national NGO, AIDER, (who is acting as *Ejecutor de Contrato de Administración* of the area) signing a contract with a private company to implement a REDD+ programme in the area, for which the Ese Eja were not consulted and from which they argue they will not benefit.
Figure 1. Map of hydrocarbon blocks and forestry concessions in the Región de Madre de Dios. The native communities are in yellow. The conservation areas are also marked. (Source: ACCA in AIDESEP, 2009). Link to website: http://www.aidesep.org.pe/indigenas-aislados-amenazados-por-licitacion-de-sus-terrenos-a-empresas-petroleras/ (date accessed: 6/4/2016)
I have presented an overview of the territorial distribution in particular highlighting the areas for conservation and resource extraction in Madre de Dios in order to set out the different scenarios which affect the indigenous population in the region. Most areas considered ancestral lands by indigenous people are now under different management regimens and in some cases such as the Communal Reserve, the indigenous peoples have been able to work in collaboration with the state in order to retain some decision-making powers. In other cases, the designation of conservation interests over those of the communities are leading to renewed attempts by indigenous populations to push for rights to participate in the management of these areas. The extractive activities which the state has often assigned over titled native communities sets the scene for increased socioeconomic conflicts of interests in the region, such as those that relate to gold mining and oil extraction. This background information is important as I will explore the creation of inside and outside spaces for interaction in Chapter 4, where the state becomes constructed as Other and outside, and territory frames my discussion in Chapter 5 as this relates to state-indigenous interactions.

**Indigenous peoples and Native communities in Madre de Dios**

The region of Madre de Dios is characterised by the presence of 4 linguistic families: Harakmbut, Arawak, Pano and Takana. In this thesis I will mostly refer to the Harakmbut and Ese Eja peoples as the leaders with whom I had most close contact were from these groups and indeed the Harakmbut leaders made up a majority within the Federation Directorates at this time (see tables on page 79). For this reason I will give some additional information about these peoples here and not about all of the other groups in the region.

The term Harakmbut literally means “people” and is used to refer to all the groups of people who speak the Harakmbut language (Gray 1996: 5). They use the suffix –eri to differentiate between the different groups, as this means “people of” (Gray 1996: 5). Lyon suggests that the suffix –eri could be translated as “those who live in” or “those from” (Lyon, 1970: 186), and is used to form the names of the clans known by the rivers along which they can be located. These groups resided along the tributaries of the upper Madre de Dios river. Although there were 7 subgroups: the Arakmbut (Amarakaeri), Arasaeri, Wachipaeri, Pukirieri, Zapiteri, Kuzamberi and Toyeri (Gray 1997; also see FENAMAD Facebook page 24 July 2012), essentially now only 2 remain in any great numbers, the Arakmbut and Wachipaeri (Alexiades 1999: 80). Whilst some of the remaining individuals from the other groups have been incorporated into the different communities, the majority of their populations were reduced due to disease at the start of the last century (Gray 1996).
Harakmbut is also used to refer to the language spoken, and the linguistic family which is
taken to mean “language of the people” (Lyon 2003). The Harakmbut language can be divided
into two branches: the first includes the languages of the Arakmbut (Amarakaeri) and the
Kisambaeri, and the second includes the Wachipaeri, Arasaeri, Sapiteri and Toyeri. Linguistic
distinctions are based upon cultural factors and residence (Gray 1996: 4), although the
Harakmbut are joined by a shared kinship and mythological system. It has been suggested
that the group of dialects which characterise the Harakmbut language have separated
relatively recently in time, or have maintained mutual comprehensibility via continuous contact
or intense contact over a longer period of time (Lyon 1970). All the Harakmbut languages
share the same phonetic system.

The term Ese Eja, when used to refer to the ethnic group, has been taken to mean “human”
(Burr 1997), “true people” (Chavarria 2002; Alexiades 1999) or “people from our group”
(Chavarria 2003). Ese Eja is also used to refer to the language spoken, which belongs to the
Takana linguistic family (Alexiades & Peluso 2003: 93). The Ese Eja people are divided into
three sub groups based on slight linguistic variations and geographical origin (Alexiades
1999). These groups are the Bawaja group associated with the Tambopata river and its
tributaries; Sonene group from the river Heath and the Madidi group from the Beni river in
Bolivia (Alexiades 1999: 82). There are 3 Ese Eja communities in Peru called Palma Real,
Infierno (Bahuaja Kuiñaje) and Sonene with others in Bolivia. Oral tradition identifies the river
Tambopata or Bawaja as the place where the mythic ancestors descended from the sky on a
cotton rope (Burr 1997).

The other indigenous peoples in the region include the Shipibo-Conibo, Kichua Runa,
Matsiguenka, Amahuaca and Yine. All of the indigenous populations are now settled in 34
native communities with state granted, titled lands (see Figure 2). There are a number of
groups in voluntary isolation thought to be from the Pano linguistic family such as the Nanti,
and Yora, while there are other groups referred to as the Mashco Piro who appear to share
linguistic similarities with the Yine (Huertas & García Altamirano 2003). There are also
Matsiguenka populations both in isolation and in processes of initial contact in and around the
Manu National Park (Rodríguez 2008).
Figure 2. Map of the native communities and Territorial Reserve of Madre de Dios (Source: FENAMAD 2009).
The “native community” came into existence as the result of the “Ley de Comunidades Nativas y de desarrollo agrario de la selva y ceja de selva” (Decreto Ley Nº 22175). This legislation, first introduced in 1974 was amended in 1978. The amendments meant the exclusion of forests, which instead are provided as a concession in use (cesión en uso) which means the state has rights to determine the use of these areas. Equally, the land titles under this legislation do not give rights to the subsoil, which remain property of the state. The combination of these factors presents itself in conflicts over mining and oil concessions, meaning that the native community did not provide the hoped for levels of autonomy and self-determination.

The legislation recognises groups of families linked through language or dialect, cultural and social characteristics and communal use of a permanent territory, either with a dispersed or nuclear settlement.¹ This legislative framework drew from a pre-existing model of Andean communal land rights dating to the 1920s indigenista era of President Leguía (Green 2009: 135). As such, it is based on a sedentary farming type of social organisation common in the Andean highlands, while indigenous peoples maintained their social organisation around hunting and slash and burn agriculture which necessitated greater movement across areas. This means that the tracts of land which were titled proved to be insufficient to sustain this type of lifestyle and the growing populations. The indigenous system of land use previous to the native community offered more flexibility and freedom across greater extensions of land and people generally lived in smaller household clusters and migrated frequently to take advantage of the forest resources and game. For this reason the concept of a native community, with large populations in a fixed location, was alien to indigenous life worlds but they increasingly settled around the services such as health and education which these title deeds made possible (see also Erazo, 2010: 1023; Alexiades, 1999; Alexiades & Peluso, 2015).

Despite a strong tendency towards autonomy, the desire for education influenced the current social structures of the communities.² Killick noted this as the main reason for people “being willing to cede a certain authority to a particular individual in order to achieve this end” (Killick, 2007: 476). Peluso also associates the installation of native communities with possibilities for increased contact with urban areas, in part due to the increased transportation possibilities (Peluso, 2015a: 62) and undoubtedly, it could be

¹ Link to the Law Decree No. 22175: http://www2.congreso.gob.pe/sicr/cendocbib/con3_uibd.nsf/0D41EC1170BDE30A052578F70059D913/$FILE/(1)leydecomunidadesnativasley22175.pdf
² I discuss autonomy and how the concept of native community plays into Federation politics in Chapters 3 and 4.
added, the economic opportunities that this opened up. Indigenous people in the region refer to the native community in which they reside when presenting themselves.

The introduction of the native community facilitated increased economic possibilities based on resource use, which have resulted in economic differences both within individual native communities and between native communities who have access to certain resources (e.g. gold), creating economic inequalities. This in turn has had an effect on how individual communities view FENAMAD and the kinds of dealings which they have with the Federation (see later for further discussion of the role of FENAMAD).

Along with the sedentization of indigenous peoples into native communities, the legal structure of these necessitated inscription of community representatives in the form of a President, Vice president and so on. This introduced profound changes to the social organisation of the communities and it has been noted that often those elected to these offices were young men who were familiar with the national society rather than older men with more prestige, meaning that their ability to influence decisions was limited (see for example, Rosengren, 1987). Through this thesis I provide a further insight into what I see as the development of the role of these younger leaders, and the establishment of a place for them within the social organisation of the communities and certainly within the indigenous organisation, FENAMAD.

According to AIDESEP there are still 594 native communities awaiting title deeds.³ One community in Madre de Dios, Puerto Azul, had been in the process of titling the community for 15 years.⁴ Delays such as these are not uncommon and are often due to lack of state funds, periods of institutional inefficiency, lack of political will or changes in requirements for titling or any combination of these factors. Currently, it is estimated that there are about 30 steps which need to be undertaken in order to progress a file and receive an official land title (a long and arduous process which indigenous organisations have questioned). In order to further the project of titling native communities indigenous organisations have often sought funding from NGOs both national and international. The result is that in many cases external agents have funded the land titling processes of

native communities in the region, and in Peru (García Altamirano, 2003; Huertas & García Altamirano, 2003; Letts, 2012).

**Structure of indigenous political organisation**

As mentioned, the various indigenous peoples in the region are organised primarily into native communities, each with their own elected representatives. These representatives are generally changed by voting every two to three years. The positions are registered formally in the Public Registry Office (*Registros Públicos*). Each community must have an agreed upon voting system, and a published internal organisation structure called the community statutes. The exact terms of the statutes are decided upon communally through a public assembly (*asamblea comunal*) and can be changed only by communal consensus. All decisions need to be registered in the communities *Libro de Actas* (book of agreements). The native communities make up the “*bases*” upon which the indigenous movement both regionally and nationally is built.

All of the 34 native communities collectively are represented at a regional level by the Native Federation of the Madre de Dios River and Tributaries (FENAMAD) which has its office in the capital city of Puerto Maldonado. The communities in the region are spoken about in terms of the “*parte alta*” (upper) and “*parte baja*” (lower) which refers to the regions of the Madre de Dios river where they are located. The predominant groups in the upper region are the Harakmbut, Matsiguenka and Yine and those of the lower region are the Ese Eja, Shipibo-Conibo, Amahuaca, and Kichua Runa. More recently there has been talk of the “*parte media*”, inhabited by Yine groups which have moved to the Las Piedras river from areas in Ucayali. There are two intermediary organisations that are affiliated to the Federation and hold their own vote during the FENAMAD Congress. These organisations aim to represent the particular interests of the upper region communities and the lower region communities, namely the Consejo Harakmbut, Yine, Matsiguenka (COHARYIMA) and Consejo Indígena de la Zona Baja de Madre de Dios (COINBAMAD) respectively. COHAR was formed in 1993 by Harakmbut leaders, partly in response to an Ese Eja leadership in FENAMAD and a feeling that Harkambut demands were not being prioritised (García Altamirano 2003). It was in 1995 that it moved to becoming COHARYIMA to include Yine and Matsiguenka populations as well. In 1996 this organisation was officially incorporated into FENAMAD. COINBAMAD was recognised by FENAMAD in 2012 in the XV Congress in Boca Inambari after some years of the lower communities organising together to place their demands before the Local
and Regional Government and as the result of a predominantly Harakmbut leadership in FENAMAD.

FENAMAD is one of the nine regional indigenous organisations in the country which form part of the national organisation, Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana (Interethnic Organisation for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest-AIDESEP) who has their administrative base in Lima. A rival national Federation exists with its office in Lima and is called Confederación de Nacionalidades Amazónicas del Perú (CONAP) which also has some regional organisations affiliated to it but not in Madre de Dios. These institutions provide the organisational base in terms of representation and consultation of the indigenous peoples of Peru.

The Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin-COICA) is a transnational indigenous organisation, founded in 1984, which works on an international level. This organisation has its main offices in Quito, Ecuador. The Executive Committee for COICA is decided during a Congress held with all the affiliated leaders from national and/or regional indigenous organisations in the countries who share the Amazon. FENAMAD representatives have attended some of these Congresses. For example, in 1988 Miguel Pesha, attended the III Congress as part of the AIDESEP delegation (García Altamirano 2003: 294). Currently the president of COICA, is Edwin Vasquez, a Peruvian leader who used to be President of ORPIO (see organigram, Figure 3).

The other indigenous organisation with an international character is the International Indigenous Committee for the protection of peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact in Amazonia, Gran Chaco and the western region of Paraguay (CIPIACI). This organisation was formed due to feelings that indigenous people did not have influence within the international bodies who determine international frameworks for dealing with the issue. An indigenous coalition was created during a meeting in Bolivia with international organisations in 2006, and the Llamamiento de Santa Cruz de la Sierra was signed. Since then they have maintained close links to the United Nations platforms such as the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and organise international meetings with state officials from the countries who are working towards the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation.
The Native Federation of the Madre de Dios River and Tributaries (FENAMAD)

It is our reason for being, to defend the rights of the indigenous people of Madre de Dios, together with our brothers and sisters in Amazonia. (In Avance Indígena, Revista Institucional, Edición No. 16, December 2008)

FENAMAD was founded on the 18th January 1982, bringing together the different peoples in the region in order to consolidate the indigenous territories and defend collective and individual human rights and territorial rights. It is registered as a non-profit civil association with legal status. The main protagonists at the time came from the Harakmbut peoples who had a longer history of direct contact with outsiders due to their traditional lands being shared with colonos, gold miners and poor migrant farmers from the Andes (Moore 2003; García Altamirano 2003). This meant that these peoples, in particular, felt the urgent need for legal representation and help in securing the rights to the lands that they continued to use. The need to organise to be able to confront shared problems such as those presented by large scale colonisation of the region and mining in turn led to a search for new defence strategies. The different Harakmbut groups began
organising in the 1970s. Later other indigenous groups in the area joined together with the Harakmbut and affiliated themselves to the Federation, which grew into the multi-ethnic entity that it is today.

The Arakmbut made two trips to Lima in 1980 and 1981 to visit AIDESEP which served in the formation of the idea of FENAMAD. After these trips there were a number of inter-community meetings before undertaking the first Congress in Boca del Karene (a community which has since been disbanded) in January 1982 (Gray 1986: 82). The priority in the second Congress in August 1982 was to define FENAMAD’s program as this relates to land, health and education (Gray 1986: 84). During the third Congress of FENAMAD in the Arakmbut community of Boca Inambari in December 1985, which was sponsored by Oxfam, the 13 affiliated native communities passed a resolution to support registering indigenous people in Madre de Dios as Peruvian citizens to ensure that they have the same fundamental rights as other Peruvians (Gray 1986: 6).

Since its creation the Federation has managed to aid the acquiring of title deeds for almost all of the native communities and has been active in the defence of the human rights of the indigenous populations of the region as well as the environment. FENAMAD gained the Bartolomé de las Casas award in 1997 for their defence of the rights of groups
in voluntary isolation (see Figure 5), and one of the indigenous leaders from the region, Julio Cusurichi, won the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2007.

Figure 5. A young Antonio Iviche with Hector Sueyo receiving the Bartolomé de las Casas Prize from Prince Felipe VI of Spain. (Source: http://www.aidesep.org.pe/fenamap-recuerda-premio-por-la-protectción-de-la-vida-de-los-pueblos-en-aislamiento-que-habitan-en-la-region-madre-de-dios-entregado-por-el-ahora-rey-de-espana-felipe-vi/). Date accessed: 4/7/2016.

As well as securing the titling of individual “native communities” FENAMAD has been instrumental in the establishment of the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve, encompassing the ancestral lands of the Harakmbut peoples, and the Territorial Reserve of Madre de Dios for voluntary isolated peoples. These are significant gains as they involved continued negotiations with the state since the 1990s, and intensified pressure from the indigenous peoples in the way of mass mobilisations in 2000. These two tracts of land and their respective causes figured on the political agenda and the need to direct attention towards these aims were ratified in numerous pronouncements resulting from FENAMAD’s Regional Congresses.  

5 In the VI Congress of FENAMAD held in the community of Shintuya in 1989, the establishment of the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve was proposed (Garcia Altamirano 2003: 292).
On a more day-to-day basis the Federation is involved in channelling the demands of the communities to the state and these mainly relate to land, health and education. The Federation also deals with legal matters arising from the communities or from combined actions on the state or in the international courts. More recently there has been an increased amount of time devoted to dealing with the issue of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation on the upper Madre de Dios and Las Piedras rivers and the management of the Territorial Reserve.

In the Federation there are five or six democratically elected indigenous leaders who are changed every 3 years during what is known as the Congreso Regional (Regional Congress) or Asamblea General (General Assembly). The Congress is undertaken with three representatives from each of the affiliated communities present. Those elected are assigned posts on the Executive Committee in a hierarchical fashion including a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Monitor and Spokesperson. Apart from the indigenous leaders in the Federation there are also auxiliary staff who are hired to give support to the leaders in their daily activities. At the time of my fieldwork there were two lawyers, one sociologist, two communications specialists (working on the diffusion of information via internet, printed documents and film), two forestry engineers, one specialist in maps (SIG), a secretary, two administration/audit workers and myself as an anthropologist. The composition of additional workers changes depending on the internal needs of the Federation, access to funding and the availability of skilled workers. Also there have been times when some of these auxiliary posts were taken up by trained indigenous people from the region or other Amazonian regions.

FENAMAD is involved in mediating the dealings between the communities and the various others with whom they have contact such as the different state departments, NGOs, universities, the church, extractive industries, other regional federations such as the Regional Agrarian Federation (FADEMAD) or the Regional Mining Federation (FEDEMIN). They also deal directly with AIDESEP and other regional indigenous organisations, with an ebb and flow of information shared between them relating to topics of national interest, legislative amendments and proposed bills in Congress, projects such as REDD+ and in recent times specifically in relation to indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation. FENAMAD has gained notoriety in the region (and further afield) due to its success in managing the situation with respect to indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and as such has maintained contact with other indigenous organisations such as ORAU (Organización Regional de AIDESEP-Ucayali) in Ucayali. This work has also
helped FENAMAD strengthen its links with NGOs in the Acre State of Brazil, such as Comisión Pro-Indio (CPI) or through petitioning help from FUNAI (National Indian Foundation, a Brazilian state department) to deal with the itinerant behaviour characteristic of these peoples who maintain use of areas on both sides of the border.

Within the Federation, the leaders refer to the communities as “las bases de FENAMAD”, indicating that they are the reason for FENAMAD’s existence and emphasising their role in the development of its activities. These communities make their needs known through the Congress and attention given to resolving problems in the communities forms a major part of the work of the leaders and auxiliary staff in FENAMAD. The organigram below (Figure 6) shows the structure of the organisation, which makes clear that the communities occupy the most basic level, followed closely by the Congreso Regional in terms of highest decision making powers within the organisation.

![Organigram of FENAMAD](http://www.fenamad.org.pe/organizacion/organigrama/)(Date consulted, 1/6/2016)
Daily activities

A typical day in the office begins at 8am, although some leaders arrive earlier, and others much later. The day is divided into different meetings, some internal ones involving only leaders, leaders and some auxiliary staff or leaders and all staff. There are often other scheduled or impromptu meetings with state officials, NGOs, or community members. Each leader is assigned a work space with a computer in one of the offices and, when not attending meetings, the leaders are busy at their desks reading emails/chatting, preparing itineraries for trips, preparing accounts and collating bills from previous trips or checking over letters and pronouncements to be emitted. They also take and make phone calls to coordinate activities or plan strategies with other leaders in different organisations or in the communities. They sometimes work with the communications department in preparing radio spots, or short videos. During different periods FENAMAD had a radio programme on a local station, called FENAMAD Informa, and so leaders might be asked to contribute interviews to the programme which was run by the communications specialist.\(^6\) The Federation also publishes booklets, leaflets and flyers to distribute information which is considered by leaders to be important for communities (I will talk about the role of leaders in teaching communities in Chapter 5). This information is considered to be part of the actividades de sensibilización (informing/raising awareness) and is often included as a specified activity in Project proposals and funded projects. A number of leaflets about indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation have been produced. Other leaflets have presented information such as “What is FENAMAD?” and various booklets were published about hydrocarbon activities in indigenous territories, especially at the time when Hunt Oil was to enter the RCA. FENAMAD publishes an annual review magazine called Avance Indígena, in which the different activities and successes gained through the year are described for distribution to communities and the local population.\(^7\) In addition, they published a book, Pueblos indígenas y movimiento social en Madre de Dios, in 2010, which is for sale.

When not occupied the leaders spend time chatting together in their offices, in the reception or courtyard, drinking gaseosa (fizzy drinks) or coffee (during cold spells), going out for snacks or speaking on the phone. The general atmosphere in the

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\(^6\) The radio programme emitted regularly between 1991 and 2001 was called La Voz Indígena de Madre de Dios (Garcia Altamirano, 2003: 288).

\(^7\) The Boletín Avance Indígena started in 1989 and continued to 2001 (Garcia Altamirano, 2003: 288).
Federation is one of solidarity and sharing and there is a lot of joking and sharing of stories between leaders and staff.

The Federation is an important stop-off point for community members whilst they go about their business in the city. Elected leaders from the communities pass by to collect correspondence, to keep abreast of important meetings or just to sit in the auditorium and listen to whatever else is going on or chat to their friends as part of their paseo in the city. The Federation office also sometimes houses communities when they are in the city for sporting events or other activities such as desfiles or state festivities (anniversary celebrations for the founding of the department or independence day) and intercommunity football matches, where the members sleep in the auditorium in makeshift beds. Also, it is not uncommon to see indigenous students who are living in Puerto Maldonado just hanging out in the Federation or passing by to participate in events. There was a time when some students were housed in the Federation but this has since been discontinued as there is a house for students called Miraflores in another part of the city.

The legal team is the busiest as they deal with anything from micro level disputes between families, to the procedures for formal registrations in the Public Registry Office, to penal cases. They are also dealing with the case of the past president who is being pursued for “terrorist” charges for his involvement in the national protests in 2008, and the Inter American court case filed in Washington DC, in which FENAMAD denounced the Peruvian state for neglecting its responsibility to implement adequate protection measures for indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation in the region.

Many of the internal meetings are focused on planning trips to the communities, or individual meetings with the communities in FENAMAD, coordinating activities or meetings, or coming up with action plans to present demands to the state, elaborating and revising letters and documents, etc. There is also collaborative work undertaken to review documents such as the Environmental Impact Assessments from the petrol company, the Master Plans for the protected areas (especially those where indigenous

\[\text{\textsuperscript{8}}\text{At the time of my fieldwork there were two young male students, one Yine and one Matisguenka, who spent a lot of time in the Federation and helped out during events and activities. It was suggested to me by one Federation leader that they were being trained, through interaction with the Federation leaders, to later take on leadership roles for the benefit of the communities. Incidentally, he also said that they were doing very well at university and did not drink, and this seemed to be something which was considered important.}\]
peoples in voluntary isolation are known to inhabit), as well as Agreements with NGOs or state departments.

There is a lunch break, when the Federation is closed between 1pm and 4pm and then the day continues officially till 7pm, although oftentimes meetings run much later than that. The offices are open week days only but it is not uncommon to see leaders and staff in on Saturdays or Sundays and sometimes internal meetings are planned for weekends. Workshops also often run on weekends as this is when community members are free from internal commitments in their communities. The Andrew Gray auditorium, used for meetings, is also hired out for use by other institutions or may play host to events organised by the Federation, NGOs, state departments (e.g. Education Ministry or Health Ministry) or the Public Ombudsman (Defensoría del Pueblo) for the benefit of the communities. Sometimes these events are jointly organised and FENAMAD additionally becomes involved in convening the meetings and ensuring the participation of the community members. There is a radio in FENAMAD and this is used to communicate with more isolated communities, although some now have satellite telephones and so communication is easier using phonecards.

The building itself was acquired by the Federation in 1992 (see Figure 4) with the help of the Coordinadora de Intercentros de Investigación y Desarrollo (COINCIDE) and is located only one block from the main city plaza (García Altamirano 2003). It has 3 offices on the ground floor and a fairly large reception area, with sofas, where the secretary meets people entering, and receives mail. The ground floor offices are divided into sectors: territory, administration and the library/office. Upstairs there are 4 further offices including the President’s office, and offices occupied by the legal team, communications team and the team involved in work relating to the indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation. At the back of the house is an open courtyard leading to the Andrew Gray Auditorium. This auditorium is named after the anthropologist from Oxford University, Andrew Gray, who worked with the Arakmbut of San José del Karene in the 1980s and was instrumental in supporting their quest for self-determination and human rights during the early years of the Federation.9

9 He published three volumes (Gray, 1996; 1997; 1997b) based on extended field work among the Arakmbut.
FENAMAD Regional Congress

According to the Federation statutes a *Congreso Regional* (from here on referred to as the Congress) is to be held every three years with the full participation of delegates from all of the 34 native communities affiliated to FENAMAD. During the Congress departing leaders give an account of their activities and budget for the preceding three years and a new panel of leaders is elected to take over the running of the Federation for the coming three years. Also during the meeting there is an opportunity for the different communities to express their demands in terms of priorities for the Federation, such as land titling, schooling needs or health priorities, which are then transferred to the triannual plan. This acts as a guidebook for the incoming leaders who are then able to steer their actions and activities around the different demands and priorities of the various communities. Additionally FENAMAD has a *Plan de Vida* (Life Plan), which outlines the priority themes of the communities and the Federation.

The Executive Committee members are voted in by the community delegates who attend the Congress. There are three delegates from each of the 34 native communities, who have voice and vote (*voz y voto*), and any other members present have the right only to *voz*, meaning that they can participate and comment during the event but on the last day they are not able to vote in the elections. The statutes require that one of the delegates
be the current President of the community. The voting is done in secret before a specially selected Electoral Committee established on the day and the voters have to make their choice on a piece of paper which is then inserted into a box. At the end of the voting the votes are counted, one by one, in front of the audience and the outcome is announced. There can be up to three different planchas or electoral panels but it is most common for there to be two. These panels are consolidated during the first days of the Congress and the leaders are assigned their cargo or position before the voting, so that when the proposed panels are presented to the voters they already specify the names of the people who will occupy each role within the Federation.10

The details about how the Congress is to be undertaken are specified in the statutes of the Federation and need to be adhered to stringently for the outcomes of the Congress to be able to be registered in the Public Registry Office. Registration is a step required by the state for official recognition of the leaders and for any legal powers to be transferred, such as access to bank accounts and the like.

In the past it was more usual that the Congress was held in a native community, although more recently the communities have shown a preference for the event being held in the city of Puerto Maldonado, claiming that it is more neutral. Also, I had heard people comment on how in the past the elections were done by publically nominating individuals during the Congress and then the delegates would show their approval by raising their hands. The person with the most votes would assume the position of President and then the person with second most votes as Vice-President and so on. The change to a secret voting system has led some community members to accuse the Federation of “doing politics like the state”. One man, from the Arazaeri community (Harakmbut), stated that having only three delegates allowed to attend and vote means that the Congress can be managed by the leaders as they can ensure that only their friends attend as delegates. He feels that this is a strategy for the leaders to maintain their power. He suggests that it would be fairer if the Congress was open to anyone who wanted to attend and vote (fieldnotes, 23/11/12). Similarly, Juan from Infierno associates the new voting system with deja (outsiders) suggesting that in his experience the old voting system ensures

10 This is the view expressed by leaders when you speak to them but in practice the panels are already being constituted in the year leading up to the Congress in the communities and in the Federation. Links and allies are being made and often times the main leader, the person to be designated as President, looks for possible allies in the communities who would help to form the electoral panel (plancha). It is the final consolidation of the panel that takes place on the first nights of the Congress depending on who has been sent as delegate from the communities. This is also a way for the communities to take an active role in the process, as they can deny certain individuals from attaining power in the Congress through not voting for them to represent as delegados during their own internal asambleas. Without credentials to vote, it is impossible to become incorporated into any electoral panel during the Congress.
better representivity. His experience comes from his community, which is a mixed community with a mestizo majority and Ese eja minority, meaning that the majority can overrule despite alternative interests leading to the Ese Eja feeling marginalised during voting in their community. Greene similarly speaks about how the Aguaruna had to learn how to undertake this new type of voting as it was a “totally foreign” idea to have a “sole representative elected to each office whose centralised authority is made possible by summing the wills of all the individual voters” (2009: 122).

The organisation of the Congress also appears to have changed over time. Carlos, an Ese Eja man from Infierno who had attended a Congress in the 1990s in the Harakmbut community of Santa Rosa de Huacaria (fieldnotes, 20/9/2013), related his experience to me. He spoke about the delegation that went to that Congress and how there were 2 boats with about 60 people in each boat. The delegation from the Harakmbut were puro viejitos (only old people). On the first night they camped out on a beach along the way and the older people went into the forest to collect leaves to make pataraska (a dish of fish cooked inside leaves from the bijao plant (Calathea lutea)). They sat round the fire for hours talking and then later in the night they went out and hunted frogs and came back and put them to roast on the fire. He recalls that they must have slept only a few hours. The day after they had to camp in a different section of the river and the old people took out their bows and arrows and went fishing for boquichico (Prochilodus nigricans) and came back. Upon arriving in the community he recalls that the first thing the older people asked was where to find caza (prey) and went hunting maquisapa (spider monkey) and chorro (woolly monkey). He spoke about them as knowledgeable and skilful hunters despite their age.

His description of the run-up to that particular Congress is notable for two reasons, the first being the atmosphere – the Congress was a way of getting people together and hunting and eating together before making decisions together. The second was in terms of the age of the people who attended. In more recent Congresses, the people are younger and generally have a good knowledge of Spanish. The older people, if they do attend, do not normally come as delegados (with the right to vote) but rather as observers and maybe sometimes as advisers. It is also important that he remembers the context of mixed ethnicities. The Harakmbut in many regards are seen as others by the Ese Eja and they often speak of them and their practices as such, marking the difference between
the ways in which the Ese Eja and the Harakmbut do things (see Reeve & High, 2012 for a similar discussion of interethnic relations between the Kichwa and Waorani).11

I would suggest that the changes are partly due to the necessity for the results to be inscribed in the Public Register, which means they need to follow the statutes exactly. The system adopted by the Federation mimics the common state system of voting as in National Elections. Interestingly, this mode of voting is not required by the state for recognition in the Public Registry. The statute defines the political organisation of the Federation and similarly the mode of voting. Any type of voting could have been stipulated and inscribed if there had been common consensus so it is significant that the Federation and its members (and their legal advisors) at some point in the past decided to adopt this particular system instead of the system which they had been using. Someone during the second Congress suggested that they should consider going back to the old system as he had seen that other communities in other regions don’t use the secret voting system.

One factor which has undoubtedly impacted on the Federation has been the change in political situation over time. The Federation leaders now face a very different panorama to that of the first leaders, with an increase in the needs, priorities and problems facing the different indigenous groups in the region and the increase in communities affiliated to FENAMAD. The first and second Congresses of the Federation were held in 1982, both in Harakmbut communities, and the priorities then were land, health and education (Gray, 1986: 82, 84). These still remain priorities, but new issues have been added as a result of increased presence of extractive industries (gold mining, oil, forestry concessions), major road and hydroelectric projects and indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation. The cost of running Congresses may have played a role in the changes too as it would now be impossible to invite an unknown number of people to the event as the Federation has to search for donors in order to finance the food, accommodation and transport costs of those who attend. In the past, because the community hosting the Congress supplied the food by way of hunted meat, finances may not have been as much of an issue. This change in financial responsibility, it could be argued, has grown

11 The Ese Eja refer to other indigenous people also as “haaji pia”, as opposed all others who are referred to as “deja” (Chavarria, 2003: 191). I found that in Spanish they use the terms indígena, nativo or paisano to refer to other ethnic groups. According to Andrew Gray, the Amarakaeri (Arakmbut) differentiate between indigenous peoples who come from the same group whom they call Harakmbut and others who are Taka. He suggests that Taka are frequently hostile and feared, but when they live in the same community they are referred to as Apoining (word for river boa). (Gray 1986: 33). For more detailed analysis of kinship and allies refer to Chapter 3.
with a change in how the Federation is viewed by the communities, and specifically with regard to the perceived role of the Federation, something which I will return to later.

**Elected leaders**

During my time in Peru I was able to participate in three Regional Congresses, Boca Inambari (Dec 2010), San José del Karene (Dec 2012) and Puerto Maldonado (Jan 2013), and worked alongside three different groups of leaders between 2008 and 2010 and during my fieldwork in 2012 till 2013.\(^{12}\)

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**Consejo Directivo 2007-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of leader</th>
<th>Position in FENAMAD</th>
<th>Pueblo/Native community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antonio Iviche Quique</td>
<td>Presidente</td>
<td>Arakmbut/San José del Karene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Víctor Manuel Kameno Manuaje</td>
<td>Vice-Presidente</td>
<td>Arakmbut/ Boca Inambari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaime Corisepa Neri</td>
<td>Secretario</td>
<td>Wachipaeri (Harakmbut)/Puerto Azul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lourdes Karina Almiron Loraico</td>
<td>Tesorera</td>
<td>Harakmbut/ Kotsimba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juda Augusto Shaconi</td>
<td>Vocal</td>
<td>Matsiguenka/Shipetiari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Trigoso</td>
<td>Fiscal</td>
<td>Yine/Diamante</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Consejo Directivo 2010 - 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of leader</th>
<th>Position in FENAMAD</th>
<th>Pueblo/Native community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaime Corisepa Neri</td>
<td>Presidente</td>
<td>Wachipaeri (Harakmbut)/Puerto Azul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klaus Quique Bolivar</td>
<td>Vice-Presidente</td>
<td>Arakmbut/San José del Karene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Payaba Cacique</td>
<td>Secretario</td>
<td>Shipibo/Tres Islas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>César Augusto Jojaje Erinay</td>
<td>Tesorero</td>
<td>Ese Eja/Palma Real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia Fernández</td>
<td>Vocal</td>
<td>Yine/Puerto Azul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edy Manrique Huajohuajo</td>
<td>Fiscal</td>
<td>Ese Eja/Sonene</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Consejo Directivo 2013 - 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of leader</th>
<th>Position in FENAMAD</th>
<th>Pueblo/Native community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Klaus Quique Bolivar</td>
<td>Presidente</td>
<td>Arakmbut/San José del Karene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfredo Vargas</td>
<td>Vice Presidente</td>
<td>Shipibo/San Jacinto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>César Augusto Jojaje</td>
<td>Secretario</td>
<td>Ese Eja/Palma Real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana Maria Dariquebe Laura</td>
<td>Tesorera</td>
<td>Harakmbut/Queros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Elena Chinchiquiti</td>
<td>Vocal</td>
<td>Matsiguenka/Yomibato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julio Valles</td>
<td>Fiscal</td>
<td>Yine/Isla de los Valles</td>
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</tbody>
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\(^{12}\) In fact there should have only been one Congress at the beginning of 2013 but due to some communities contesting the validity of the Congress held in San José del Karene in December 2012, another Congress was undertaken in January 2013 in the city of Puerto Maldonado (see Chapter 3 and 4).
When consolidating the panels there is an attempt to include people from the different ethnic groups to ensure representation of the different peoples in the region. The last few Presidencies have been held by Harakmbut leaders which has resulted in internal disagreements, which I refer to in the discussion of the two congresses in Chapter 3 and 4. Also in recent years there has been a move to include more women in Federation politics.

**How do communities construct their ideas about FENAMAD?**

The Federation states as its aims the defence of indigenous rights, and particularly territorial rights. The statement on their website regarding the purpose of its creation elaborates on this:

> It was created by men and women from the indigenous communities of the region to channel their proposals and demands toward the state and civil society, in this way supporting the defence of our rights and contributing to the wellbeing of our peoples. It also serves to guarantee respect for the way of life and territory of our brothers in voluntary isolation. We, the communities and indigenous peoples of Madre de Dios, are FENAMAD.\(^\text{13}\)

FENAMAD is an organisation which groups together the various indigenous peoples in the region to coordinate and direct their demands towards the state and it has been successful in doing so, as its 34 year trajectory attests. Despite having a clear aim, which is reiterated in publications, meetings, Congresses and the like, there is still some confusion in the communities about what FENAMAD really is and does. Many community members do not have a clear idea about how FENAMAD is run, how funding works and what the main aims are.

Conscious of this the Federation leaders produce different documents for circulation in the communities such as leaflets and magazines. Part of the confusion comes from the fact that FENAMAD does many things. FENAMAD has helped to coordinate the hiring of school teachers for communities through RESSOP (Catholic Church), promotes intercultural bilingual education, it undertakes activities relating to geo-referencing and correction of boundary limits in the communities, it coordinates with the Health Ministry

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to ensure the hiring of health staff in the communities and it runs and manages surveillance posts for the protection of voluntary isolated peoples, hiring staff and paying wages. Sometimes, FENAMAD buys equipment for the communities such as radios or motors for boats, and manages projects related to economic activities. The leaders feel that many of these activities should in fact be undertaken by the state and that this has led to increased demands placed on FENAMAD by communities. The leaders often complained about the types of demands placed on them by communities who are confusing the role of FENAMAD with that of the state and expected FENAMAD to deliver when the state could not. The case becomes even more complex given that different communities and indeed members within these communities have different experiences of the state, the Federation and the wider city. For example, the Matsiguenka who live in the Manu National Park have had very little state attention to their needs over the years and a lot of community members have not travelled to Puerto Maldonado, so the only contact they had with what a state should do is through FENAMAD (and sometimes not even then, due to the distance of these communities from the city). Others, living closer to the city and fully aware of what the state should do but isn’t doing, are in a better position to use FENAMAD to direct their demands rather than assuming that FENAMAD can itself satisfy them. As Alfredo (Vice President of FENAMAD) highlighted to the Minister in the Viceministry for Intercultural Affairs, Patricia Balbuena, during a meeting which we undertook in Lima, “FENAMAD has struggled without the presence of the state for many years but how good it is now to be able to work together”.

For many community members FENAMAD seems like an organisation that collects money from outside and uses it for their own ends, while the communities remain with their needs unfulfilled. One day when talking to Alfredo he gave me some insight into what the Federation might look like to someone who has very little contact with it. I have taken this extract from my fieldnotes.

He said that when he was younger he was president of his community [San Jacinto] and they had been playing football when Antonio [President of FENAMAD] arrived to the community. He said he didn’t really know much about FENAMAD and thought that the federation had a lot of money. He didn’t pay much attention to the visit but then Antonio called him over and said can we talk. At that time he said that San Jacinto wasn’t working in gold mining but rather were working with wood extraction in collaboration with Shipper (one of the biggest loggers in the region). Antonio told him that the deal they had with Shipper was not a good one for the community and that they were losing out and should reanalyse. Alfredo said that it was only later that he realised that what Antonio said was true. At the time he said to Antonio – what are we supposed to do? We don’t have the means to work the wood ourselves, we don’t even have
chainsaws. Since he thought that FENAMAD was all money he said to Antonio – why don’t you buy us a chainsaw then? He said that his view of FENAMAD has changed since then and he now realises that one of the roles is orienting the native communities.

Ideas similar to these were manifest by community members from Palma Real during a meeting about the voluntary isolated peoples project undertaken by César Augusto. One member said that FENAMAD “is not an organisation for everyone. It is because of the money that they want to gain personally, and that is why they fight to win the positions [referring to the elections].” A different older man offered his opinion saying that “FENAMAD is like a big caiman that eats everything but AIDESEP is the biggest caiman of all”.

Whilst in Palma Real and Sonene, two Ese Eja communities (3 and 8 hours from Puerto Maldonado, respectively), I asked different community members “what is FENAMAD?” The responses varied and it was only those who had had direct experience with FENAMAD (such as ex-leaders) who gave an answer close to what the stated aims are, as the following examples show. One community member from Palma Real elaborated that,

We don’t give it any importance. The state sends money for the indigenous people, that money arrives to FENAMAD only… Foreign money also reaches only FENAMAD. Palma Real and Sonene don’t see any of the money that the state sends […] It [FENAMAD] is useful when there is a problem. For example when the police catch us because we are indigenous, since indigenous people have another law we tell them.

Whilst for César Augusto, FENAMAD is to defend the interests of the communities, como persona y como Pueblo. FENAMAD politically defends against the big dangers from the big interests, he told me. Similarly Edy, who was spokesperson in FENAMAD for a time before retiring early from the post stated that “it is an entity that fights to protect the rights of the 32 communities… it channels projects only when the communities request the help of the technical team. Before I could not give a response. Now I know that it is an entity that offers help through the initiative of the authorities of each community”.

The need to clarify the role of the leader and the function of FENAMAD adds a layer of importance to the practice of travelling to the communities which I discuss in Chapter 3. Here is an example of one of the leaflets published for communities (Figure 8).

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14 There were 32 communities affiliated to the FENAMAD at the time that he was part of the Executive Committee.
An awareness of the different conceptions that the communities hold about FENAMAD are reflected in this leaflet. In the first paragraph there is a statement which serves to clarify that FENAMAD is not a company which generates funds, neither does it finance development projects, rather “this is the role of the Peruvian state”. Later on the leaflet highlights that it is a state obligation to ensure that the native communities have access to health services and education, as expressed in the law, “and this is not the work of the oil companies”. The leaflet reiterates that the role of FENAMAD is the defence of territorial and indigenous rights, and to attend to and orient the community members and native communities, creating allies as necessary.

The problems that community members have in understanding the role of FENAMAD have persisted over time as Andrew Gray noted during his stay in San José in 1985,
Their cooperation is for specific goals and is not a ploy to unite the indigenous groups of Madre de Dios into an undifferentiated mass (Gray 1986: 85).

Through an analysis of how communities view FENAMAD as compared to what the Federation aims to do, it has been possible to see how distance from communities presents a particular difficulty for the leaders. The role of the Federation in the city is central in terms of placing the demands of the communities before the state, for gaining specific types of knowledge, such as those related to rights, and for access to resources such as lawyers, administrators, forestry engineers and social scientists, and the equipment necessary for land titling, such as GPS machines and computer systems. The leaders see their role in terms of teaching the communities and imparting knowledge, but the fact that the offices are based in the regional capital makes it difficult for community members to see exactly what they do there. Also the fact that the leaders are generally young and for the most part educated presents other problems as they appear to communities to be privileged economically by their role. These aspects of leadership in the Federation will be addressed through the thesis as I will show how leaders aim to overcome the difficulties inherent in their role through travelling and being present in the communities (Chapter 3) and working towards the creation of an inclusive and non-hierarchical Federation structure through recourse to a shared inside space (Chapter 4). Sharing knowledge and resources gained from the Federation in order to address the demands of the communities then becomes an important task for leaders, as I will discuss in Chapter 5.

Líder or dirigente?

During my fieldwork I noticed that people often made a distinction between types of leaders through their choice of words, using either dirigente or líder, when referring to certain individuals or when speaking about the types of processes that had to be undergone in order to attain that status. While both types of leader are involved in leading, the dirigente is associated with work in the Federation or as community leader (which are both registered in the Public Register), while the term líder is generally related to the influence that that person holds within their community. It was sometimes mentioned that you could identify a líder by his characteristics from a young age. Also sometimes a líder was recognised for their shamanic powers, often associated with a role as curandero (healer). To become a dirigente appears to involve a different learning process, and specifically learning how to deal with external others such as the state. The types of leadership which have emerged since the installation of the native community
are also related to a role of dirigente, but within a community setting. This role gives these individuals a certain type of power as recognised by the state. The emergence of the role of dirigente also coincides with the development of the communities' expectations of these people and in this way the communities are able to influence the types of characteristics favoured in these new leaders.

According to a number of people with whom I spoke, the people who held power and influence in Ese Eja communities were those who were able to develop relations with the spirit world for the benefit of the communities, such as the well-known eyamikekua (shamans) Ñape and Felipe Jojaje. People were able to give the names of the first leaders, who were chosen to help the communities take the steps towards land titling. This task was different to the role of a líder. With the shift in the tasks of the leader came new expectations placed on these individuals, as dirigentes. This is evident in comments made by people from Palma Real. Jacinto, one of the first presidents of the community, spoke about the first years of FENAMAD in the following way.

In 1986, there was a gringo Thomas Moore, when I was president with Enrique... it started with only a few nativos, it opened their eyes and things changed... Jorge Kwakibewe was chosen because he knew how to speak well and had studied a little. To be a good speaker you need to be able to manage money well and not spend it badly.15

The next two quotes demonstrate that there is a difference in what people mean by líder and dirigente. One man said that “Before, they dreamt it, a grandfather came in a dream to say who would be líder. When Ñape [an eyamikekua] died, Ñape had made Felipe Jojaje a curandero. When Felipe died, Ramayo dreamt and was líder. After Ramayo died, now there are no more líderes” (Gregorio, Palma Real). Another mentioned that,

Before there was no FENAMAD, before we didn’t know anything about FENAMAD. In the old days, the community selected someone as capitán. Felipe was a curandero, he was only a shaman. Ramayo was president and then Mateo, and Jacinto, then Enrique, after that came Felipe, Arturo, these are the new ones. It changed. Before the president was strong, he kicked out foreigners (gente de afuera). Here we do not want gente, before there were no people from outside. We were scared that they would bring all of their family to settle. In the time of Mateo, we requested our land. We said to abuelo [Mateo], why didn’t you ask for more land. At that time there were no professionals, puro nativos, to decide on the territorial limits. Before there were no elections, it was already decided.

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15 Oratory skills have been identified with leadership in Amazonia. For example, Brown 1993; Turner 1995; McCallum 1990; Oakdale 2004; Erazo 2010, amongst others.
The characteristics prioritised in the new dirigentes are further demonstrated in the following comment.

What we want is someone who knows (alguien que sabe), someone that has been to school and finished secondary school. We don’t want just anyone, as he won’t know. Its best if the person who goes knows a little. My son wants to study to be a tourist guide. I want him to study so that he doesn’t have to suffer in the sun, going to the forest, fishing, sweating, it’s better for him to be sat writing in his notebook... The lideres now are professionals, they only do it for money, before no.\(^\text{16}\)

Andrew Gray also noted differences in leadership within the Arakmbut communities and specifically refers to what he calls a boundary leader. The boundary leaders or indirect representatives differ from community based leaders in that they do not have to be living in the community. He suggests that it is the “boundary person between two worlds who can negotiate the non-indigenous groups and act as a sort of go-between” (1986: 108). While in San José he found that there were a mixture of both types of leader. He sees the difference between a boundary leader and a community leader as related to the position which the person holds within FENAMAD, so whilst all boundary leaders have a community basis, they do not necessarily hold positions of power within the community. This distinction helps to shed light on the difference which I make in the thesis that being part of the Federation executive committee is instrumental in the formation of the leaders who are referred to as Federation dirigentes. These leaders have a different role to those found within the communities and the types of decisions which have to be taken also differ. Additionally, Gray notes the use of the term Wairi to refer to a resistance leader who combined shamanic and political qualities and this may relate to either a community or boundary person. Non-indigenous people could be referred to as Wairi also if “no indigenous Wairi seemed powerful enough to take on the power which threatened them” (Gray 1986: 117). Moore (2003: 74) describes the Wairi as prestigious men, affiliated to a demographically strong clan, who demonstrates good hunting skills, generosity and eloquence. Wairi have also been characterised by their ability to gain satisfactory solutions to conflicts.

\(^{16}\) One day when I was visiting the community of Infierno, whilst sat drinking gaseosa and talking to an older man his daughter came over to us. I knew that the President of the community and others were due to have a meeting that day with FENAMAD lawyers and so I asked them what the meeting was going to be about. His daughter replied “we don’t know, the meeting is for those that know”. This serves to illustrate that being a dirigente involves acquiring a certain type of knowledge that not everybody has access to.
In the case of both líder and dirigente, the role can be related to how Lévi-Strauss (1974) spoke about a chief, as someone who unites people and people congregate around this person because they are able to provide benefits to the group (see also Killick, 2007). The benefits that dirigentes bring to the communities include land titling, securing medical attention and possibilities for schooling, which are considered important steps towards securing the well-being which communities seek.

Why organise political action through indigenous organisations?

Indigenous peoples are faced with an ever changing political context within Peru which means that sometimes it is deemed necessary to collaborate with state agendas but other times those agendas need to be questioned. The particular context that was important during my time working in FENAMAD, and which impacted on indigenous-state relations, relates to the Presidency of Alan García Pérez, from 2006-2011. It was as the result of his promotion of a series of laws and amendments to existing laws (paquete de ley) relating to land rights and extractive activities, that indigenous peoples believed it was necessary to resist and oppose the state rather than collaborate. In 2007 and later in 2008, a package of laws referred to as “Ley de la Selva” were being discussed in Congress in order to align national legislation with a Free Trade Agreement signed between Peru and the United States of America. It was felt that specific decrees, mostly relating to land and land use rights, would have to be modified in order to promote investment in and development of the Amazon. It was at this time that Alan García published a controversial article in the national newspaper, El Comercio, which outlined his personal opinions relating to land and resource exploitation and specifically the vast tracts of “idle” (ociosa) land taken up by those he described as having “el síndrome del perro del hortelano” (a dog-in-the-manger attitude) (See Figure 9, below). Indigenous organisations felt that the perro del hortelano was being used as a euphemism for indigenous peoples who possess extensive tracts of land but do not make use of them in any “productive” way and do not let others use them either. García went on to describe five important ways in which Peru had potential for growth through exploitation of its natural resources: the forests of the Amazon for wood, land for farming, minerals, the sea, and human resources. He explained that in each of these areas there are those that

17 For the full article from 28th October 2007 see: http://www.aidesep.org.pe/editor/documentos/58.pdf
oppose progress with excuses that cannot be justified at a time when other countries with less comparative wealth in resources are growing exponentially, and which leave Peru stagnating and unable to “progress”. Indigenous protests in 2008 were undertaken requesting that the law packet be repealed. Later President García was quoted as calling indigenous peoples “second class citizens” as a way of minimising the significance of their protests and justifying the state’s non engagement with protestors.\textsuperscript{19} The protests continued into 2009 and ended with the tragic events in Bagua on the 5\textsuperscript{th} June, when indigenous people and police officers clashed on the now infamous “Curva del Diablo” road in the province of Bagua in the Amazonas region, which left 32 dead and some 200 wounded.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18} Progress was very much part of his agenda as his campaign slogan “Peru Avanza” suggests.
\textsuperscript{19} See this interview with Alan Garcia https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjzxl1lBswc (Accessed: 20/7/16)
\textsuperscript{20} According to official reports there were 32 deaths, 22 police and 10 natives, but indigenous organisations claimed that the number of indigenous dead is much higher with eye witness reports of bodies being dumped into the river and further reports of missing persons in otherwise isolated communities. Importantly at the time there was a government enquiry into the events which produced contested findings and presently there are court proceedings underway looking to establish the culpability of Alberto Pizango, then President of AIDESEP, in the deaths of the police officers and for his role in organising the mobilisations and protests. The indigenous people involved in the protests were referred to as terrorists by Alan Garcia. See the television spot: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDVgw4pbHEk. (Accessed: 20/7/16)
These events set the scene for massive debates, within Peru and beyond. The debates revolved around ideas related to “development”, “progress”, “indigenousness”, “well-being” and importantly “consulta previa”, and what these terms really mean and for whom. It was at this point and as a direct result of what happened in Bagua that indigenous Amazonian people burst into the national consciousness. As Marta Torres, one of the people whom I interviewed from the Environment Ministry (MINAM), put it: “There is a before and after Bagua. Before, no one knew that indigenous peoples existed and now after it’s like - take care because they can be rebellious.”

The events of Bagua, referred to in the national media as “El Baguazo” marked a pivotal point in national politics in relation to Amazonian indigenous peoples and changed the panorama, making “pueblo indígena” a political category, and of significant national

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21 Consulta previa relates to indigenous petitions for the right to prior informed consultation with respect to activities or initiatives which will affect their lives or their territories. In this case, they were protesting that they were not consulted about the law packet, which would have a direct effect on them. The right to prior informed consultation also relates to indigenous petitions on the state to be consulted with regards to extractive industries and concessions which are often granted over indigenous territories by the state.
interest. There was a marked change in how the state (both state departments and individual officials) dealt with indigenous petitions and new spaces opened up for dialogue. Work groups were set up to address the indigenous demands and many of the laws were repealed or amended. Here we can see a clear example of when indigenous leaders can take on the role of both permitted Indian and unruly Indian (Hale, 2004), aware of the limits inherent in the first category of permitted Indian. Leaders often referred to the unproductivity of state relations through the use of the verb mecer (like being rocked in a cradle or swing backwards and forwards but ultimately not going anywhere). When the spaces opened up by multicultural reforms, and democratic process failed to give results, the indigenous people had to mobilise to pressure the state, before assuming the permitted Indian role again via the work groups.

One of the first acts undertaken by the newly elected Ollanta Humala, the president who succeeded Alan Garcia in 2011, was to pass the law relating to the “consulta previa”, here defined as the right to prior informed consultation, in an attempt to distance himself and his government from that of the previous one, especially in light of the fact that he had won the indigenous vote.\(^{22}\) However, this was not the end but rather the beginning of the debates about how this consultation should take place, who would be entitled to participate in the consultation and importantly what that consultation means, i.e. that it does not mean the ability to veto government/state plans for “development” or resource extraction in the Amazon region (or elsewhere), or specifically on indigenous lands.\(^{23}\)

What were the indigenous people fighting for during those protests and why was this so problematic? The main point was that they were fighting for their land and by extension they were fighting for their rights to self-determination or “free choice” about what they want to do on the land. They were demanding their participation in the decision-making processes with regard to activities or plans which involve themselves and their lands.


\(^{23}\) Also at issue was the definition of “indigenous” with the production of a controversial document, which was never published, that outlined which communities are entitled to consultation based on those classed as “indigenous” by the state and those who cannot be considered “indigenous” anymore. In general the criteria relate to cultural practices, and language but also importantly to resource interests, as at the time of writing mining interests in the Andes would take precedence over “indigenous” Anvedean peoples’ rights to consultation. Recently the state has made public the Base de Datos about indigenous peoples in Peru. See: [http://bdpi.cultura.gob.pe/fuentes-de-informacion](http://bdpi.cultura.gob.pe/fuentes-de-informacion)
the same time they were contesting the version of neoliberal multiculturalism on offer at the time, which involved superficial recognition of indigenous peoples but importantly did not offer them opportunities to be involved in decision-making. Their involvement in the protests provided a critique of “development”, “progress” and other words which had been used to describe what the new laws would facilitate as they asserted that they should be allowed to define what these terms meant for them.

In the face of continued political invisibility and its very real consequences for indigenous peoples, they organised nationally and coordinated mobilisations in the street (see Figures 10-12, below), thus making statements, which put them in the public space (both physically and politically), where they stayed for many weeks. When I asked indigenous people about why they had taken to the streets to protest the responses reiterated that they wanted to be consulted about state plans. For example, one leader stated that, “you are not going to see me on the streets with indigenous traje [costume/dress] and arrows for nothing, it was the state’s fault, the Congress and Congressmen. There was no respect when they emitted the law packets, we were not consulted and it was for this reason that we took to the streets”. Whilst another Ese Eja man stated that “it was the government’s fault, they made the indigenous peoples fight, made them fight for territory. The state wanted to take away their territory and for this reason they stood up and that’s what made them fight with the government".
Figure 10. Indigenous mobilisations in Puerto Maldonado, 2008

Figure 11. Indigenous leaders, Jorge, Antonio and Jaime, addressing the protestors in the Plaza de Armas in Puerto Maldonado, 2008
The other real advantage of organising on a large scale relates to visibility due to the relatively small indigenous population size. It is through massing together that indigenous peoples can gain strength to effect changes on the political level. In the Madre de Dios region in particular, the indigenous population is far outnumbered by that of colonos and this is reflected in all aspects of government. There is one position in the Regional government, as part of the department for Native communities and Citizens Participation (Gerencia de Participación ciudadana y comunidades nativas) which is often taken up by an indigenous person and indigenous people have run for positions in local government in the provinces of Madre de Dios with varied success. One leader ran for Regional President in 2010 but received very few votes in the elections. In general there is little indigenous presence in the city and a marked Andean influence with highland festivals celebrated throughout the year. Further examples of invisibility in the local context include the fact that there are no street names in any indigenous language: instead schools and streets are named after Ernest Rivero, Fitzcarrald (the rubber baron responsible for the massacre of indigenous peoples) and others considered to be the founding fathers of the region. Similarly the regional anthem, whilst applauding the bravery of the first explorers to enter the region and establish the city, makes no mention
of indigenous populations (see below). It is for these reasons that indigenous peoples are struggling for recognition, both of their existence and their rights to inclusion in the state and state agendas. They are jostling for a place at the table, with the power to make decisions.

**Himno a Madre de Dios**

*Autor de Letra: Domingo Troncoso Mendoza.*

*Autor de Música: Jaime Piña Porteza*

Cantemos hermanos, con cálida voz,
Un canto vibrante de amor y esperanza
Un himno glorioso y lleno de alabanza
A la noble tierra de Madre de Dios.

Del incario hacia el oriente,
Trasmontando el ande frío,
Las huestes del Inca Yupanqui
Llegaron a nuestro río.

Los andinos precursores
Tierra de lucha encontraron,
Fueron hombres superiores,
Y no en vano se inmolaron.

Gloria a los bravos pioneros
Plenos de audacia y valor
Y a los nobles misioneros
Con su mensaje de amor.

Cantemos hermanos, con cálida voz,
Un canto vibrante de amor y esperanza
Un himno glorioso y lleno de alabanza
A la noble tierra de Madre de Dios

Tierra de amor y de valor ... Madre de Dioooos
Tierra de amor y de valor ... Madre de Dioooos
Madre de Dioooooooos
Chapter 3

The interplay of power between leaders and communities

This chapter focuses on the important role of the communities in influencing FENAMAD politics. In the first instance I will outline the run up to the Congress held in San José del Karene in 2012 as there were divided opinions about both the date and venue of this Congress. The different leaders in the Federation were each swayed by opinions emanating from their respective home communities, demonstrating the ways in which the communities are able to influence a leaders decisions within FENAMAD. I use an analysis of the Congress proceedings to uncover the significance of the phrase “llegando bien a la comunidad”. This was mentioned to me by one Ese Eja leader during an interview and serves to highlight one of the expectations of leaders in the Federation. César Augusto described his role to me in the following way (this is part of a much longer description which I will analyse further in Chapter 5).

That’s how I became a dirigente in FENAMAD. I took the role of secretary in order to have a higher position. I hadn’t expected to be given the role as coordinator of the people in voluntary isolation (PIAV) project but Klaus [President of FENAMAD in 2013] assigned me this role as my commitment. It has been difficult for me to assume this role but I continue assuming responsibility for both PIAV projects. I continue undertaking the activities in order to llegar bien a la comunidad (interview, 3/8/2013).

Literally translated llegando bien a la comunidad means “arriving well to the community” but also could be understood as “being seen well or positively”, “in a good light” or “doing right by”. The phrase relates to the correct undertaking of a leadership role as expressed by opinions from the leader’s community whereby people feel that the leader is working towards their interests. Through an analysis of the literature on kinship and mobility in Amazonia we are able to see that both “llegando bien a la comunidad” and “presencia en las comunidades” (presence in the communities) allow leaders the opportunity to maintain kinship ties and consolidate allies in the various communities. This becomes significant for their powers of representation within the Federation. In this chapter I will take a closer look at how these actions work to consolidate leaders within FENAMAD. According to Lévi-Strauss (1974), it is consent which takes primacy in leadership among the Nambikwara, and the basis of power is consent. Although a chief is always aware that the group could withdraw its consent at any time. The group’s consent in turn is based on the chief’s ability to satisfy the needs of the group. Llegando bien a la
comunidad demonstrates how a leader is driven to prove that he is able to satisfy the needs of the group. Additionally, thinking about the importance of consent adds weight to the practice of being present in the communities. It is through travelling and being involved with different community members that consensus relating to decision making and the legitimacy of leaders as spokespeople is maintained.¹ Maintaining a presence in communities also offers the possibility of disseminating information about the Federation and its activities, discussing important community issues and obtaining opinions regarding planned actions. This helps to orient the activities of the leaders in FENAMAD. In this chapter I will discuss the Congress at length as it sets the scene for the rest of the thesis but first I would like to clarify what I mean when I refer to community and Pueblo, and how this relates to kinship.

**Interethnic versus intra-ethnic relations**

Each native community, as per the legislation, possesses a titled territory and on that land there is one single population centre. This is a village, where the sala communal (communal hall), school and health post are located. Most of the communities are organised around these services and often there is a football pitch in the centre with individual houses dotted around this. Some communities maintain some distance between houses, with different family clusters living further away from the central services, while in others the community members build their homes close together. The village is often surrounded by farms (chacras) and the community members use the surrounding forests to hunt, fish and gather wild fruits. In the communities who have Brazil nut forests the members will work on these in family groups just after the rainy season when the nuts have fallen to the ground. Logging or activities like gold mining (in some communities) are also undertaken in the forests adjacent to the village. When I refer to native community I am referring to this population centre and the clusters of families who live there.

Internal to each native community there are various dynamics which determine how the community is distributed spatially and organised socially and politically. This depends largely on the ethnic group to which the people belong. This is what is meant when I use

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¹ Paula Letts (2012) chooses to use the word legitimacy instead of representivity when discussing the Federation leader’s position. She discusses the different decision-making mechanisms in place in the Federation and between the Federation and other indigenous organisations such as ECA-RCA which work to secure the legitimacy of decisions taken.
the term *Pueblo*, taken to mean people or nation. So for the Ese Eja, Harakmbut, Yine and so on, the social organisation of the community will depend on marriage practices, post marital residency practices, clan affiliations (in Harakmbut case), and farming and work practices. Each *Pueblo* also recognises different types of individuals as powerful within the community, and may measure prestige according to their own criteria. People use both native community and *Pueblo* to identify themselves. For example during the Congress interventions people would often state their name, the native community which they belong to and their *Pueblo* (ethnic group) as these are all referents which give information about the person in this multi-ethnic context. By way of further clarification, Gray offers that the “community is the most stable residential grouping among the Arakmbut and most people remain in the same village for most of their lives and use its name as their prime form of identification in local and regional contexts” (Gray 1997: 125).

The situation is complicated somewhat in that native community as a legal category defines a specific village and a bounded territory whilst kinship ties often surpass these boundaries due to marriage between communities but within the same ethnic group. For this reason importance is given to references to *Pueblo* in Federation politics as this encompasses indigenous identifications and family relations which may surpass titled community boundaries. For the most part intra-ethnic relations are defined by *Pueblo* and interethnic relations refer to relations between *Pueblos*. Native community has taken on greater significance after land titling and in recent times due to rights over resource use. The categories used by people to describe themselves are therefore relational and depend on the context. Within each community, social organisation is based on kinship and proximity whereas ethnic group becomes significant when dealing with others outside of the community, and particularly with the state who has set the parameters for recognition of indigenous people based on ethnicity. Within the Federation ethnicity is also significant as this relates to which leaders take up office and the different demands placed on these leaders by their respective communities.

Kinship amongst the Ese Eja is defined by both given and processual aspects (Alexiades 1999; Lepri 2005) and they have a classificatory kinship terminology which places a person’s relatives in terms of generational level, age difference and gender (Burr 1997: 35). They practice uxorilocality, where the husband lives with the wife’s household after marriage (Alexiades 1999: 113). Political organising in the Ese Eja has not been notable in the past and this may be related to the fact that establishing political alliances along
consanguineal lines is weakened by the dislocation of men from their family groups (Alexiades 1999: 113).

Isabella Lepri (2005) describes that for the Ese Eja filiation is associated directly with the transmission of substance, in this case blood and semen, which is linked to patrilineal inheritance of group membership (see also Alexiades 1999: 112; Burr 1997). In marriage practices, cross-cousin alliances are favoured. She describes two specific Ese Eja terms which relate to those who are the same as me, *uapapojama* (non-other, e.g. parents, grandparents, descendants and their offspring) and those who are ‘not like me’, *uapa* (other) (Lepri 2005: 708; see also Alexiades & Peluso 2003: 105). Marriage can be with those described as *uapa*, who are classed as internal others, and are therefore not considered dangerous as they share certain aspects of conviviality and familiarity. 2 This is understood by the further clarification of others in terms of residence so that internal others are considered those who ‘live/sleep with me’ (*eniji-jaaji*) and are opposed to those who live and sleep elsewhere (*pia-jaaji*). “Most of the time *pia-jaaji* are seen as enemies” (Lepri 2005: 709) and so residential group endogamy is preferred. Also due to uxorilocality Ese Eja are “preferentially endogamous, in the sense that they marry within their community and linguistic subgroup” (Alexiades 1999: 113). The clusters of houses in the community are thus distributed accordingly based on kinship ties. A newly married couple will live with the wife’s family initially before constructing their own home close by often upon the birth of the second child.

The Ese Eja refer to other Ese Eja people as *ese eja* and use the term *deja* to describe other people such as Peruvians more widely, or Bolivians (Lepri 2005: 708). Like Burr (1997: 30), I also noted the use of the term *gente* to refer to other people. Additionally, I found that the Ese Eja referred to other indigenous people from different ethnicities as *nativo, indígena* (similar to Lepri 2005) or *paisano* (see also Burr 1997: 30).

For the Arakmbut, the largest Harakmbut group in terms of population size, kinship is understood in terms of patrilineal clan affiliations. The word *onyu* which means “pure” is

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2 There is a further internal division in terms of moieties with two patrimoieties characterised by patrilateral kinship. Father is therefore referred to as *icha* and *kaka* depending on the moiety. This is not considered to play a significant role in the regulation of marriage as it has been found that marriage can be either endogamous or exogamous to moiety (Burr, 1997: 36).

3 Lepri (2005: 708/9) defines this as “us or our lot” and therefore includes those who live/sleep together and those that live/sleep elsewhere. She also notes the use of the Spanish term *pariente* (relative) to refer to other Ese Eja.
used to refer to clans, as a descriptive term (Gray 1997: 131). There are 7 clans, Yaromba, Idnsikambo, Wandigpana, Singperi, Masenawa, Embieri and Saweron which are spread through the five Arakmbut communities (Gray 1997: 127). Marriage is clan exogamous and clan conflict is a strong feature of community politics. Clan identity is important in everyday life and clan rivalries come to the fore in drinking parties (Gray 1996: 264; Henley 1998). Further the communities are divided by wambet, which with its root wamba, defines a “room or area in a maloca where a family live” (Gray 1996: 93). Andrew Gray distinguishes the wambet from clan as this is not a named group but refers to categories of relationships which stem from a particular individual, so is an ego-centric alliance which cross cuts clan divisions (Gray 1997a: 131). The wambet is formed from neighbouring households or clusters of houses who cooperate intimately in mining activities, farming, gathering, food sharing and preparation. These can be made up of groups of siblings and affines. It was found that the wambet now plays an increasingly significant role in the social organisation of the community and challenges the monopoly of the clan (Gray 1997a: 191). The spatial distribution of the Harakmbut communities are therefore determined by these factors.

The Arakmbut refer to other Arakmbut as ndoedn Arakmbut or my people (Gray 1997a: 131) while the different Harakmbut groups are called “Taka” and feared for their powers of sorcery (Gray 1997a: 123). Other indigenous people are called nongharakmbutnda, meaning other paisanos (Moore 2003: 76). According to Gray they refer to non-indigenous people or white people as amiko (Gray 1996: 286), a term which may be borrowed from the Spanish term amigo. Gray also noted that “amiko are often considered hostile. Friendly amiko are called Apoining. The Amarakaeri therefore do not consider all strangers dangerous but […] can sometimes seek advice, support and enter into friendly relations with them” (1986: 33).

Given this background information it becomes clear that any leader within the Federation will be influenced to represent the wishes and position of their own home community as this is where the leader’s kin reside and it forms the base of his individual power within the Federation. One’s home community decides who will be selected to represent as delegate in the Congress. In addition, allegiances demonstrated to other communities from the same ethnic group, or Pueblo are significant as often they share similar

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4 Before contact with the missionaries and the installation of the native community, the Harakmbut families lived in communal houses or malocas, called a hak, which were distributed over an extensive territory. Contact between malocas was related to marriage ceremonies or visits but each maloca was autonomous and independent. See Moore, 2003 for more information.
problems and issues and may also contain kinship alliances. Language similarities enable fluidity in interactions and being from the same ethnic group means that leaders are aware of the expectations on their behaviour and move towards fulfilling these. The result of focusing on kin and maintaining kinship relations means that invariably indigenous others are created by exclusion. The task is made difficult by the fact that the Federation leaders are based in the city where the Federation maintains its main office. This means that leaders are not involved in the everyday politics of the communities. In order to be able to be “seen well” or to do right by both their own and other communities a different aspect of the leader’s role therefore becomes significant and that involves travelling to the communities. The formation of allies in communities from different ethnic groups is an important task for Federation leaders, as it is expected that a good leader will be able to address everyone’s issues and not only those of his Pueblo. This action also aims to reduce internal othering. By analysing the Congress we can see how these dynamics play out through the interplay of power between leaders and communities.

The debate surrounding the Congress

As per the Federation statutes a Congress was due to be held in January 2013. At the start of my fieldwork in September 2012 there was much talk of the upcoming Congress with the leaders beginning to make plans for this. Previous Congresses had been held just before the Federation’s anniversary on the 18th January so that the outcome and anniversary could be celebrated at the same time. Somewhat unusually, that year arrangements were being made for the Congress to be held in December and before the Christmas holidays. The proposed location of the Congress was being debated and the President Jaime Corisepa was eager for the Congress to take place in the Arakmbut community of San José del Karene. This particular community was home to the vice president and the president’s wife as well as the recent ex-president of the Federation, Antonio Iviche. From the very beginning of the discussions there was some opposition

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5 In conversations between leaders within the Federation there is often criticism if a leader is thought to be favouring only the agenda of his own ethnic group rather than trying to attend to the issues of other groups as well. Leaders who were able to attend to and resolve problems in the different communities were looked on more favourably and would fare better in elections.

6 I use the term Arakmbut when referring to the specific Harakmbut group or to leaders who belong to this group. I use Harakmbut as a plural when referring to different groups collectively or leaders who belong to the Harakmbut linguistic family. For example, if talking about 2 Arakmbut leaders and one Wachipaeri then I will refer to them collectively as the Harakmbut leaders, aiming to specify the particular groups to which they belong if this is necessary for understanding the context. See Chapter 2 for further information about Harakmbut groups and clans.
from leaders within the Federation with regard to both the venue and the date of the Congress, and specifically from two members of the executive committee. These members, Alicia Fernández and Jorge Payaba, were Yine and Shipibo respectively and were particularly vocal about their disapproval. At first this was manifest as discontent with the option and attempts to gently persuade the other members on the committee to reconsider the possibility of holding the elections in the city of Puerto Maldonado during internal meetings. The date did not seem to be too much of an issue at that point but the venue was thought to be inappropriate due to recent internal problems within the San José community and a contested internal election. There were claims and counterclaims from within the community about the legitimacy of this election and rumours in the city that this change in presidency was instigated by FENAMAD leaders as an attempt to lay the ground work for a potential re-election of the current Federation president in the upcoming elections.

As time went on it became clear that the President and the other members of the executive committee were going to concretise the plans for the Congress to be held in San José before Christmas. Letters were commissioned to request an advance in funds from the donor, Rainforest Foundation Norway. Other letters were sent out to potential donors in order to look for additional funds to finance the transportation and accommodation needs of the delegates. The President also commissioned the secretary to begin drafting the letters to the communities inviting them to hold their own internal communal assemblies (asamblea comunal) in order to vote for the delegates who would attend the XVI Congress of FENAMAD. In this letter, drafted at the beginning of November, the venue and date were finalised as 15th and 16th December, for the meeting to be held in the native community of San José del Karene.

The president argued that the elections had to be held earlier that year in order to capitalise on funding opportunities due to financial problems within the Federation, as well as for tax purposes. This was also one of the reasons stated for holding the Congress in a community rather than in the city where accommodation would have to be provided in hotels. Additionally it was argued that as “native people” they should hold their own elections in communities and not in the city, in keeping with the spirit of the initial FENAMAD Congresses.

Upon receiving the letters the communities from the lower Madre de Dios region who are represented by COINBAMAD, organised what they classed as an “historic” meeting titled “organisational strengthening of the communities from the lower zone of the Madre de Dios”. This organisation represents the Shipibo-Conibo, Amahuaca, Ese Eja and Kichua
Runa peoples as well as some newly formed Yine communities from the Las Piedras river. The meeting, on the 12th November, was held primarily in order to discuss concerns about the proposed congress date and location. Importantly some Arakmbut communities had also attended this meeting despite their not being affiliated officially to this organisation. An Act of Agreement was signed by all 16 native community representatives present that day and was forwarded to the leaders in the Federation offices.

The main details of the agreement and outcome of the meeting were as follows:

1. A concern for the lack of democratic process within the Federation as the President did not take into consideration the opinions of the Yine and Shipibo members of the executive committee or the letters from the native communities who were opposed to the proposed venue.
2. A concern for the lack of guarantee of physical and psychological integrity of members who would attend as San José had had recent internal problems.
3. Concerns that this was an attempt to manage the meeting and effect outcomes by retiring leaders as it would be on Harakmbut territory.
4. Emphasising the proposal to hold the meeting on neutral territory in Puerto Maldonado.
5. Questioning the reasons behind the date change.

A proposal was outlined for the Congress to be held on 15-17 January 2013 in Apaktone in Puerto Maldonado and a specific point was made that if the date and venue were not changed then the 16 native communities represented in this meeting would not attend the Congress. Also included in the Act was a proposal for a panel to be presented in the Congress presided over by Julio Cusurichi Palacios, a renowned Shipibo leader who had won the Goldman Prize for Conservation but has never been president of the Federation.

The first paragraph of the Act stated that:

Everyone [present] showed their discontent with the political administrative process of the actual committee of our organisation where many of the agreements are not being validated or known by the native communities or by all of the Executive Committee/board of FENAMA. Also some of the presidents [of the native communities] indicated that in many cases [the Federation President] opposed collaborating institutions

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7 Apaktone is a Dominican Missionary conference hall which can be hired for a small charge.
directly approaching the native communities. FENAMAD in this period did not have any intention to strengthen the intermediary indigenous Councils, COINBAMAD, AFIMAD, COHARYIMA, and consequently are in breach of the statutes of our organisation. For all of these reasons the native communities and leaders present agreed that the Congress of the indigenous communities should be held in Puerto Maldonado, in order to have a transparent and honest debate to redirect the principles and objectives of our organisation so that it meets the needs of our communities and indigenous peoples.

A response letter was drafted to COINBAMAD in which each of the points was addressed in turn, not before first mentioning the surprise of the leaders in the Federation at not having been invited to the meeting or informed of its undertaking. As COINBAMAD is an intermediary organisation of FENAMAD it would be expected that they should have received an invitation to a meeting of this scale. In their response the Federation leaders justify their decision and highlight that:

> [H]istorically FENAMAD congresses have always been held in various native communities as part of the strategy to strengthen the peoples; that is the spirit and will of the indigenous peoples in the same line as our sages and leaders who first initiated it, we maintain this tradition to continue strengthening our bases. We do not encourage other intentions, electoral or otherwise, because we leave that to traditional political parties, it is not part of our essence as indigenous peoples.

They also called for unity in position stating that:

> Such attitudes do not help in strengthening the unity of the indigenous movement, it is not a constructive way to move forward to strengthen our institution and our people, because the only thing which is gained is weakening, dividing us and confusing us. We must be consistent with our principles since otherwise the only beneficiaries will be those who continue to ignore our rights.

> We also believe that differences in opinions and positions with respect to the management of the current board of committee leaders should be discussed and clarified in this congress that being our democratic space, as unilateral discussions do not help strengthen us and rather generate speculation or distorted reports which only favor interests very alien to our own.

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8 The significance of a leaders role in establishing the social boundaries for interaction are discussed further in Chapter 4, in terms of inside and outside spaces.

9 Behavioural expectations of leaders are discussed in Chapter 4, and particularly as this relates to leaders attempts to distance themselves from behaviours considered characteristic of the Others and the outside.
Despite, the growing opposition to the proposed Congress, the President proceeded with the arrangements. It is important to note that the Federation is made up of 34 communities and if half of them were to be absent from the Congress this would present real difficulties for any elections to be undertaken in terms of power of representation and there would be a high likelihood that any such election would be contested at a later date. A contested election outcome would also prove problematic for the elected leaders in terms of their reception in communities and their legitimacy to represent.

It was at this point that the Yine and Shipibo members of FENAMAD also stated that they would not be attending the Congress if it were to go ahead in San José del Karene and they began to put pressure on the auxiliary staff such as the anthropologists, lawyers, communications team etc., to voice concerns over the events taking place. I had a good relationship with the lower communities and with these particular members of FENAMAD who voiced their concerns to me on repeated occasions. Whilst attempting to be neutral, due to my employment as anthropologist with the Federation, I felt the need to speak to the president and vice president voicing my concerns that if the lower communities were to boycott the event this would have serious consequences for the Federation and might nullify the Congress. Despite my and other professionals who are involved with the Federation voicing concerns either personally, via email or on the telephone, the President stayed on course for the Congress in San José as planned in December, leading me to ponder the reasons behind his persistence.

In internal meetings the President, stated that it was illogical for COINBAMAD to claim that their opposition was due to security concerns and he added “as if the Harakmbut, would be violently coercive during the event.” This comment was in response to rumours that the San José community would be waiting with bows and arrows for the delegates. Additionally, he was quick to deny that the internal problems in the community would affect the successful running of the Congress, as, according to him, the internal issue was now resolved. This was despite the fact that another neighbouring Arakmbut community had also written a letter concerned that the Congress was to be held in San José due to the internal problems in that particular community. The other rumours surrounding the Congress were that the Harakmbut wanted it to be on their territory in order to influence the votes and ensure another Harakmbut presidency. This was one of the principal reasons why COINBAMAD was pushing for it to be held on more neutral
ground. Also some people suggested that the Harakmbut would use their magic to sway votes if it was to be held in their community.\textsuperscript{10}

After the historic COINBAMAD meeting and the document’s official presentation to FENAMAD, the Yine and Shipibo members of the executive committee became more publicly vocal in their opposition to the Congress. They also spent a lot of time trying to persuade César Augusto, to voice his disagreement with the proposal given that the other Ese Eja communities and his home community, Palma Real, were against the proposed Congress. It is of note that members of the executive committees of all the Ese Eja communities were present during the asamblea organised by COINBAMAD and signed the agreement in conformity with the outcomes and against the Congress in San José.

In spite of everything arrangements were made. Hotels in Puerto Maldonado were booked for those delegates coming from communities further afield who might need to stop over for the night before making their way on to San José. Transport was arranged by bus from Puerto Maldonado to Puerto Santa Rosa where boats would collect delegates to take them up river to the community, and the Federation office was busy with general preparations. A banner, folders, pens and T-shirts were designed and ordered, and a preliminary agenda was set for the upcoming Congress. All the paid auxiliary staff were involved, as per usual, in the arrangements for the Congress and all of the Federation members were involved minus the two who had voiced their concerns from the outset. These members began to be absent from the offices. One of them planned a trip to the distant Yine communities on the Las Piedras river in order to fulfil other work commitments for the same dates as the Congress, whilst the other one accepted to attend a conference in Colombia.

Interestingly, the Ese Eja leader was not vocal about his opposition to the Congress, although he had some reservations, which he mentioned in private conversations with the Shipibo and Yine members. He went along with the preparations in the office and when asked directly he was certain he would attend. As time got closer to the event letters started arriving into the Federation from native communities from the lower region,

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Magia} in this case could refer to the use of plants such as \textit{piri piri} thought to be able to influence behaviour or to \textit{brujería} (sorcery). Interethnic conflicts are oftentimes manifest in terms of fear of possibilities for sorcery between groups (Alexiades & Peluso 2003; Moore 2003). Certain groups are ascribed enhanced abilities in \textit{brujería} and are feared for this reason. Gray (1997: 123) noted the Arakmbut preoccupation with sorcery in relation to the Wachipaeri and \textit{brujería} was given as one of the reasons for their escape from the mission in Shintuya in the 1960s.
stating that they would not be attending the Congress and outlining their reasons why. COINBAMAD held many internal meetings which were sometimes attended by members of Arakmbut communities who were not in favour of the Congress in San José. Some of the COINBAMAD and Federation leaders opposed to the Congress had gone to speak on radio programmes which were listened to by the communities, thus making the dispute public. News articles appeared online and in press about the controversy.

A few days before the Congress, I was asked by the Federation President if I would be able to attend and help with the proceedings. I felt under pressure not to attend the Congress as this was a moment when allegiances were being tested. Everyone was very aware of who was on which side of the divide – those with FENAMAD and those with COINBAMAD. The decision of whether or not to attend had important implications for my fieldwork and especially in terms of access. If I was to attend the Congress, I would show to the Harakmbut leaders that I was loyal to FENAMAD and could be trusted as an ally. But in attending I felt that I may compromise the relationship that I had with the communities of the lower region and their leaders who had spoken at length to me about their misgivings. Despite the fact that I agreed to attend the Congress and help with documenting the event, my position as “neutral observer” was later called into question by the Harakmbut leaders and I was unable to get past Harakmbut gatekeepers who later denied me access to their communities and to interviews.11

The Congress

The 14th of December was the day set for the delegates to embark on the trip by bus/car and boat to the San José del Karene community. Many of the delegates had arrived the night before to Puerto Maldonado whilst others would be transported by boat directly from their communities further along the Madre de Dios river. Those of us who would be leaving from Puerto Maldonado waited in the Federation offices for the hired taxis to collect us with our belongings and with the provisions needed for the Congress. Boxes containing the food, drinks, banners, folders, electric generator, computers, printer and other utensils necessary for the 3 days in the community were packed and waiting in the

My initial research proposal was to work with Harakmbut leaders to look at the role of ayahuasca in politics. I had planned to spend my fieldwork in two Harakmbut communities, Boca Inambari and Shintuya, as well as in the Federation. I was unable to gain access to these communities and the new leaders voted into the Federation as a result of the Congress in January 2013 (to be discussed in Chapter 4) did not appear to regularly use ayahuasca. I decided to shift my focus to leadership more generally within the Federation. See Chapter 2 for a discussion about methodology.
front office to be loaded into the taxis. I sat biting my nails and hoping that the event would at some point be called off amid the very real discontent felt by the lower communities and the palpable lack of their presence in the offices. Maybe when we arrived the leaders would notice that there were not enough community delegates present to hold the elections, I thought to myself. The atmosphere in the Federation was tense and quite different to the jovial atmosphere which I had noted before the 2010 Congress. The Federation leaders looked stressed and tired.

The taxis arrived outside the Federation offices and we all bundled in to make the 3 hour trip along the interoceanic highway to the port of Santa Rosa, where the boats were waiting for us to make the almost 2 hour journey up the Madre de Dios and Colorado rivers to the community of San José. It was late afternoon by the time we arrived at Santa Rosa and embarked on the boats, and night had fallen when we arrived at San José. As we clambered in the dark up the steep, muddy footpath towards the community there was a real tension in the air and the community was silent as we made our way to the sala comunal. There were hardly any community members present to welcome the delegates to the community. We set up our tents in the newly built communal hall and waited for dinner. There was a delegation of women, some from the community such as the Federation president’s wife, along with the secretary and helpers from the FENAMAD offices, who were in charge of cooking and serving the food. We ate our mountain of chicken stew and rice and I sat up late talking with the other anthropologist and some Yine men who had worked as boat drivers to transport the delegates to the community but who were not attending the Congress as elected members from their community. We all felt certain that due to the lack of numbers of delegates the Congress would have to be called off the next day and we would go home.

**Congress – Day 1**

On the morning of the 15th, we woke up early and packed up the tents in order to prepare the room for the days’ events. I also had a chance to look around the community and talk to the people who had travelled to attend the Congress as delegates. There were some familiar faces but a real lack of certain well known individuals who would normally be present at big events such as these. Particularly missing were the Shipibo leaders

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12 The community had recently completed work on the hall which was a large concrete and brick structure with corrugated iron roof. Alongside the hall were also newly constructed toilet facilities. A point which was argued made this community ideal for holding the present Congress.
who have a big political presence in the region and are extremely vocal and knowledgeable about the issues affecting the communities. The Harakmbut leaders seemed uneasy and paced around outside, huddled in small groups talking or smoking cigarettes.

After breakfast, the lawyers made the first call for the Congress to begin. According to the statutes there have to be two calls made if a quorum has been established and the Congress can then go ahead after the second call with whatever number of people are present. We waited eagerly to see if any other delegates would arrive after the first call, maybe from communities closer to San José. Most of the 16 communities whose representatives had signed the Agreement were not present and despite the Federation leaders waiting an extra 2 hours before beginning proceedings, no-one else arrived for the Congress. At 11.15am the second call was made and the delegates were invited to proceed to the hall to register and receive their folders and badges. Their credentials were also checked by the legal team to ensure that they had been democratically elected as legal representatives by their communities. This was verified by a letter from the President of the community or ideally an Act from the internal communal meeting. People started queuing up to sign in and have their credentials checked and then made their way into the hall to take their seats.

The Congress was titled “United for the consolidation of the seven peoples of the Madre de Dios”, and began with the President of FENAMAD, Jaime Corisepa Neri; the President of COHARYIMA, Luis Tayori (intermediary organisation representing the Harakmbut, Yine and Matsiguenga); the President of ECA-RCA, Fermin Chimitani (representing the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve- RCA, and beneficiary communities) and Antonio Iviche, the new President of the native community San José del Karene, being invited to take seats at the front table facing the delegates. These leaders were asked to give their welcoming address to the delegates before a mesa directiva (a board, made up of three people, to direct the proceedings) was voted in. It is interesting to note that all of these leaders were Harakmbut, being from the Arakmbut group, with only Jaime being from the Wachipaeri group.
Figure 13. Harakmbut leaders undertaking their welcoming address before the delegates

Antonio, as President of the San José community, gave his words of welcome. In his address he asked for *fraternidad* in this event which FENAMAD had organised. Emphasis was placed on solidarity and dialogue in the face of the fragmentation of the Federation due to communities who had chosen to boycott the event. He stated that “It is in happiness and not anger, that the indigenous peoples have the opportunity to meet now in order to come up with strategies and make a work plan for the coming 3 years”. He went on to mention “as you have heard some people have wanted to boycott the meeting because they said that we would be waiting with arrows. Some people even said that Klaus had said that since now there are no arrows it would be with guns. But this is not so, rather there are sectors which wanted to boycott the meeting.” He emphasised that San José is an example of how to receive people and when they go to other communities they will also receive in the same way. He called for this event to act to strengthen and unite the indigenous people.

The President of FENAMAD, gave a greeting in Harakmbut before thanking everyone for making the effort to come to San José, drawing a parallel between this meeting and one which was proposed in 1995 in the native Harakmbut community of Queros, where
similarly some leaders had refused to attend. He mentioned that this was an opportunity to “evaluate the problems which we are facing. We are living in a different conjuncture. Our people have been confused by reports on the radio.” He spoke of leaders by name who had gone to the radio to voice their opinions as “leaders who had passed through the doors of FENAMAD and are the first to defame the institution. A meeting is to discuss and debate. It is built by proposing ideas.”

Luis, a young Arakmbut leader was next to give his welcome, in which he likened the event to a “party to exchange many things”. Fermin, also a young Arakmbut leader gave thanks for being able to be present at this important event. He stressed that “the Communal Reserve is not a stranger to the problematic lived by the beneficiary communities” emphasising that this was the opportunity to “discuss and construct with positive ideas.”

After this the mesa directiva which would preside over the whole event was established with a President, Secretary of Acts, and Disciplinary Secretary. The moderator, Julio Pareja (a forestry engineer and part of the technical team) set out the agenda for the upcoming days and asked if any delegates would like to add to the agenda. The Vice President of FENAMAD, asked to include talk of the emails which had been circulating regarding this event and specifically about a group known as “hijos de Wanamei” (children of Wanamei) who claimed to speak on behalf of the Harakmbut people. A new Yine community called Nueva Oceania, proposed their official affiliation to FENAMAD be included in the agenda. Boca Inambari asked to incorporate the theme of a sanction which one of their members had received in the previous Congress and César Augusto asked that they incorporate the theme of the Ese Eja ancestral territory into the agenda. Another leader suggested that there should be a discussion about possible sanctions for individual leaders who approached the media to talk about the internal affairs of the Federation.

Upon discussion of the defamatory emails which had been circulated in the communities, sent by the hijos de Wanamei, the Federation President specified that the problems and attempts to discredit the Federation are a result of the big companies (grandes empresas), who have interests in dividing the communities in order to gain access to their resources. Wanamei incidentally is a tree which figures in a Harakmbut myth. This tree saved the Harakmbut people at a time of a great fire as the people climbed up the tree and were able to live there, eating its fruit until it became possible to return to the earth (Gray 1996). The emails in question were rumoured to have been written by a relative of one the current Harakmbut leaders also from the San José community, who
had worked in the Federation for a number of years. Or there was speculation that they could have been written by a Harakmbut community officer hired by the oil company for community relations work.

After discussing these additional points to the agenda, there was a break for lunch and then the meeting continued with the stipulated agenda. The first section being a detailed report of the management of the Federation between January 2010 and December 2012, followed by a financial report. After each section there was a chance for delegates to ask questions or intervene.

Congress – Day 2

The second day started early, much like the first day, with breakfast served before everyone took their seats. The oil company and their dealings with the upper communities of the Madre de Dios were on the agenda again. The event started with an analysis of the situation of the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve by the President of ECA-RCA. In his presentation he reminded those present that this Reserve was pushed for as a way to recuperate the ancestral lands of the Harakmbut people. He went on to use his intervention to clarify certain issues which have marred the successful management of the area by the Executor of Administration Contract (ECA). One issue of note, as it relates to the importance of leaders being “seen well” or “doing right” by the communities, is that Puerto Luz (incidentally this is the President of ECA’s community of origin), had accepted a sum of money (US$ 400,000) from the oil company allowing them to work on their lands. The President of ECA-RCA was then accused by the community of withholding the money. He used the talk to clarify that by law the oil company was unable to release any money until the Environmental Impact Assessment was complete and this had nothing to do with ECA or him personally.

During the interventions following his presentation, people asked for clarification about the oil company’s work and most of the questions were answered by the President of ECA-RCA. He emphasised that the community relations officers (indigenous community members hired by the oil company) son aliados a la empresa (are company allies), who have to report good things about the oil company to the communities and bad things

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13 ECA is made up of the Harakmbut, Matisguenka and Yine members elected from the 10 beneficiary communities which border the Reserve. Fermin Chimitani is the current President of ECA.
about FENAMAD. He implied that these characters were instrumental in creating divisions in the communities by spreading rumours and misleading community members. It was at this point that Antonio offered a contribution, mentioning the past situation of what he called a petro-ECA, in which the members of ECA were aligned with the oil company and worked for their interests rather than those of the communities who had voted them in.

Later on in the day the communities were separated into groups to discuss their specific concerns and demands which they would want to be included in the Federation work plan for the coming three years. Each group had a technical staff member helping to write down their demands and the groups specifically were considering the broad themes of economy (economic activities), health, territory, education and organisation. Other communities had social issues which needed attention from the Federation such as the presence of voluntary isolated peoples in their territories. Some people in my group specified that they wanted FENAMAD leaders to visit their communities at least once a year.

The last part of the Congress was taken up by the establishment of an Electoral Committee to preside over the electoral process, made up of a President, Secretary and Relator. The Committee read out the rules for voting and made sure that everyone was clear about how voting was to take place before calling up the delegates one at a time to vote. A 10-minute space was allowed in order for the delegates to prepare their proposed panels and present them to the table. The first panel was presented immediately, in fact the names of the delegates were already entered into the computer before the 10-minute slot but extra time had to be allocated to this activity as no other panel was presented to the table. After 30 minutes a second list of delegates was presented to the table. The lists of the two proposed panels for the FENAMAD Executive Committee were then placed on a board for the delegates to consult in making their votes. The lists were as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>List No. 1</th>
<th>List No. 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Jaime Corisepa (Wachipaeri/Harakmbut)</td>
<td>Leonardo Vargas Perdiz (Yine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Klaus Quique (Arakmbut/Harakmbut)</td>
<td>Jesus Acho Corisepa (Wachipaeri/Harakmbut)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>César Augusto Jojaje (Ese Eja)</td>
<td>Jorge Tayori Kendero (Arakmbut)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Ana Isabel Dariquebe (Harakmbut)</td>
<td>Hayde Trigoso Perez (Yine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor (fiscal)</td>
<td>Maria Elena Chinchiquiti (Matsiguenka)</td>
<td>Martin Mambiro Vicente (Matsiguenka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokesperson (vocal)</td>
<td>Julio Valles Flores (Yine)</td>
<td>Wilbert Carazas Cruz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the votes were counted there were 41 votes for List No. 1 and only 2 votes for List No. 2. Two votes were nullified therefore making the total votes counted 45. The session was called to a close after everyone had gone up one by one to congratulate the winning panel members.

After dinner everyone sat in groups drinking beer and dancing in the wet football field. Many people were talking about the possible split of the Federation and the implications. The newly elected leaders, or re-elected leaders, as the three principal ones were already in the Federation and were keeping their positions according to the days votes (except for Cesar Augusto who was being promoted from Treasurer to Secretary), stayed up all night drinking. At day break they were still sat together in a group drinking. Next to a mountain of beer crates stacked to one side, were Antonio, the young Harakmbut leaders who had presided over much of the Congress and other Federation staff, as well as some other Harakmbut men from the community. The rest of us made preparations to pack our things and made our way towards the port in order to board the boats for our return home.
The importance of “doing right” by your community

In the run up to the Congress FENAMAD leaders had been having problems with the communities from the upper region of the Madre de Dios due to the presence of the oil company, Hunt Oil. There were complaints that FENAMAD leaders did not travel enough to visit the communities in the upper region to listen to their problems. FENAMAD leaders felt that they were unable to compete with the oil company workers who were constantly present in the communities. The leaders also felt that the community officers hired by the oil company were weakening the position of FENAMAD and the other indigenous intermediary organisations in the communities through rumours and misinformation. They felt unable to counter this with their heavy work agenda in Puerto Maldonado and lack of financial resources to have a constant presence in the communities.

Through a closer analysis of this Congress and the agenda we can see that it was heavily influenced by the Harakmbut people and served to address mainly the concerns of the upper communities, as related to the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve and the presence of the oil company on their lands. There appeared to be discontent in the upper communities, as manifest by the hijos de Wanamei emails regarding the current Federation leaders and the accusations of withholding money from the communities. Through the emails and accusations levied against particular leaders, the Harakmbut communities were questioning the legitimacy of the current Harakmbut leaders’ decision-making powers. Further the internal frictions between the different Harakmbut groups and clans were reflected through the hijos de Wanamei emails. It was through the Congress proceedings that leaders were able to reiterate their compromise to help resolve the problems in the communities. The community Puerto Luz was suspicious of the uneven power dynamic and the possible appropriation of power by the leader through his acting as spokesperson for the community in the city. This position was reflected in the rumours in the communities about his collusion with the oil company. Despite having accepted that the oil company work on their lands, the community maintains their distrust of the company and leaders thought to be allied with the company are questioned for their legitimacy and criticised publically as furthering their own interests and not those of the community.

If the Congress was not serving to unite all of the indigenous peoples in the region, as per the banner, I was led to consider why it had been so important for the Harakmbut leaders who pushed for it to be undertaken in San José. I argue that the Congress in
San José was necessary in order for these particular Harakmbut leaders to “llegar bien” or do right by their community (i.e. their kin and clan). This Congress acted as a platform for these communities to air their grievances and for FENAMAD leaders and other Harakmbut leaders to demonstrate their understanding of the lived problematic of their particular communities and to be seen to be working to resolve the problems. It allowed leaders the space to respond to questions in order to clarify their position. The choice of community is significant precisely because that is where there had been problems and a concentration of mistrust of the Harakmbut FENAMAD leaders and the ECA-RCA committee members. It was also possibly the source of the Children of Wanamei emails. Arguably this type of agenda, which favoured the upper communities’ problems and specifically the issue of the oil company, would not have been possible in a Congress where all the 7 indigenous peoples from the region were present. Other communities have different issues which necessitate attention too and so the agenda is set to include as many of the problems and options for future action as possible. Herein lies the necessity for leaders to “llegar bien a su comunidad” (their own community), and demonstrate a deep understanding of their specific problems. They need to demonstrate that they have proposals of how to go about solving them through the use of networks, allies and the like. Additionally leaders need to be able to demonstrate that they are able to present this knowledge in open platforms such as the Congress. In this way they make visible their support for their community, which is essential in order to gain trust and demonstrate one’s suitability as a possible candidate for the Federation leadership. The leaders are therefore aware of the importance of cultivating and maintaining good relations with their kin and community.

Andrew Gray noted that there is a difference in the Arakmbut communities between “spiritual leaders” and “the more political leaders who defend the interests of their clan (onyu)” (Gray 1986: 94). That is why it is significant that the choice of venue was San José, where these particular Arakmbut leaders had a strong kin base. It would appear that this was a critical moment internally for the Harakmbut leadership and so it was necessary for these particular Harakmbut leaders to show their allegiances and commitment to work towards solutions to the mining and oil company problems which are selectively affecting their own communities and clans. It could be argued that the subsequent Congress’s success (to be discussed further in Chapter 4) was based on these leaders having mended their relationships at home first, in order to secure votes.

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14 Some of the lower communities also have gold mining issues, such as the mixed-Shipibo community of Tres Islas, but the majority of the others do not share this same reality.
and favour with kin and gain significant Harakmbut allies. The Harkambut leaders, whilst sympathetic to the Ese Eja, Yine and Shipibo pleas, were driven to prioritise their own communities needs at this time and particularly their own clans’ needs. They preferred to run the risk of these elections being contested at a later date as they would have a secure base then and could be voted in by their Harakmbut kin and allies, as a direct result of this meeting.

It has been possible to see that through Federation politics the internal clan disputes became manifest. The dispute followed internal faction lines between two Harakmbut clans, the Idsikambo (those involved in organising the congress) and the Yaroba (those opposing the congress) who each secured allies from the other clans and different Harakmbut groups to support them. While some chose to ally themselves with the other ethnic groups, as can be seen by individuals from the Harakmbut communities choosing to attend the COINBAMAD meetings (Thomas Moore, personal communication). Therefore this Congress allowed the Harkambut leaders to be “seen positively” by their own community and clan by addressing their specific concerns and through sharing food and alcohol, and planning strategies while drinking into the wee hours. Dany Pinedo argues that for the Arakmbut clan affiliations are favoured over other relationships in community politics, “such that a man is expected to support his clan member in any dispute which could arise between clans irrespective of who is right in the argument” (Pinedo 2013). The ability of these Harakmbut leaders to llegar bien a su comunidad is ultimately reflected in the voting during this Congress as the first panel received almost all of the votes. This attests to the importance of this meeting for securing the base of followers for these leaders.15

For the Ese Esa leader, attending the Congress was significant for furthering his personal ambitions. Through his complicity in supporting the Congress he demonstrated his compromise to work towards the Harakmbut agenda, despite his own pueblo’s misgivings and open resistance to the Congress. This relates to an individual political agenda of one leader, with the more long term goal of being seen to do right by his own community. In the short term he had to secure his position as ally with the Harakmbut leaders who were presenting a panel for the next elections in order to be included in that panel as the Ese Eja representative. This offered him the power to be in the Federation

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15 The same panel was presented in the Congress in January 2013 (to be discussed in Chapter 4) with the only modification being to the position of President. The panel won in the elections to preside over FENAMAD for the subsequent period 2013-2016.
for a further three years, an important step towards his goal of helping to create an Ese Eja organisation in the future (see Chapter 5 for a discussion about the Ese Eja Committee).

The Yine and Shipibo leaders in opposing the Congress were demonstrating attention to the demands of their own home communities, as these had been vocal in manifesting their discontent with the decision to undertake the Congress in the Arakmbut community. It was necessary for them to ally themselves with their own Pueblo’s agendas, showing congruence with their role as representatives of their communities within the Federation. Without their home community’s support they would be unable to continue as leaders in the Federation. Additionally by choosing to boycott the Congress the lower communities were showing their disapproval of the decisions undertaken by the current FENAMAD leaders by physically withdrawing themselves and their consent, so choosing not to follow the leaders anymore. This ultimately contested the leader’s ability to create unity and a group of followers.

In all these cases the leaders showed their capacity for leadership and attention to the needs of their specific communities. This worked to ensure the leaders’ continued position of power before their respective kin. The position of the Federation as a power-giving structure was reinforced as it offers both communities and leaders the power to work towards their particular agendas. The significance of the dispute over the Congress can be understood through reference to kinship (and community) and we see how kinship ties are able to affect a leaders decisions and strategies once in the Federation, as ultimately “doing right” by one’s own community has the greatest influence over a leaders continued position in FENAMAD. In order to maintain strong links to the communities a different aspect of the leadership role comes into play – being present in the community – and it is to this that I now turn.

**Presence in the communities**

FENAMAD leaders are often criticised when they do not make time to visit the communities affiliated to the Federation. An Amahuaca man from the Boca Pariamanu

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16 One Shipibo leader, who had political ambitions to run for a place on a panel to be presented at the second Congress was denied this possibility as his community did not ultimately vote for him to attend as a delegate during their internal asamblea. I am not sure of the exact reason but his nephew suggested to me that it was related to an internal issue within his community and not to his work as dirigente in the Federation.
community, complained, “Six years and my community has never received the presence of FENAMAD, and maybe it’s the same in all of the communities. More than anything they have stayed in their office and didn’t come out”. The leaders themselves see the need to be present in the communities, as presencia en las comunidades is often spoken about and they make a point of visiting as many of the communities as they can at specific moments during the year. Attempts are made to attend celebrations held to mark the founding of the communities called anniversaries or to attend other important events such as the intercommunity football games in the summer. It is at these times that opportunities for sharing are provided and relationships of alliance are built based on shared ideals, goals and understanding of what it means to be indigenous or nativo. The Congress and similar interethnic meetings can be understood then as a specific “space of sociality” (Santos-Granero, 2007: 1) which is different to that of the community.

Viveiros de Castro (1996) discussed three different analytic styles used to study Amazonian societies, of which the “symbolic economy of alterity” seems important to consider here as it relates to relations “that cross socio-political, cosmological and ontological boundaries, thereby playing a constitutive role in the definition of collective identities” (ibid. 190). Given the multi-ethnic nature of FENAMAD, alterity becomes significant as does the focus on affinity and predation, but this does not help to illuminate how interethnic relations within the Federation are maintained and continue to be safe and productive. Santos-Granero (2007) offers an interesting alternative to this as he studied the importance of interethnic friendships which serve to enhance the sphere of safe relations between ethnic groups. In particular he emphasises the “great importance attributed to trust in such relationships”, which are maintained “only through repeated demonstrations of trustworthiness” (2007: 11). I would argue that the significance of presencia en las comunidades, serves to establish relationships of trust between communities and helps the leaders demonstrate their trustworthiness. In this section I want to see how leaders work to maintain kinship ties and develop allies during their visits to the communities and why this is so important.

When visiting the communities leaders are expected to pasear. By pasear, I here refer to the activity of walking around the community which generally involves visiting individual houses. This is a principal activity in the communities, often undertaken in the late afternoon after a day’s work and a bath, where information can be exchanged and

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17 Being consecuente is discussed in Chapter 4 and is directly related to the present discussion as leaders need to prove themselves to be trustworthy in Federation politics, and do so in a number of ways.
alliances can be made visible. It is through the act of walking around that one makes known their agenda, and can receive gossip, and other information. It is expected that leaders pasear in the communities in order to reiterate what was discussed in the general meeting (if this happens to be the primary reason for the visit), give further explanations, and discuss issues specific to each community received directly from the individual families. Leaders who do not engage in this activity are criticised for being creídos (thinking a lot of themselves) or unresponsive to the lived problematic in the community. It is during this activity that leaders can share food and drink, share information and exchange gifts. This serves to reaffirm kinship ties and can be essential for the creation of allies in communities other than one’s own.

Similarly leaders’ are expected to participate in communal activities during their visits such as take part in the football games or volleyball, and actively drink and share beer during the anniversary party. It is expected that they associate with the people in the community in this way and this is part of the communities’ attempt to reaffirm the leader’s position as working towards their particular needs and to bring them closer to the lived experience of the community. It also offers community members the opportunity to mould the leaders and influence Federation agendas. Often after visits to the communities the leaders will sit down to discuss the issues raised and plan actions or activities with the auxiliary staff to try to resolve them. For example, it was after a visit to the community Arasaeri that the Federation leaders organised to undertake an inspection to document the presence of illegal gold miners working on their lands. The miners were using a road running through the community which provided access to the river where they were working. Documenting this was necessary in order to press the authorities in Puerto Maldonado to attend to the matter. Being present in the communities attests to the importance given by the communities to the leader being able to convivir con la gente (live with the people), as it is through lived experience of sharing with the communities that knowledge about them is created.

Leaders may be more or less receptive to attempts made by communities to bring them closer to their lived experience, and may be selective in which communities they visit

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18 Being considered creído can have serious consequences. An indigenous forestry engineer described to me what had happened to a leader in AIDESEP who was considered creído and did not attend to his kin. He was said to have developed skin lesions, like psoriasis, which were attributed to sorcery undertaken by members of a community. The sorcery was carried out by placing items of his clothing in a gorvinchí (leaf cutter ants) nest and as the ants cut through his clothes, this manifest itself in his body by bits of skin falling off.
and whose agendas they prioritise. This affects the type of relationship possible between the leader and the community in question. Ultimately this also affects the way the leader is treated and received in the community and can affect votes during the elections. As the Federation is multi-ethnic and aims to represent the diverse groups in the region it becomes important for leaders to be able to “do right” by communities other than their own as well. Being present is often a difficult task in communities other than one’s own, as there is a greater feeling of ease and empathy with these people and an uneasiness generated by staying in communities from different ethnic groups who speak a different language and do things differently. For this reason establishing relationships based on friendship and trust become significant. Having a variety of people from different ethnic groups within the Federation committee also works to ensure possibilities for smooth relations in communities other than one’s own, as these leaders are then called on to navigate relations when in particular communities.

It was common for the Harakmbut leaders who travelled to the Ese Eja community of Palma Real to spend the night in the household of a Arakmbut man, who was married to an Ese Eja woman, Elisa, at that time. They felt comfortable there and this was visibly so as they would sit on the porch in a relaxed manner and joke with people passing by. Elisa would cook for them and they would eat there. On one occasion when we visited they bought beer and invited the community President and a few other young men to come and drink with them. This act is significant in forming alliances and for discussing Federation strategies (see Killick 2009, for role of sharing masato).

The behaviour of the leaders was markedly different where ethnic affiliations were absent and finding themselves immersed in a purely Ese Eja community, the Harakmbut leaders were often reluctant to spend the night, or would sleep in the sala comunal and limit the amount of time spent in the community. Upon visiting the Ese Eja community of Sonene (located about 8 hours by boat from the city of Puerto Maldonado and considered difficult to access due to the shallow and winding River Heath on which it is located), at different times the Harakmbut leaders would call upon an Ese Eja man who was married to a mestizo woman who they had established a relationship with. We would hand over any provisions that we had brought with us for her to cook and we would sit on their porch conversing amongst ourselves while the meal was made. The leaders never went from house to house there but would be open to conversation with the Ese Eja community members if they came to where we were sat, and often the community President did come over to talk. Otherwise they would converse with our host and engage in lengthy
discussions during the planned meetings but had little other contact with the Ese Eja people from the community.

On other occasions we would bring our own provisions, and even once brought a portable gas stove, in order to prepare our own meals. This was deemed necessary by the Federation leaders who perceived the behaviour of the Ese Eja to be unresponsive and distant and due to the leader asserting that the Ese Eja didn't have food to offer them. On one occasion of note, we arrived at the community and the Ese Eja man and his wife who we normally asked to help with the food preparation were not present, having made a trip to Puerto Maldonado. This posed a particular problem for the Harakmbut leaders as apparently they did not feel enough closeness to the other community members to be able to ask for their help. There appeared to be no other allies upon whom to call. Instead they chose to go to the teacher’s living quarters, where he had a little shop, and bought crackers to eat with the cans of tuna which we had brought along with us. That night they made comparisons of the type of reception received when they travelled to their own communities, the abundance of fish and masato (drink made from fermented manioc), and complained bitterly about the lack of food in the Ese Eja community. With no ally in the community and no Ese Eja Federation leader present, the leaders felt uncomfortable and uncertain about how to manage relations when in the community.

In contrast, when Harakmbut leaders visited their own communities or for example when we visited the Yine community of Diamante on the upper Madre de Dios region, the leaders spent time going between houses, receiving masato and talking with the men on our way to the communal building where the meeting was to be held. When in these communities they also sometimes bought beer and drank with community members in the evening, establishing and cementing ties which they had made.

Therefore being attentive to the needs of the communities and establishing allies can be seen as a two way process. Leaders need to demonstrate attention to the needs of the community, caring for them and sharing both in the Federation offices (through their role as representatives) and in the respective communities. In turn individuals within communities attempt to bring leaders closer to their lived experience during visits to their homes. Leaders who were open to sharing and participating in community events, irrespective of the ethnic group, were looked on more favourably and spoken of as approachable and interested in the problematic of the communities and would maintain strong allies in communities other than their own. This works in their favour when the
panels are being formed for the committee during the Congress. Leaders who are considered creído, or otherwise unapproachable and distant were not received well in the communities and were often left to their own devices or otherwise ignored upon their arrival by the majority of community members. The significance of reciprocity adds to expected behaviour from both leaders and communities and underlies the resentment manifest by leaders who felt that this was not displayed to them upon visiting these Ese Eja communities.

Reciprocity and generosity are central to the formation and endurance of alliances in the Federation and are expected from both communities and leaders (see also Lévi-Strauss, 1974). At the same time it ensures the productiveness of interethnic relations, as “it is only through the ‘proper’ mixing that safety can be achieved in society and danger averted” (Overing, 1983: 333). As noted by Santos-Granero (2009: 485) it is conviviality and commensality which are crucial for the fabrication and transformation of bodies. By extension it could be argued that it is through sharing food, beverages, and the company of people that steps can be taken towards the formation of the collective social body. In particular, events such as anniversaries are an opportunity for communities to give and share with leaders in the form of food and company. While leaders expect to receive a certain kind of treatment in the communities, the communities expect to receive something from the Federation, as leadership and prestige are associated with “the capacity to satisfy the desires of others” (Gray 1997: 119; Lévi-Strauss 1974; see also High 2007) and generosity is highly valued in the Arakmbut (Gray 1997: 119). Erazo (2010: 1024) suggests that it is generosity that serves to strengthen social ties and in this way can increase the number of individuals that a leader can call on for support. Similarly, McCallum (2001: 68) found that a “xanen ibu”, that is a “true leader” is characterised by his ability to feed people and gather people together. While Gray (1986) suggests that feasting has political implications as it makes prestige through generosity of providing drink, which is as significant as the distribution of meat by a hunter. “The more meat or drink available for distribution the wider the network of recipients becomes” (Gray 1986: 37).

I found that the Federation leaders never went to a community meeting without bringing something with them, this was often in the form of refreshments for the meeting such as gaseosa (Coca Cola or Inka Cola) and biscuits. Other times they would provide a meal. This was the same when meetings were held in the Federation offices. There was also an expectation that leaders need to give communities valuable items bought with NGO funds such as radio equipment for distant communities to be able to communicate out or
motors for boats which are supposed to be stored and used communally. This was considered necessary by communities in order to account for how funds were managed and to divert possible accusations of leaders accumulating all the money for themselves (see High 2007 for a discussion of the politics of egalitarianism in a Waorani political organisation). Problems arose with this though as some leaders then felt that in many ways communities came to expect these and would accuse leaders of favouritism if certain communities gained items of value that others did not. Some leaders argued that it was creating dependence and furthering paternalistic trends that they were trying to steer communities away from when dealing with the state or NGOs. It was a difficult situation to manage but when seen in terms of generosity we can see why communities would feel that it was necessary for Federation leaders to engage in relations in this way through gift giving and sharing of the benefits of NGO money. In general it was expected that FENAMAD did something for the communities, gave back in some way and this task has become more difficult in recent times due to the fact that the founding principal of land titling has been undertaken and completed in most cases. Thus, new demands from communities are placed on Federation leaders in relation to the diversification of economic activities and obtaining funding for new economic activities in the communities. It is useful to note that “political power in Amazonia is embedded […] in economic relationships” (Santos Granero 1986: 678).

Danny Pinedo (2013) makes reference to the distinction between bonding ties and bridging ties in his discussion of FENAMAD and their participation in regional and national strikes. In his analysis he highlights the ability of FENAMAD to gain strength through creating ties with other non-indigenous organisations, to find funding and support for their claims to land rights and mining rights. He draws on the work of Mark Granovetter (1973) to describe bonding ties as strong ties based on kinship and ethnic identification. These are opposed to bridging ties which are weak and transitory but essential for economic opportunities. He argues that for the Arakmbut bonding ties are formed on the basis of clan affiliations and are maintained through reciprocal relations. Bridging ties on the other hand relate to other types of relationships, based on friendship, compadrazgo or trade relations. For my discussion it could be argued that the significance of visiting and being present in the communities serves both functions. Within the leaders’ community of origin, the bonding ties take precedence and need to be cultivated as they are vital for retaining favour and ensuring possibilities for leadership in the Federation. It is ultimately one’s own community who has the power to put forward the names of those who will be present as delegates in the triannual Congress, thus offering those leaders the opportunity to be involved in the elections. The bridging ties,
on the other hand, are those made between different communities and are also essential for a leader’s continued success and ability to create group cohesion. Leaders have to work at making allies in as many of the different communities affiliated to the Federation as possible in order to be received well in those communities and to ensure the establishment and maintenance of followers. It is a leader’s trustworthiness and the relationships of trust which become significant for maintaining safe relations when visiting different ethnic groups.

The strength of the Harakmbut lies in their ability to maintain group cohesion across the Harakmbut communities and consolidate their position as a Pueblo, working towards a similar agenda. Herein lies the significance of the Congress as discussed earlier. They were able to consolidate their combined position through the Congress and the leaders made this possible demonstrating their ability to llegar bien not only to their community but to their Pueblo as well. Through an analysis of the position of Cesar Augusto we can see the significance of interethnic alliances for the possibility that this may offer a leader to ultimately address the needs of their own community and Pueblo. The example of the Congress which I outlined highlights the extent to which both kinship and allies are essential for allowing the Federation to function as an institution that can serve all of the ethnic groups in the region. The difficulties inherent in maintaining allies in the communities and the differences in cultures and distrust of others, as potential enemies, also allows us to reflect on why it is so important for leaders to actively work towards sociability based on shared feeling, empathy and the creation of a wider community of hermanos. This is something which I will discuss more fully in Chapter 4.

**Becoming-other**

An additional aspect to presencia en las comunidades can be related to the literature which discusses the risk that leaders take in possibly “becoming-other” due to prolonged periods away from their home communities and to eating foreign foods and associating with different people (see also Colleoni 2016 and Rosengren 2015 on becoming and being). This serves to highlight the Amazonian conceptualisation of the body as the locus of sociality and emphasises how it is thought to be “continuously formed and honed to meet the expectations and aspirations of the individual” (Rosengren 2015: 80/81) and his kinship group. In the same way that substance can be made in communities through conviviality and commensality, it can also be made in the city through eating strange
foods, speaking to people considered other and sharing with them (Santos-Granero 2009).

Being other is manifest in the way leaders behave, dress and speak. César Augusto once mentioned that members of his family sometimes say that he speaks like NGOs, which serves to support the idea that spending too much time with others can transform you into other. Evan Killick described how Ashéninka individuals who became overly demanding or authoritarian in organising their own labour would routinely be compared to mestizo *patrones* (Killick 2007: 474). Also McCallum found that the Cashinahua made distinctions between leaders who she described as “almost anti-kin” (McCallum 1990: 420) as they were considered to behave too much like *Nawa* (foreigners).

The relevance of the dynamic of travelling and spending time in the communities is recognised by both leaders and communities. It is through being present in the communities eating “real” food (Gow 1991; see also Fausto 2007) and participating in community activities that leaders are able to re-constitute themselves as insiders. This offers the opportunity for them to be formed by their kin and they are therefore able to maintain the outside as a place of others who are otherwise dangerous and in need of separation (see Chapter 4 for further discussion of the creation of inside and outside spaces for interaction).

**Mobility as indigenous practice**

Mobility has long been an aspect of indigenous practice and has “served Amazonians as an effective instrument of spatial and social mediation; of approximation or distancing from markets and social others, allowing individuals and collectivities to manage risk, uncertainty and change” (Alexiades and Peluso 2015: 4). We only have to think about the characteristics of the indigenous groups in voluntary isolation who, it is assumed, chose this condition by moving to the inaccessible headwater regions in an attempt to distance themselves from the harmful effects of the rubber boom on their possibilities for physical and social reproduction (Huertas & García Altamirano 2003; Parellada 2013). It has also been noted that mobility is a strategy for conflict resolution (Burr 1997; Alexiades 1999: 115; Alexiades & Peluso 2003; Erazo 2010). Conflict avoidance was mentioned as the reason why the Ashéninka choose to live in family clusters dispersed through a wide territory (Killick 2007: 465). As a result of this dynamic in the past it was seen that indigenous people were highly mobile and frequently lived in smaller groups.
or sections of larger villages would move away, either to form a new part of the village or to form new villages altogether. This dynamic has become more difficult in recent years due to the sedentarisation of indigenous peoples in the region onto bounded lands titled as native communities and the services that this offers, as well as the lack of free lands to move to as a result of increased colonisation. Nonetheless, the number of communities affiliated to the Federation changes as new communities are formed and incorporated. Sometimes I heard Ese Eja in Palma Real talk about the possibility of moving towards areas within the National Park in order to avoid problems with colonos or Park guards, highlighting the persistence of this dynamic in principle, if not always in practice. Gareth Burr (1997) also mentioned comments similar to this from the Ese Eja in Sonene who at that time maintained a greater degree of flexibility and mobility with various families leaving the community in the summer for a number of months to take advantage of the fishing and/or hunting and the recollection of taricaya (turtle) eggs. He noted that they spoke of their ideal as being no community at all but instead the possibility to travel upriver to areas with fewer people. Similarly, Rosengren (1987: 157) spoke about how mobility allows people to separate themselves from certain persons and allows them to attach themselves to favoured persons, suggesting that mobility is a common dynamic in lowland Amazonia.

More recently studies of mobility have analysed how a sense of belonging is achieved by Amazonian people who increasingly move between urban and rural landscapes (Alexiades and Peluso 2015; Peluso 2015a). This focus allows us to reflect on the further significance of presencia en las comunidades for indigenous leaders. Daniela Peluso (2015a: 1) suggests that “indigenous migrations rarely signify full-time absences or dislocations from communities of origin. Nor do they necessarily entail a permanent move to towns, but rather, individuals positioning themselves in various degrees as potentially indigenous urbanites, creating a wide series of active links between cities and communities of origin” (Peluso 2015a: 76). So it is not about a complete rupture with their home community but rather a way of articulating themselves within urban landscapes. Living away from your community also does not signify that you are forgotten, as for the Ese Eja one of the motives for travel was often to visit family in other communities in

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19 Nowadays it is rare for communities to be abandoned altogether due to the legal implications of holding state recognised title deeds to their lands. Although the dynamic of separating and moving away to form other smaller residencies still continues in some communities but within the titled lands. While new communities are formed by families breaking away from titled communities and looking for other areas to settle as is the case of some Yine communities which are located on land categorised as a forestry concession.
Bolivia. The Ese Eja remember their kin even if they are not living in the same community. So rather, indigenous leaders are strategically positioned in the urban centres to take advantage of the links which they actively create with the state and NGOs (and others) to further the demands that their communities place on them through the Triannual Plan developed during the Congress. This can be seen as a continuation of the “historic practice of politically leveraging Western goods” (Peluso 2015a: 72), which has characterised much of Amazonian peoples dealings with outsiders.\(^\text{20}\) The ability of the leaders to share these links and the benefits of the contacts epitomises their role as intermediaries between communities and others. In this section I have shown how leaders move between the city and the communities, maintaining their relations with kin and forging new relations both in the city and in the different indigenous communities. An analysis of increasingly mobile indigenous individuals pushes us to rethink the “simple links between identity and place, challenging Western notions of spatially bounded cultures, ‘localities’ or territories” (Peluso 2015a: 62). In the following chapter I will revisit these themes to see how through the dealings that leaders have with the communities they are forging a wider sense of belonging based on indigeneity which allows them to surpass kinship networks and community boundaries. This is necessary for the success of the Federation. I also look at how leaders themselves are actively developing their own identities through their interactions with both the communities and the state.

Conclusion

Through a discussion of the Congress in San José I have shown the importance of “doing right” by one’s own community as this informs and influences leader’s strategies whilst in office. It is the most important aspect of a leader’s success as ultimately it is one’s own community which decides on the delegates to attend the Congress. I have shown that the power lies in the communities who push for possibilities to determine the Federation agenda through stressing the importance of presencia en la comunidades. The need to retain favour with one’s own community and Pueblo can have a powerful influence over the decisions that a leader makes. This challenges the dominant assumption often expressed in the media of the marginality of the communities in Federation level politics and highlights their instrumental role in influencing who takes up leadership and the

\(^{20}\) When looking at indigenous peoples dealings with missionaries and during the rubber boom it was often the desire for manufactured goods which led individuals to establish pacific contacts, work relations, trade relations or raiding to appropriate these goods (e.g. Alexiades, 1999; Erazo, 2007; Killick, 2008, 2009; Grotti 2013; Colleoni 2016). Rubenstein (2004) speaks about this in terms of desire.
decisions being made. Additionally, I have been able to show that indigenous leaders, whilst accused of being distant, dislocated and “becoming-other”, have actually established an internal mechanism for securing their sameness and representativeness within the Federation, through being present in the communities. Being mobile is key to maintaining links to one’s own community and to securing consent and consensus in other communities. Living away in the city does not therefore signify a break from one’s home community but rather is a necessary part of the role of leader as the links, allies and relationships developed in the city are founded in order to benefit the communities and particularly one’s own community.

Through my discussion of the Congress I have shown how the different power dynamics are played out between communities of the same and/or different ethnic groups which manifest themselves through Federation politics based on the ethnicities of the leaders who are in the Federation at any one time. These dynamics help us to see the significance of kinship and how kin are instrumental in influencing what happens in the Federation and a leader’s decisions once in office. The fact that the Federation is made up of different ethnic groups also highlights how internal tensions within the Federation leadership are generated by the different expectations placed on a leader by his/her home community and Pueblo. Understandings of leadership between ethnic groups may vary and a leader has to ensure a balance between the expectations of the Federation (that is all the communities) and their own home community (from a specific ethnic group or clan).

Through not attending the Congress, the communities from the lower region of Madre de Dios were able to question Federation politics and contest the power of the Harakmbut leaders to represent their particular interests. On the one hand, they do this through the creation of intermediary organisations better suited to their needs such as the COINBAMAD and align themselves to these leaders. On the other, they question the position of the leaders in progressing with the Congress despite the discontent shown by the communities, as a criticism of the leader’s ability to resolve conflicts and create unity. Their position was manifest in the Act elaborated by COINBAMAD during the historic meeting which challenged the leadership style of the current committee members as being undemocratic and unrepresentative of the wider goals of the Federation with respect to all the communities.

The diversity of opinions and positions that arise in Federation politics make the presence of the leaders in the communities a vital part of their work as this opens up
spaces for dialogue and communal decision making. It also offers steps towards transparency and legitimacy of FENAMAD decisions and actions, whilst presenting an opportunity for sharing and making kin and allies. For example through sharing food, drink, masato or alcohol, leaders are aiming to reaffirm kinship ties or to establish relations of “confidence with individuals who would otherwise be considered as non-related and therefore, as potential enemies” (Killick 2009: 172, 173).

Further it is through travelling to the communities that the leaders are able to let them know what is going on in the Federation or more widely in national politics. This opens up spaces for exchange and learning. A leader shows that he is generous through disseminating information and sharing the knowledge which he has learned in FENAMAD for the benefit of communities (see Chapter 5 on Production of Knowledge for more detailed analysis of role of FENAMAD in empowering communities).

In the following chapter I will reflect on the way the internal differences within the Federation are managed through recourse to a wider brotherhood in order to consolidate the Federation and further its aims of promoting unity and a shared agenda before the state. I will again look at the role of the communities this time in influencing acceptable behaviours in leaders through an analysis of the additional Congress undertaken in January 2013.
Chapter 4

Producing leaders, producing people

In this chapter I will look closely at how inside and outside spaces for interaction are created in FENAMAD by examining the role of leaders and communities, who through discourse make clear their expectations of each other. The inside space for indigenous politics is created continuously through contrasts drawn from the behaviour and actions of those on the outside, who are considered “Other” and dangerous. I argue that the use of the term hermano (brother) is significant in establishing the boundaries of the inside and outside. This works to incorporate all of the different indigenous peoples into a shared inside space. This space allows for relations between ethnic groups to be both safe and productive, which serves to consolidate the Federation and further a shared agenda. In addition, the use of the term hermano in interethnic interactions situates the relationship between leader and communities (and between individual leaders) as one of equals despite the hierarchical structure of the Federation. Brown (1993) notes ingrained suspicions of hierarchy in lowland Amazonians, and the problems inherent in this appear to be countered through the use of the term hermano which places the leaders as equals and diminishes possibilities for aggrandizement and leaders becoming too powerful. Rumours stemming from within the communities also work to diminish the individual power of any leader. Leaders are instrumental in working towards the “production of people” (see McCallum 2001; cf. Viveiros de Castro 2002), similar to what has been noted in the Cashinahua villages where the leaders refer to followers as children, highlighting their role as agents in making bodies of kin (McCallum 1990). The further importance of the term hermano is in the types of sociability that this enables (Strathern 1999). There is a circularity to the process as while leaders work to create a coherent, trustworthy social body, the communities work to create leaders who are trustworthy and loyal to furthering their interests. This provides an insight into the way that people’s actions are shaped through the production and reproduction of the social structures which constrain their acts and in so doing reinforce or reconfigure those same structures (Giddens 1979; see also Ahearn 2001; Rubenstein 2004).

The Federation Congress is considered the highest decision-making instance as it is during this event that representatives from all of the different communities are able to mould each other’s behaviour through discourse and interactions, emphasising what is expected of an indigenous person in the Madre de Dios region. Giddens (1979: 5) speaks about discursive consciousness, as knowledge which actors are able to express on the
level of discourse. So language can be seen as a form of social action in which “meanings are co-constructed by participants, emerging from particular social interactions” (Ahearn 2001: 111). Being indigenous is not a static or fixed identity position but rather is debated through internal politics, constructed and created through interactions with others. In the first part of this chapter I will outline how the inside and outside spaces for interaction are constructed and how this serves to make interethnic relations productive within the Federation.

The construction of inside and outside spaces for interaction

Indigenous politics within the Federation invariably involves interactions with both kin and non-kin on a daily basis. It is therefore necessary to understand how closeness and distancing are viewed in light of this fact. FENAMAD as a multi-ethnic indigenous organisation represents all of the indigenous groups from the Madre de Dios region. All indigenous people who enter the Federation, irrespective of ethnic origin, are referred to as hermano or hermana. During meetings with indigenous peoples from the different communities, and thus different ethnicities (Pueblos), the welcome address, which is often given by a Federation leader, reiterates this point by referring to everyone present as hermanos. In everyday conversation and in internal meetings both the leaders and different community members also call each other hermano/hermana. This raises the question of what leaders mean when they use the term hermano.

Baumann & Gingrich (2004) refer to the dialogical relationship between sameness and differing, belonging and othering, identity/alterity as related to social conceptions which, in turn, are always shaped and influenced by their respective historical and socio-political contexts. In particular, Baumann identifies three classificatory structures or grammars (although there may be more) by which sociocultural group identities are conceived and enacted in order to emphasise that they are defined “by the way in which they arrange whatever content of self and other they are used to structure” (Baumann & Gingrich 2004: iv). Thus “the grammars provide a repertoire of structures through which to put forward arguments about self and other, but … all grammars are always at the disposal of all social actors and it is precisely the constantly shifting invocations and revocations of each grammar that matter in the social processes of selfing and othering” (Baumann 2004: 31). The “segmentary grammar” may be applied to the use of the term hermano in Federation politics, as this determines identities and alterities according to context.
This suggests that self and other are defined “according to a sliding scale of inclusions/exclusions” (Baumann 2004: 47).

In Amazonia people have used self-denominations which literally mean “human”, “real people” or “real humans” (Burr 1997; McCallum 2001; Gow 1991; Gray 1996), as a way to highlight the distinction between “those who are fully human persons ‘like us’ and those who are not” (Reeve & High 2012: 143). Further it has been argued that “Humanity is conceived of as a position essentially transitory which is continuously produced out of a wide universe of subjectivities that includes animals” (Vilaça 2002: 349). For this “the production of differentiated groups conceived of as kin takes place by means of the fabrication of similar bodies from this substrate of universal subjectivities” (Vilaça 2002: 349-350). These positions suggest that others come to be understood through a comparison with self.

Peter Rivière’s work with the Trio in Guyana is particularly useful in coming to understand the actions that create inside and outside spaces for interaction. He suggests that inside-outside is a concentric dualism that is pervasive in the symbolic and political ordering of Lowland South American societies and characteristic of their socio-cosmological thinking. “In this scheme the inside is associated with familiarity, kin and safety, the outside with the other, affines and danger” (Rivière 1993: 511). Additionally it is worth noting that in Lowland South America, affinity, “the coming together of unlike items” - entities and forces which are different from each other (Overing 1983: 12), for example through marriage alliances or in shamanism, is seen as essential for the continuance of society, despite there being a danger inherent in this mixing. Overing Kaplan (1981) brings our attention to the significant role that reciprocity plays in making safe exchange relationships reminding us that “it is only through such reciprocity that the danger inherent in the in-law relationship can be averted” (ibid. 162). It is through affinity that alterity can be managed, making relations with others safe through their incorporation into an inside space for interaction (for an analysis of the significance of incorporation see also Colleoni 2016; Viveiros de Castro 2012). In addition Overing (1983) found that there were specific instances where it was not possible to reciprocate relations, for example when the Piaroa stole wives or took food from their neighbours, and when faced with possible danger from others people classified individuals with whom they interacted

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1 The other two grammars which are suggested are orientalising grammar and the grammar of encompassment. For Baumann the “orientalising creates self and other as negative mirror images of each other”, while “encompassment defines the other by an act of hierarchical subsumption” (2004: 47).
as “kin” rather than “affines”. She argued that this “carries with it the connotation of extreme safety amidst the perils of the strange land, strange food and strange people” (Overing 1983: 13). These observations may be useful in coming to understand the significance of the term hermano in the multi-ethnic Federation, FENAMAD.

Viveiros de Castro posits that it is “affinity that stands as the given dimension of the cosmic relational matrix, while consanguinity falls within the scope of human action and intention” (2001: 19). By this he means that while kinship relations need to be constructed over time, otherness is the default position. So the management of alterity relies on the potential affine for its mediation (see also Viveiros de Castro 2004). Considering this the use of the term hermano within Federation politics, instead of “brother-in-law”, might seem rather unusual, as by default all others would be referred to in the idiom of affinity rather than kinship. I suggest that the use of the term may be a reflection of contact with the Dominican missionaries in the early part of the 20th century or may be adopted from Spanish discourses more widely or specifically those used by political movements in the region. The fact that FENAMAD is an interethnic organisation may also have influenced the use of this term since the shared language for interactions is Spanish. It is for this reason that a more detailed analysis of how the term is used in indigenous politics is interesting. Through my discussion of the indigenous federation I aim to shed light on the way in which some sections which would have otherwise been considered the outside (i.e. non-kin, as defined by Rivière) are “made safe” through the creation of relations of sharing, mutual support and shared interests. This allows us to think about the productivity of alterity and the importance of reciprocity, so that the interethnic relations are not only made safe but also made productive and useful to the indigenous movement in the region.

Like McCallum (2001: 71), when I refer to inside and outside spaces I am referring to the specific sets of relationships and types of interactions that this divide enables rather than to any fixed physical space, although sometimes inside/outside is used to delimit specific

2 Viveiros de Castro (2004) undertakes an analysis of the use of the term hermano/brother in Western and Amazonian thought through a discussion of the meaning of the Cashinahua word txai, which can be translated as “brother-in-law” but has been interpreted by some to mean “brother” (which he argues is incorrect). He argues that in Western thought “brother” is used to signify something in common and is used to assimilate, unify and identify. Whereas Amazonians emphasise difference rather than identity as the principle of relationality. So the term “brother-in-law” actually brings this difference to the fore. Stating that “while we tend to conceive the action of relating as a discarding of differences in favour of similarities, indigenous thought sees the process from another angle; the opposite of difference is not identity but indifference” (2004: 16, 19).
physical spaces for interaction within the confines of the Federation building or within communities. So leaders can limit physical access to the building or to communities when this is deemed necessary for constraining the encroachment of the outside into indigenous affairs.³

Within the Federation other kinds of people are referred to in different ways. People such as NGO workers are referred to as *amigo*⁴ (friend) or simply *aliado* (ally). The difference is that by being referred to as *amigo* there is often a certain relation of trust and mutual interest or reciprocity. *Aliado*, on the other hand, is a loose term which can be used for potential *amigos* who have as yet not demonstrated their allegiance to the indigenous cause or for those who may have a specific interest in collaborating or helping the indigenous movement presently or at a future date. *Compadre* is also sometimes used to refer to allies or friends who have a certain degree of closeness to the leader such as for example other leaders from grassroots federations such as the FADEMAD (Agrarian Federation of the Madre de Dios) or professionals who collaborate with the Federation. Although *compadres* are mostly not indigenous they maintain some other type of closeness, such as shared feelings about certain topics, shared agendas or they may have collaborated with the indigenous cause during meetings, strikes and the like.⁵

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³ I can think of three types of specific examples where the inside/outside divide was enforced through physical means. The first was when the support staff (lawyers, anthropologists, technical team) were asked to leave the premises in order for an internal meeting to be undertaken with the indigenous communities and the President. To quote one of the leaders, “the technical staff were thrown out like sick chickens”. This was at a critical point during discussions about the possibility of another Congress and after the lower communities had allegedly taken the Federation under siege. A second example is when outsiders are refused access to internal meetings. A fellow anthropologist and friend, commented that his petition to sit in on an internal meeting in one of the communities of the Upper Region of the Madre de Dios had been refused by a Federation leader and he was given no further clarifying explanation as to why that might be the case. I too was denied the possibility of visiting Harakmbut communities. The third, and perhaps more dramatic example, was when during the national strikes of 2008/2009, the then Federation President, was being looked for by the police in connection to an arrest warrant for his alleged role in instigating the burning of the government offices in Puerto Maldonado. This incident had occurred during a generalised regional strike and the indigenous people physically closed and locked the Federation doors and gates to stop the police from entering to search for the leader. He later escaped to a native community.

⁴ Andrew Gray noted that the Arakmbut used the term amiko to refer to white people. This serves to highlight their otherness since “Amiko knowledge comes from God or the State so problems stemming from these sources need different techniques based on education, medicine and affirmation of legal rights” (Gray, 1996: 286), as opposed to recourse to the spirit world.

⁵ My use of the term *compadre* in the context of the indigenous leaders within the Federation differs from that described by Killick (2008, 2013) in that there does not necessarily have to be an actual godparent/godchild relation for this term to be used and indeed there seldom is. It would appear that *compadre* is used to refer to those considered of equal standing who could also be called friend. The term is sometimes used in a playful way, and abbreviated to *compa* and can relate to drinking partners or people who have shared similar experiences together such as support staff within the Federation. It may
Gringos are white people from European or American NGOs, institutions such as universities, anthropologists or other individuals from afar who come to visit the Federation. The term is used to refer to these people generally when they are not present i.e. when the leaders talk about who they had a meeting with. These people are distanced by the term as this relates to a complete difference in understanding of the world and way of being. Antonio Iviche referred to this during an interview which I conducted in 2009 when he said “Our vision has always been – and still is – quite different from that of the gringos, the “blue-eyed.” The oil company and its workers are referred to as la petrolera and state departments and associated officials are referred to as el estado. In this way distance and closeness are created through terms of reference and this serves in the creation of inside and outside spaces and places limits on the types of interactions possible.

The inside space is marked by indigenous affairs within the Federation as this relates particularly to indigenous people who feel a shared sense of belonging in the region. It encompasses a shared mandate to protect indigenous territories from invasions from outsiders or attempts to divide either land or people. As Alicia, a Yine leader pointed out, “the issues of indigenous people will be solved by indigenous people and not by the técnicos [auxiliary staff]”. Food and the sharing of food is also essential for the creation of shared substance, as it underlies relations of sharing and caring. There is a shared understanding of what is “real food” (Gow 1991: 7) such as manioc, plantain, fish and hunted meat and both communities and leaders often refer to this type of food as being associated with being indigenous. “Real food is produced in particular relationships, and its circulation and consumption sets up other relationships” (Gow 1991: 119). Being a good hunter is associated with prestige in many Amazonian societies and also in the Ese Eja and Harakmbut and is often related to the ability to regulate access to resources.

be that this term is borrowed from its wider use within the region. There are examples of compadrazgo similar to those described by Killick within the indigenous communities themselves where indigenous parents search out compadres/comadres in teachers, or other mestizos, or even anthropologists such as myself. Within the Harakmbut communities the compadrazgo system has been used to make relations with mestizo gold miners “safe” and manageable but has also resulted in internal divisions (see Gray 1996).


7 For detailed analysis of how the presence of the state comes to be felt through the workings of state officials see Ferguson and Gupta (2002).

8 Other indigenous people can also be included in the inside space. Leaders from different indigenous organisations and AIDESEP, who the Federation leaders have contact with are also referred to as hermano.
through links cultivated with the spirit world (see Gray 1997: 135; Alexiades, 1999: 126; 136). Similarly, the production, circulation and consumption of food animates relations between people and particularly amongst kin. As Santos Granero (2009: 485) noted “the making of beautiful, skilful and moral Yanesha men and women requires the ingestion of certain foods and the avoidance of others at different stages in life” which further attests to the powerful role that food is thought to play in the production of certain types of people (see also Fausto 2007).

Distance in terms of both physical proximity through access to the communities and ways of seeing and being in the world defines the outside and Others. These include state officials or departments, local, national and international organisations and at specific moments in time some NGOs and other individuals. Oftentimes there are irreconcilable rifts without the possibility of reconciliation by falling back on shared substance despite the possibility of continued shared feeling on certain topics or goals. In this way the indigenous movement is able to close itself at specific moments by excluding certain allies who overstep their position of trust, enter into non-reciprocal relationships or are no longer considered useful to the wider goals of the movement.10

The outside and the others

The outside space is characterised by the various others who have dealings with the Federation and the unity of the indigenous movement I would argue derives from these being considered shared enemies. Here the shared enemies are seen to be, at different points in time, the state, various extractive industries (and particularly the oil companies) and sometimes certain NGOs. These different entities are often spoken about as being predatory. They are described as if they are waiting for gaps or holes in the indigenous movement in order to move in and disrupt the dynamics, and take advantage of the indigenous peoples with the ultimate aim of dividing and weakening them in order to gain control of their lands and resources. Extreme alterity is often referred to in Amazonia in

9 Rubenstein argues that “Territorial boundaries constitute clearly demarcated social boundaries” as well (2004: 142).
10 Reciprocity is considered an important aspect in relationship construction. I heard people talking about the distrust that they had in NGOs or tourism companies who undertook investigations or used communities’ names to gain funds but never gave anything concrete back to those communities. Also, anthropologists were often accused of taking information away, writing books and getting famous but not doing anything for the communities in return. Lack of reciprocity or selfishness is considered a characteristic of “outsider” behaviour, indeed generosity is valued in the Arakmbut (Gray 1997: 135).
terms of predation (See also Viveiros de Castro 2012). Viveiros de Castro speaks about “a widespread ideology of ontological predation as a regime for the construction of collective identities” (Viveiros de Castro 1996: 194). Rivière draws our attention to the fact that there is often an association between enemy, cannibal and affine in lowland South American cosmopolitical thought (Rivière 1993: 512). It is the shared struggle against these dangerous others which I argue secures the unity of the Federation despite the internal ethnic differences. As Santos-Granero (2007: 11) suggested, friendships that extend the boundaries of one’s own ethnic group (i.e. interethnic friendships in Amazonia) often “emerge in contexts of great fear of (potentially) dangerous others”. This section discusses how these others become manifest to indigenous people and why they may be considered dangerous.

Whilst the others that I refer to are separate entities with distinct aims and objectives, in practice it is sometimes difficult to see this and they become seen as one significant Other. This is especially the case as the state is intertwined with oil companies and NGOs (see Aretxaga 2003: 398) to such an extent that they are seen to become one and speak with one voice. Moreover these other organisations often take on the role of the state and this is the face which is manifest to the communities. State presence is therefore felt in terms of both verticality (the state is “above” society) and encompassment (the state “encompasses” its localities) (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 981). For Ferguson and Gupta, “The force of metaphors of verticality and encompassment results both from the fact that they are embedded in the everyday practices of state institutions and from the fact that the routine operation of state institutions produces spatial and scalar hierarchies” (2002: 984).

The state is considered to have a dual nature as it can be both friend and enemy. The role of Federation leaders is to be able to manage the different faces of the state. That the image can change from one moment to the other is also understood and particularly is related to who takes up Presidential office in the regional or national elections. There

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11 That the communities feel threatened and at risk of possible physical and/or cultural elimination is manifest in their cautious attitudes towards the intentions of outsiders. This was made manifest by one Arakmbut man who said that the birth control programme which the state was implementing in his community was part of a state strategy for the reduction of indigenous people with the ultimate aim of eliminating them to gain control of their lands. He said that they didn’t want the birth control programme because they wanted to have many children and to increase their numbers which had fallen due to diseases upon contact.

12 During the Regional Presidencies of Santos Kaway and Dr. Jorge A. Aldazabal, FENAMAD had developed good links with different state departments and had signed inter-institutional Acts of Agreement with the
is a general assumption that state workers and politicians cannot be trusted. They buy votes and say one thing and then do another once in office, so their underlying motivations are always questioned and questionable, as this quote from a member of the Palma Real native community demonstrates.\textsuperscript{13}

The Regional President has come here to see about developing a tourism lodge, it is possible that he came here to deceive us about the US$30,000. That is why we don’t really believe it when the President or NGOs come here, as they only come to deceive us.

The sometimes dramatic differences over time between presidential candidates and their agendas adds to feelings of uncertainty with respect to the state, as a new President may quite possibly reverse plans or amend agreements using legislation. Herein lies the significance placed by the indigenous movement on understanding law and obtaining legal land titles as part of the push to gain respect for self-determination. It is hoped that this will provide some guarantees in an otherwise turbulent political climate.

One of the greatest dangers is considered to be division. The indigenous people see a principle of divide and rule underlying state politics. They claim that the institution of the native community with title deeds was part of a wider goal to divide peoples (Pueblos) creating separate distinct areas where groups of people live and therefore reducing their collective power. They also agree that this was a strategy to divide up ancestral territories in order to free land for the state, colonos, extractive industries and others. Thus the emphasis of FENAMAD on unity is felt to counter state power, as there is safety in numbers and this gives significance to their ability to speak with one indigenous voice.

After receiving title deeds to native communities (or at least initiating the process in some cases) the Arakmbut people collectively fought to secure control over what they considered to be their ancestral lands in the 1990s. The area bordering the various

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\textsuperscript{13} This relates to Presidential campaigns where some local candidates hoping to run for regional elections have visited individual communities to garner support for their campaigns and make promises which are generally not kept.
Harakmbut, Yine and Matsiguenka titled communities was first designed as the Amarakaeri Reserved Zone (2000) before changing category to Amarakaeri Communal Reserve in 2002 under the State’s natural protected areas legislation (Álvarez et al 2008). This was as a result of sustained pressure by the communities and after some regional strikes (see Chapter 5). The new categorisation offered the indigenous people greater powers of decision making over the area via the institution of an Administrative Contract Executor (ECA). Later in 2006 the state designated an oil concession (Lote 76), over the majority of the area. The problem only grew and the state became more ambiguous in its form after they gave rights over the block to Hunt Oil, a company owned by the Hunt family in Texas (who were associated with Repsol, the Spanish oil company, at the time).

As per the legislation, the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve needed to develop a Master Plan in which valid and up-to-date information about the aims, objectives and management plan for the area are published and made available for implementation. This document was developed in 2007 with the participation of the 10 indigenous communities who make up ECA and in collaboration with the Jefatura of the area. SERNANP observed the maps and proposed changes in categorisations of the zones from zona de protección estricta (strict protection and no access allowed) to zona silvestre (allows for some economic activities), which the communities opposed. A date was set for a meeting on the 28th December 2008 to discuss the final document and to get an agreement signed by ECA and the communities to authorise the information in the document. The Federation leaders felt that the situation was being manipulated by the state in order to facilitate the entry of Hunt Oil to the area. It was suggested that the date chosen for reviewing the document was strategic, since being between Christmas and New Year the majority of the communities would not attend the meeting in Puerto Maldonado and the auxiliary staff in the Federation, such as lawyers, would be away on leave. The document that was signed on that day was later questioned and contested by the Federation leaders. In particular, due to the elimination of strict protection zones within the Reserve and the insertion of a phrase which designates the work of the oil company to be in the best interests for the development of the reserve (FENAMAD 2009).

Many of the communities who formed part of ECA openly rejected the exploration work to be undertaken by Hunt Oil and the Federation leaders maintained a firm stance with respect to the oil company. They claimed that there was no due process of prior informed consultation by the state before the oil concession was assigned and argued with respect
to the negative impacts of oil exploration on their ancestral lands and in the biologically sensitive headwater regions. Some communities, however, welcomed the possibility of paid work and the opportunities that it was hoped the oil company would bring. Although during a meeting on 13th September 2009 the combined stance of “no a la petrolera” was manifest. This meeting was undertaken with the presence of representatives from the native communities who make up ECA, Federation leaders and COHARYIMA leaders, along with the state and oil company representatives. On the day the state official from SERNANP, Marcos Pastor, and two oil company representatives, Silvana Lay and Arturo Chavéz, walked in together and took seats at the front of the FENAMAD auditorium. At the table (facing the rows of seats where the community members were), also sat the President of ECA, Adan Corisepa, and the President of the FENAMAD at the time, Antonio Iviche. After an initial debate, each community representative had to stand up and present the position of their community with respect to the oil company. Most of the communities reiterated their stance as “no to the oil company” and in fact only 2 communities and the ECA leaders were in favour. The final unanimous decision was thus “no”, as taken by the position of the majority (Incidentally, these communities changed their opinions to “no” and in particular the ECA president said that “they have cut my wings” meaning that he was bound to vote “no” based on how the communities had manifest their opinions during this meeting). The contributions included claims that the oil company was causing divisions in the communities, as the president of Masenawa, Anoshka, stated “the oil company brings many bad things to us, it even makes us fight between ourselves, between indigenous brothers” (meeting with Hunt Oil in FENAMAD, September 2009).14 Here she is referring to the indigenous people within individual communities who it is claimed had been bought by the oil company and worked to create divisions internally between those who were benefitting (and indeed sought to benefit) from the oil company and those who were not. Additionally the presence of the oil company instigated infighting between communities due to differences of opinion with respect to their work. Their presence also served to create inequalities in communities, something which works to create divisions, jealousy and infighting. After receiving the final “no” vote, the oil company representatives and the state representative got up

14 See this video clip from the meeting - “See how the indigenous people in the Peruvian Amazon say no to Hunt Oil Company” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bHoIIVYOK0&ebc=ANyPxKpwDuG1jNNPj2uKhX4oMQ2vCFY01fCNtQTv7kgl6yYpNnBjCN6lrOwHwUgug9gSYxZT6iVBHB_FxGcmVp4331g2I7Wm3g (date accessed 17.3.2016).
together and left the meeting amidst taunts by the community members to go and look for oil on their own lands.

The ambiguity of the state becomes apparent in this example. On the one hand the state is involved in the conservation and protection of this natural protected area through SERNANP, but on the other it is actively involved in promoting oil prospecting in this same area through the Ministry of Energy and Mines. Additionally, the state is working in coordination with the native communities and beneficiaries to the area for the effective management and conservation of the area via the Jefatura of RCA and SERNANP, but undermines the process by initiating changes to the Master Plan, without the consent of communities, in order to facilitate work by the oil company. SERNANP additionally works in close collaboration with the oil company as was evident in the entrance and exit of the representatives together, as if they belonged to the same entity. Thus the position of the state is ambiguous and the aims and motives of the state and oil company become aligned and difficult to disentangle.

In the next example, the state, this time in the form of the Health Ministry became intertwined with Hunt Oil in the implementation of a health campaign in the upper communities of the region. Many of the native communities in the Madre de Dios region struggle to find and keep health professionals in the health posts (puestos de salud) in the communities, this is particularly the case in the upper region. Often these individuals do not stay long, due to the rigors of working in isolated communities, the low pay and difficulties of access to the city where they have to go monthly to receive their wages. Health issues remain high on community agendas and Federation leaders are entrusted with pushing for state attention to the problem during Congresses. Amidst community and FENAMAD resistance to the entry of the oil company, and the resultant internal problems which this generated particularly in the native community of Shintuya (which served as their base of operations), Hunt Oil initiated a health campaign. This formed part of their commitment to “development” in the communities, which was outlined in their Community Relations Plan. In November 2009 Hunt Oil paid for health professionals to visit the communities in the Upper Madre de Dios to undertake health checks and provide medication to community members and the health centres. This was facilitated through the Ministry of Health, via the Local Committees for Health Administration (CLAS) who
manage the different health centres in the area.\textsuperscript{15} The ambiguity that this generated in terms of the responsibilities of the state and those of the oil company are referred to in a leaflet produced by FENAMAD (“What is FENAMAD?”) where they clarify that it is the state’s responsibility to ensure adequate attention to health issues in communities (see Chapter 2).

Figure 14. Boy in Shintuya holding a balloon from the health campaign organised by Hunt Oil in his community, the logo of the Ministry of Health can be seen on the opposing side (Source: David Gutiérrez).

This aspect of the work of the oil company did not go unnoticed by both the communities and FENAMAD and these events only served to create more internal divisions in the communities with respect to those in favour and those against the oil company’s presence. This was particularly marked in Shintuya where families were divided and the President at the time was actively collaborating with the oil company. Incidentally he was later sanctioned in the FENAMAD Congress in January 2010 for his involvement with the oil company allegedly against the wishes of the majority of his community (although

\textsuperscript{15} News article: “Residents in Manu are attended to as part of the health campaigns organised by Hunt Oil”. http://www.inforegion.pe/41523/1500-pobladores-del-manu-son-atendidos-en-campanas-de-salud-realizadas-por-hunt-oil/
the sanction was not ratified by his community). By aligning themselves with the state, the oil company aims to gain legitimacy for their actions and by giving to the communities, such as the health campaign, they are able to garner some level of support from individuals within the communities who lack adequate state attention16.

The other kinds of others with whom communities have contact include gold miners, whether illegal operators or those officially recognised by the state and in possession of mining concessions granted by the state. Some of these concessions overlap titled native communities. This has caused continued conflicts between miners and communities, which have sometimes become violent. The Federation was founded on the need to unite in the face of the increased presence of colonos and miners on Harakmbut lands in the 1970s (Gray 1997, García Altamirano, 2003; Moore, 2003). Additionally, there are logging concessions where indigenous people are sometimes employed as workers and some communities undertake logging activities on their lands. Illegal loggers work in areas close to or on communal lands and in the RCA. Many communities have contact with different NGOs, often related to conservation as the region is considered a biodiversity hotspot and a lot of indigenous communities' border natural protected areas such as National Reserves or National Parks. Often NGOs work with the state to ensure the adequate protection of these areas and more recently NGOs and the state have collaborated in order to obtain benefits from the UN REDD+ Programme. There are times when FENAMAD and individual communities have developed very good working relations with NGOs referred to as "strategic allies" (aliados estratégicos). They have been able to further shared agendas with respect to capacitization of indigenous peoples in handicrafts and sales, use of specialised equipment, activities for georeferencing and titling lands, the protection of the RCA and the Territorial Reserve. NGOs have also helped with logistics and travel including international conference attendance. Many communities have contact with park guards when entering the protected areas to hunt and fish. Almost all of the communities have health posts and primary schools, so have sustained contact with the professionals who work in them and often develop good relations with them. Additionally, FENAMAD has managed to secure good working relationships with certain individuals within local departments of the Health Ministry, Ministry of Education and Environment Ministry and

16 Sawyer (2004) explores the tensions that arose around oil exploration in indigenous territories in Ecuador with particular attention to how "economic reforms undermined the very conditions that lent legitimacy and authority to the state’s political system – its purported concern for its national subjects – and gave rise to new political subjects who disrupted the confines and exposed the hypocrisy of the neoliberal dream" (ibid. 15).
have worked collaboratively with SERNANP in relation to issues relating to indigenous people in voluntary isolation. FENAMAD maintains a good relationship with the Public Ombudsman as well. Despite the oftentimes good relations that communities and FENAMAD are able to develop with others there is still often ambiguity.

That others can sometimes be threatening and/or dangerous is clear to the indigenous peoples in the region as they have often had direct experiences of ethnic discrimination by the increasing number of *colonos* in the region and by state officials (both personally when visiting state departments or through opinions on television/newspapers). The discrimination can be manifest in subtle ways through inattention to indigenous people’s basic rights as this relates to schooling or health and land titling processes. One leader referred to this as “like being on a football pitch with everyone just passing the ball”. Obtaining attention to needs becomes a constant struggle, *lucha*, which can take years of continued petitioning and pressure. There have also been physical assaults on indigenous people. During the strikes of 2008/2009 there were a number of arbitrary detentions of indigenous people from the communities who were physically beaten during interrogations. One of the prominent Shipibo leaders at the time Jorge Payaba, was beaten up by police in the central plaza of Puerto Maldonado also in 2009. His injuries required hospitalization. The personal experience of abuse and these kinds of stories circulate amongst community members and add to the feeling that the others are in fact not trustworthy, dangerous and threatening, a sentiment which is reiterated through Federation discourses about the need to know the other and to take care when dealing with the others. That the state uses violence to enforce its will, through punishing unruly bodies (Aretxaga, 2003), serves to highlight that it is the state’s coercive power which is considered unacceptable and it is this that is being resisted by indigenous peoples. Territory can then be seen as part of the struggle against the coercive power of the state as their lands signify a refuge, a space for their own politics and ways of being free from what they see as the negative aspects of state control. The native community with title deeds therefore offers some protection against the manifestations of state power, even if this is weak. The inside and outside spaces can here be seen in spatial terms as well. It is primarily through the often disadvantageous relations, which community members develop with these others, that the Federation sees an urgency in

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17 Garcia Altamirano (2003) notes racism and abuse experienced by indigenous populations during the 1970s and 1980s, manifest in arbitrary detentions of indigenous people who did not hold Peruvian identity documents (DNI), and confiscation of their goods, such as meat, fish, etc. by the police (ibid. 285).
its role as representative of the communities in the city. Federation leaders work to
distance themselves from actions associated with these kinds of others.

**Otherness within the Federation**

FENAMAD called for another Congress in January 2013 in light of the problems
surrounding the Congress held in San José del Karene in December 2012 (see Chapter
3). For this event undertaken on 30th and 31st January 2013 all the 34 native communities
affiliated to FENAMAD were present. This was somewhat unusual as due to difficulties
in transportation, funding, internal meetings and the like often not all the communities
can be present at the Congress. In part the unprecedented interest in this Congress and
its significance comes from the preceding events which had made regional news and
had been talked about on the radio. A major incident of note was the take-over of the
Federation building by the lower communities. To put this event into context I will
describe what happened in the run up to this Congress.

As described in Chapter 3, before the Congress in San José del Karene there was explicit
disagreement displayed by the lower communities (mainly Shipibo-Conibo, Ese Eja,
Kichua Runa and Yine peoples) who refused to attend the event due to fears for their
security as a result of internal problems within that community. They stressed that there
were no guarantees for their safety and there were rumours that people from San José
would be waiting for delegates with bows and arrows, or that magic would be used.
Despite the controversy the San José Congress went ahead with only half of the
communities affiliated to FENAMAD present, mostly those from the upper region of the
Madre de Dios (and predominantly Arakmbut). The communities from the lower region
who chose not to attend the San José Congress instead held their own internal meeting
in Puerto Maldonado on the same day to discuss the way forward. It was claimed during
the San José Congress that these communities were organising a separate Congress in
competition with the San José Congress and were planning on dividing the Federation
in two. Additionally, there were rumours that the meeting in Puerto Maldonado was
funded by NGOs such as AIDER who have interests in securing REDD+ deals in the
lower communities’ territories. These allegations were later denied by the indigenous
leaders from the lower communities who stated that they had personally financed the event.\(^{18}\)

After the San José Congress the problems continued as there was no Act of Agreement (Acta) given out to the attendees on the last day. It is normal practice to provide an Act to facilitate the dissemination of information about the agreements from the Congress to community members who were not present during the event. This meant that the lower communities and two of the Federation leaders who were not present in the San José Congress had to force the issue. They asked the Harakmbut Federation leaders for the Acta repeatedly as their communities demanded to know what had been undertaken in the Congress and when this was unsuccessful they began to make demands on the auxiliary staff. Incidentally the Acta had not actually been completed during the Congress and the lawyers worked on it afterwards resulting in the delay. The draft and final version emitted were questioned by the lower communities, spurring them to press for another Congress.\(^{19}\) Despite their attempts they were unsuccessful in convincing the Federation President to call for another Congress.\(^{20}\)

On the morning of the 10\(^{th}\) January 2013, seven Presidents from the lower communities and some 40 people entered the FENAMAD office, and confronted the Ese Eja leader. They asked all other staff to leave the building stating that this was cosas de nativos (native people’s things) and locked the doors. With the Ese Eja leader inside, as he puts it “held hostage” they called the President demanding a meeting to discuss the events. A meeting was held that same day at 4pm. It was during this meeting that it was agreed for another Congress to be held later that month. The take-over of the Federation made news locally and people speculated about what the significance of this event was, many claiming that FENAMAD was in fact separating into two organisations.

Unlike the run-up to the Congress in December 2012 there were no banners made and no agenda was set. This Congress was to discuss the internal problems in order to fix or put the house in order (ordenar la casa) and to decide whether a re-election should be undertaken. In the San José Congress, Jaime had been re-elected as President but this

\(^{18}\) AIDER is a Peruvian NGO who has the Administration Contract for the Tambopata National Reserve and Bahuaja Sonene National Park so works closely with SERNANP.

\(^{19}\) Incidentally this document was scrutinised by the leaders and questioned publically during the subsequent Congress.

was being contested by the lower communities who felt that they had not cast their vote. They claimed that the election proceedings were questionable and flawed. Those from *la parte alta* were unhappy at having to take time out to hold a new Congress when they felt that they had already made a decision. They, in turn, questioned the lower communities’ choice not to attend, claiming that their reasons were not valid.

During this time there was a lot of media attention on the internal problems in part fuelled by certain leaders from the lower communities (some with presidential ambitions) approaching the media, and especially the radio, to air their opinions. Also Facebook was used as a way to comment on the disagreements and to question the legitimacy of the re-elected Committee members (refer back to Chapter 3 for more details). The new Congress was set to be held in Apaktone, which is a centre run by the Dominican Missionaries in Puerto Maldonado. They hire out the hall for events and offer food and accommodation at a reduced price. This venue was considered neutral as it was not a community linked to any particular ethnic group.\(^{21}\) The Federation leaders had called ahead to ask for a security presence during the event out of fears that things could turn nasty due to the elevated interethnic tensions.\(^{22}\)

On the 29\(^{\text{th}}\) of January, the day before the much anticipated Congress, one Harakmbut community leader (and ex-FENAMAD President) came into the FENAMAD offices visibly shaken up. He said that it was impossible that they would allow one person to bring down the name of FENAMAD and that there should be a discussion in the Congress about how to deal with people who speak to the media (i.e. to the outside). He felt that internal problems should be sorted out internally or in the Congress. I assumed that he might be referring to sanctions as these had been initiated during his term as President. The sanctions for leaders disloyal to the indigenous movement involved separation from their community and loss of communal rights, which was at the discretion of the individual communities. Inevitably this sanction implied a ban on taking up leadership roles within the community or in associated indigenous organisations. The people sanctioned at that time were punished for making deals with oil companies behind the backs of their communities while holding positions on the community committees or as part of ECA-\(^{—}\)

\(^{21}\) I wonder if the history of contact and schooling with the Dominican missionaries adds to this perception of neutrality or if this was just a strategic option in light of reduced funds and the need to hold the event in Puerto Maldonado.

\(^{22}\) News article: “Tomorrow the XVI Congress of the FENAMAD will begin”.
RCA. That same day different members from the various Harakmbut communities held a meeting in the Federation offices.\textsuperscript{23} The meeting went on all day and was a closed affair. When I asked César Augusto about it, he said that this was a meeting for \textit{puro Harakmbut} (solely Harakmbut) and later on in the evening there would be a meeting for \textit{puro Ese Eja}, although I was unable to verify if that meeting took place.

On the day of the Congress, the general atmosphere was very tense. People were very careful about who they spoke to and where they sat, spending a lot of time huddled in small groups and generally speaking softly in their own languages rather than in Spanish. There was also a very real sense of watching and being watched. In particular the Federation leaders were taking stock of who was speaking to whom. It felt like there were two sides, separate and distinct and it mattered whose side you were on. When the proceedings began the auditorium was clearly divided into two halves, partly through the layout of the seats which had an aisle down the middle, leading to the main table, and partly due to these seats being taken up by the two separate camps. On the one side were those delegates from the \textit{parte baja} and on the other were those from the \textit{parte alta}. The Federation staff were sat at a table in the front on the same side as the Federation President and facing the main table. I was called over to sit with Alicia and Jorge, in the lower communities section, but declined as I wanted to be able to walk around freely to take pictures and also as I was very aware of the significance of visibly placing my allegiance on the side of the lower communities for my further work within the Federation.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23} Andrew Gray suggests that “a formal meeting rarely takes on an issue unresolved at the previous levels because it should be an expression of community solidarity in the face of invaders, the government or visitors” (Gray 1997: 179). Similarly McCallum (1990: 422) mentions the significance of talks between individuals before a meeting so that agreements in the meeting are often forgone conclusions.

\textsuperscript{24} At the end of the first day after the communities had taken a vote that they would hold a re-election the next day to see who would take up office in the Federation, a number of leaders from the lower communities, including Jorge (Shipibo), Alicia (Yine), Julio (Shipibo) and Segundo (Yine) came over and sat down with me. Despite the lengths that I had gone to trying to maintain a neutral position, the fact that these leaders sat down with me to talk about how happy they were that there would be democratic elections involving all of the 34 communities did not go unnoticed. As I was leaving the hall after the event my position was questioned by a group of young Harakmbut delegates and committee leaders, including the Presidents of COHARYIMA and ECA-RCA. One of them said “you should be happy now that there is going to be a re-election”. This was a direct challenge suggesting that I had in some way been involved in meddling with indigenous affairs, noting my links to the \textit{parte baja}, who they felt were dividing the Federation.

As well as the three delegates chosen to attend from each of the 34 communities there were also a number of prominent older líderes present from the different communities. Some of these community leaders held positions of significance in FENAMAD in the past or were respected leaders within their communities. Although they did not have the ability to vote in the elections their presence in this Congress was notable as it showed the significance of the event for the indigenous movement at large and they offered comments along with the elected representatives, working to create unity.

Figure 15. FENAMAD Congress 2013 in Apaktone. On the left hand side of the picture sat people predominantly from the parte baja and on the right those from the parte alta.

**Discourse and reconstituting an inside space for indigenous affairs**

Very good afternoon, Brothers. I would like to say as one of the first leaders of FENAMAD, why are we fighting, Brothers? Why? Before, when we were running the Federation, everything was quiet and now that the youth come in suddenly we are fighting between brothers so I am

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25 For more detailed information about the distinction between líder and dirigente see Chapter 2.
Within this context of ethnic difference the strategic use of the term *hermano* takes on significance. During the Congress recourse was made to a wider “indigenous” way of being and way of resolving problems. This was emphasised primarily through the language used during the interventions and through repetition by the different community members to emphasise brotherhood, shared feelings and a common way of being indigenous within the indigenous movement of Madre de Dios. Emphasis was placed on commonalities between groups and a shared agenda as a way of dispelling tensions and overriding ethnic difference. Overing (1983: 13) wrote about how the Piaroa, conscious that society exists because of the interaction of differences, even though these may be dangerous, “expend a good deal of social structural energy in masking the principles of difference toward the end of achieving safety”. In order to do this they work on achieving “proper relationships among beings of categories which are viewed as significantly different” (Overing, 1983: 16). These insights are helpful in seeing how the work of different people during the Congress was aimed at achieving proper and safe relationships between groups affiliated to the Federation in spite of the differences, and how this was undertaken through language.

The use of language during the Federation proceedings to create a specific social reality for the indigenous people in the region is significant as it shows that language does not only reflect the existing social reality (Ahearn 2001) but serves to shape it in important ways. In analysing the importance of interactions with others for the construction of self, Laura Graham (1994) looks at the way in which Xavante youths create individual identities through re-presenting songs, which they acquire through dreams, in collective performances of dance sequences. Both language and performance can be seen as significant in creating discourses which develop and maintain a certain social reality but also shape the individual identities of those involved in the dialogue. Through an analysis of the speech acts during the Congress it is possible to see how the inside space was reconstituted through language.

The first part of the Congress was taken up by an open discussion about the events leading up to the Congress where everyone and anyone present could share their opinions, comment and respond to comments. One of the delegates from the native
Brothers, leaders (jefes o jefas) of the different communities, well, we are all saying that it is a shame what we are witnessing between brothers, between indigenous people, no? The accusations between ourselves, the discords... Before COINBAMAD was formed, FENAMAD was lovely, we all went to our Federation, to FENAMAD but not now. I don’t know what is happening. Now matters are not clear [...]

Having leaders formed by FENAMAD. Our FENAMAD has spent so much money to form these brothers lideres for this, to unite us and give advice. Things are bad. We as indigenous people need to value our FENAMAD.

He refers to a common indigenous brotherhood, in which there should be efforts towards inclusiveness emphasising this as being the reason for forming these leaders through FENAMAD. Here it is worth noting the use of the term “formado” (formed) which serves to indicate that becoming a dirigente is considered a process, one which involves time and money and is something that communities feel they invest and participate in. The aim being that the leaders fulfil their function which this delegate says is to unite the indigenous groups and to give advice. In another intervention a Federation leader reiterated the idea of a shared indigenous movement which, like a body (or person), can be offended by the actions of certain individuals. He states in reply to another comment that “Brother, if I am offending you, pardon me, but you have offended the indigenous movement with all of this.” The indigenous movement, as a collective of indigenous peoples, brothers, is thus seen as greater than any individual leader, and has a longevity that surpasses that of any individual leader. It is felt that this movement needs to be nurtured and protected due to its role in furthering collective agendas.

Unity between hermanos requires work on the part of both the communities and the leaders, especially as the indigenous groups in the region are not easy friends and do not generally have much interaction with each other apart from during events such as this or the Federation anniversary, workshops and football games. Recourse to the term hermano allows for the creation of a sense of belonging which aims to surpass ethnic identities. The president of the Yine native community Puerto Nuevo, commented that

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26 He uses the word deslindamiento which is related to deslindar which is to mark with clarity, put limits between one thing and another to avoid confusion. I think that he here refers to the confusing of matters which the introduction of a separate indigenous organisation COINBAMAD has brought about and the resultant accusations and contests for power between leaders who obtain their respective followers.

27 Peluso (2015a: 61) mentions that activities organised by the Federation or regional government allow indigenous people from different ethnic groups to come together and may serve to create a para-indigenous sense of belonging.
it is “For this reason we are sat here, we didn’t come here just to keep the seats warm but to debate with honesty, with democracy and here we are all Peruvians and we are all nativos and we are here to help.”

Many other interventions placed an emphasis on being hermanos, a condition that should surpass any other differences and allow for reconciliation. The primary criterion for this was being an indigenous person from the region, reflecting the idea that there is an essential shared sense of belonging (and substance) that surpasses kinship ties and is made through certain types of interactions. The leaders who voiced their opinions in the Congress used terms such as hermano, nativo or indigena interchangeably. In this way the term indigenous takes on a distinct power; that is the power to unite separate indigenous groups in shared feeling. This is in contrast to what has been described by Weber (2012) and Lopez Pila (2014) for the Bolivian lowland indigenous movement. Lopez Pila argued that the “term ‘indigenous’ is viewed rather as a ‘professional term’, reserved only for political representations” (Lopez Pila 2014: 443). Similarly Weber (2012) suggested that although the Chiquitano can see the potential benefits of using the term (e.g. to facilitate land titling), they are acutely aware of the limitations inherent in this category. They do not self-identify as “indigenous” within their communities but rather see themselves as Chiquitano. As she goes on to mention “[i]n the eyes of my Chiquitano colleagues, the ‘indigenous’ label has simply come to replace other labels (such as indio) in their function of categorising and subordinating Chiquitano (Weber 2012: 11).

I would argue that the term ‘indígena’ serves a different function in Federation politics. The meaning of the term indígena is marked through its interchangeable use with hermano in practice, which serves to create a shared feeling and sense of belonging, as inclusion. This is necessary for making wider distinctions between us and them, those who are like us and those who are not. This groundwork allows for both the leaders and the communities to actively work at creating a shared world. This also serves to emphasise an inside-outside divide, creating a common space for all indigenous peoples in the region and thereby delimiting the outside space for the various others. This inside/outside divide is further concretised through reference to the particular behaviour associated with those people, seen most clearly when the leaders compare their actions to those of others such as the state politicians, colonos or gringos.

The behavioural characteristics of the others means that they are considered shifting and changeable in nature, untrustworthy, not consecuente, threatening and sometimes
even dangerous. By contrast, Federation leaders need to be consecuente towards the communities and this is expected of a good leader. This is the basis of what Jaime (Federation president) was meaning when he said: “Brothers, to become president of FENAMAD I did not have to convince [you by] giving sweets to the communities but you had to assess my ability, honesty to defend the interests of the communities above economic interests. I always have this in mind, look for a change and not [to be] like candidates of political parties who to gain power have to offer beer, defame each other, ok. This would be bad for me speaking as an indígena.”

It is through collective reflection on the meaning of being indigenous and reiterating the similarities between groups as demonstrated during the Congress, that the Federation as an association of separate indigenous peoples can continue in representation of combined interests. Also it is through these kinds of meetings that both the role of the Federation and its leaders is reiterated, emphasised and made public. It has been noted by others that one important function of leaders in Amazonian societies is to create local groups (Lévi-Strauss 1974; Kracke 1978; Greene 2009). This dynamic speaks directly to my data as I have shown the ways in which the Federation leaders work to create a coherent and stable social group out of all of the indigenous peoples in the region. I also show how individual leaders are able to contest this power by rallying their own followers based on their ability to satisfy the needs of separate groups. Through reference to leaders as hermano, any hierarchical or authoritative aspects to the role can be undermined. Further in accordance with an observation by McCallum, the creation of this group can be seen to be a continuous process (McCallum 2001: 128), as the internal contestations regarding the Congresses demonstrate.

**Autonomy**

The Congress and similar inter-ethnic spaces for interaction need to be understood as specific spaces, separate from those developed in the individual communities. So whilst attempts are made at unity, there is not a move towards the creation of a non-differentiated group (Gray 1986). Rather the internal differences are needed and maintained, with a respect for inter-ethnic particularities. This was stressed through discourse surrounding the autonomy of the communities (see also Killick 2007, 2009; Burr 1997 for further discussion of autonomy). The Federation does not play a role in the selection of leaders within communities or in the elaboration of the internal statutes (although the legal team may support and aid communities in their development). Any
interference of Federation leaders in the internal politics of the communities is strongly disapproved of. This suggests that presence in the communities does not mean meddling in their affairs. During the Congress it was stressed that internal community affairs should be managed internally. One Harakmbut leader Fermin argued that “As the serious dirigentes that we are we should take into consideration the principles, moral values, yes, which should take precedence. We take care to help to solve the problems in the communities but first we need to start by respecting the autonomy of the communities, conscious that the internal problems can only be solved by them.”

A separate intervention by the President of the Ese Eja community, Palma Real, makes a similar point as he reiterated the significance of one being able to show that he is a good leader internally, that is in his own community, before trying to lead others in FENAMAD. His comment also serves to highlight the important role that the communities have in placing leaders in power (see also Chapter 3). A good leader is able to demonstrate an ability to create groups of followers and lead by example.

Good afternoon brothers, we are all saying that this situation is worrying, but at times brothers we are going around in circles but not offering a solution to the problem. Here, brothers, I have been listening attentively and it seems that we are trying to solve the problems of each community. Firstly, brothers, the communities aren’t going to solve the problems of other communities but rather that is a task for the líderes who have been elected inside the community who are called upon to solve those problems. I would say that sometimes there is a competition to obtain power in FENAMAD but brothers, if we are not yet prepared to be a dirigente in FENAMAD and have not been able to put our own community right then where are we going to get to. That’s what I mean. We are fighting too much here brothers, but first one has to demonstrate their own pueblo as a model and then later they can put themselves forward, right.

There is a push to maintain the autonomy of the individual communities in their decision-making and management but also the need to remain united as an “indigenous movement” which is what is emphasised through the political space of FENAMAD. This is deemed necessary in order to confront shared problems.

**Producing leaders**

A separate but complementary aspect of the interactions and debates during the Congress comes from the role of communities in defining acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in leaders. So whilst leaders are attempting to produce a collective social body of people, it could be argued that the people are also producing the leaders. It is
during the Congress that leaders are able to publicly demonstrate their leadership capabilities since the agenda includes an oral report on activities undertaken during the time in office and the management of finances. Community members are able to question leaders about the use of their time, the types of alliances they have made and the spending of Federation funds. Additionally, the leaders use this open forum to dispel rumours about themselves and reiterate their compromise to furthering the interests of the communities.

Community members are able to make public what they think the role of the leader in the Federation should be. In a contribution by a Harakmbut woman (from the native community of Barranco Chico) she emphasised the role of the communities in calling attention to the weaknesses of individual leaders, which should serve to make them reflect on their position and act in accordance with what is expected of a good leader. She said,

Well, brothers, I am listening carefully to what is taking place in the Federation. I am sorry to say that it would be a disappointment for both our children and for our young people who are studying and are here listening to this, this disunity, no? We must reflect, Brothers, for the good of our people, no? The weakness that we are talking about, Brothers, should serve each leader to reflect and to take the road to strengthen our Federation to continue working on projects, education, agriculture, to diversify our agriculture, Brothers.

Through this comment we are also given an insight into what is expected of FENAMAD in terms of strengthening the Federation and communities (see Chapter 5) and furthering a shared agenda with respect to health, education and economic opportunities (for discussion of the role of the Federation see Chapter 2).

In particular, I found that being consecuente was something that is valued in an indigenous leader. It is used to refer to someone who is accountable for their actions and upholds their principles. It is also understood as someone who maintains coherence between their ideas and their behaviour and implies that the person is trustworthy. This desired characteristic in leaders highlights why leaders spend so much time describing their actions, refuting rumours, and reiterating their ability to be both present in the communities to listen to their needs and attentive to the demands of their role in representation of the communities. By extension rumour serves to weaken a leader’s position. It is interesting to note that most commonly the rumours were related to a
leader’s involvement with the oil company or the state in ways that were deemed disadvantageous to the communities.

One example comes from a prominent Arakmbut leader (and ex-dirigente) who it was suggested would be running for a position on the panel during the Congress. There were rumours in the communities in la parte alta of him having had dealings with the oil company. Further he had been criticised by his Pueblo for attending the meeting with the lower communities in Puerto Maldonado (a decision which he defended publically during the Congress). As a result of this he had been sanctioned by his own community by not being voted as delegate to attend the Congress which meant that he would not be able to integrate himself into any panel for the elections. During the Congress he openly challenged anyone to produce documents or evidence of his involvement with la petrolera, in this way showing himself to be consecuente. Accusations levied against leaders who maintain ties that are too close to either the state or oil company serve to distance these leaders and place them in murky territory with regard to the inside/outside spaces.

Allegations levied against leaders, be they directly addressed to those leaders or in the form of rumour, ultimately question the leaders’ ability to direct the work of the Federation in the interests of the communities. The most significant example of this came from the comments surrounding Julio, a potential presidential candidate who had worked with COINBAMAD and in the regional government for a period. He was questioned due to his alleged role in pushing the community San José to change its categorisation from native community to centro poblado (population centre) in order to be included in a government project providing access to running water. A change in categorisation would mean that it lost its legal status as a native community, which would have significant consequences for communal land titles and specific indigenous rights. It was alleged that he had offered the community money in the form of a government project to fund this endeavour. His behaviour can be likened to that of the oil companies or state who offer money for apparently noble ends but which ultimately act to the detriment of the communities and work towards dividing them.

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28 He put himself forward as President on a panel during this Congress but did not receive sufficient votes. Incidentally he was voted President of FENAMAD in elections undertaken in January 2016.

29 If the community was to be categorised as a population centre instead there would be the possibility of dividing and selling sections of land separately as the native community category implies a specific communal title deed.
In response to criticisms Julio stressed that he was not only consecuente but also spent time travelling to the communities demonstrating presencia en las comunidades and specifically reiterated that he had no intention of instigating divisions. Here are some quotes taken from his various interventions during the Congress.

I think that we are here because we want the unity of the indigenous movement... I think that the intention has always been for the greater good, no? We are now a little big to be swayed by sweets [this is a reference to the state politicians who buy votes or sweeten their claims].

They said that [here referring to rumours], but brothers, my intention never was and never will be to divide, rather it is to make the things which are happening transparent. Julio Cusirichi cannot keep quiet when there is a problem in the community.

Julio Cusurichi has never hidden away, on the contrary I have been in the different communities trying to help resolve some of their problems. I don't have a magic hand to solve them but I have tried to be present for some issues in the communities and because of that there are health technicians in the communities (30/1/2013).

People use the phrase “dicen que” when referring to rumours or things of which the person may not have direct experience. Peluso (2015a) has highlighted that often conflicts are expressed through avoidance, indifference, gossip, sorcery and secrecy (ibid. 68) rather than addressed through direct confrontation. This allows us to reflect on the significance of rumour in affecting the possibility for conflict resolution, through the leaders acknowledging the rumours and actively working to refute the claims, often with direct evidence to the contrary. In this way social balance is again achieved and leaders are able to maintain favour with the communities. Alexiades (1999) also suggests that gossip aims to disrupt an individual's accumulation of power and wealth, while Killick (2007: 474) sees public disapproval as a mode of control of behaviour. In this case, we can see that it is through rumour and accusations made public that a leader’s expected behaviour can be defined and enforced. Behaviours which are deemed unacceptable or too similar to that of the Others are sanctioned through withdrawal of approval by followers.

Through an analysis of the significance of being consecuente for a leader’s success it has been possible to highlight the limits of what is considered acceptable behaviour for leaders. It has also allowed us to reflect on the importance of not only one’s own home

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30 Luisa Belaunde (2009: 494) suggests that leaders are expected to use their relationship with Others to provide for their kin and not abandon their kin.
community but all of the communities in the region in shaping the behaviour of the leader and directing and influencing who is able to take up a leadership role within the Federation. This is contrary to the literature which emphasises the distance of leaders from internal politics of the communities (for examples see Jackson 1991, 2002; Gow & Rappaport 2002). Through an analysis of what it means to be consecuente I have shown that Federation leaders are in fact embedded in community politics and that the communities play a crucial role in their possibility of becoming leaders and in defining their role. In the following section I will take a closer look at how leaders work to position themselves favourably vis-à-vis the communities and how becoming a leader in the Federation can be the result of autopoiesis: a project of self-creation.

Becoming a leader

During the Congress most of the delegates from the communities were dressed in trousers, shorts and cotton shirts, T-shirts or dresses. Some others were dressed in more indigenous clothing such as cushmas, tunics made out of cotton with painted geometric designs, or out of bark from the yanchama tree dyed with natural red dye. Others were wearing ethnic markers such as headdresses according to their ethnic affiliation. I noted that those people who were wearing these kind of indigenous markers had leadership aspirations, being either current Federation leaders or community leaders hoping to participate in one or other of the election panels. I wondered why this was so much more pronounced than in the San José Congress where no one was dressed in traditional dress. The only other times when I had seen people purposefully dressing in indigenous clothing was during regional strikes when they took to the streets to represent the indigenous peoples of Madre de Dios or during important meetings with state officials. At these specific times the difference needed to be marked in order to stress ethnicity as the base for justified reclamations and as “rebellion against political invisibility” (Conklin 1997: 724).

In the context of this Congress, and given the problematic run-up to its undertaking, dress became significant in marking difference between ethnic groups and allowed for a visible placing of allegiances along ethnic lines. Leaders used dress to express their affiliation with and obligation to their respective Pueblo. This needed to be visibly marked as an

31 This coincides with an observation made by Oakdale that it was often leaders who invoked “reified images of Indianness or indigenous culture” (2004: 62).
expression of intention for the delegates present and served to highlight the ethnic divides within Federation politics.

Figure 16. FENAMAD Congress 2013. César Augusto (Ese Eja) and Ana Isabel (Harakmbut), leaders who had been voted into office in the controversial San José Congress, watching proceedings.
When I asked César Augusto why he wore indigenous dress on that day he said that “it signifies identity, commitment, and demonstrates an example of a strong spirit to represent one’s Pueblo which is what the young people [need to] learn to recuperate, [to be able to] say I am indígena and it is something to be proud about. To have your own identity as such is valuable for each Pueblo. Those who have to lead by example are the directivos, as a mirror in which the indigenous youth can see themselves” (interview, 3/8/2013).32

Santos Granero (2009) refers to what he calls hybrid bodyscapes and discusses cultural change in terms of bodily transformation or metamorphosis. He analyses the shift to the use of traditional dress in terms of a “reinvention of tradition” as this relates to Yanesha understandings of the fabrication of persons. The adoption of Yanesha “traditional” dress can be seen “not as a return to tradition but rather a new way of being Yanesha” (2009: 491). He found that wearing a cushma, a practice which had largely been abandoned, was now seen as a symbol of being progressive and forward thinking. Similarly Turner

32 Greene (2009) describes visionary leaders as leaders who creates the path that others followed.
saw that in the Kayapo there was a renewed adoption of what he refers to as “Indian costume” (1991: 299), which was now being mixed with Brazilian clothing during meetings. He sees this as the result of a shift in the balance of power between the Kapaypo and the Brazilians as it signified “a new assertiveness and pride in Indian identity” (Turner 1991: 299). In this way a transformation in dress can be seen to be the result of political consciousness and a visible demonstration of a change in social identity (see also Turner 1995 for a discussion of changes in identity through body modification and decoration).

I see the adoption of indigenous dress in the leaders in the Federation as symbolic of their internal transformation which comes to form part of the process of becoming a leader. The dress then comes to signify the initiation of a learning process and serves as a visible marker of that process, becoming a dirigente. When in the Federation, I saw a number of occasions when leaders would help each other to put on indigenous dress, offering items to wear before meetings or painting each other before marches or public events such as desfiles. Other leaders actively worked on crafting their own headdresses with feathers collected from trips to the communities or asked family members to help to produce and dye the cushmanas that they wore during events and meetings. On one occasion during the regional strikes in 2009, a Harakmbut leader asked Jessica, a German woman who was working as an advisor in the Federation at that time, to bring in a book on the Harakmbut by Heinrich Helberg Chávez called Mbaisik, en la penumbra del atardecer. The book contains various photos from the 1950s, and the leaders studied the photos and carefully reproduced the body-painting designs on each other’s bodies.
The identity position of a leader can be seen as a continuous process and a personal project, or part of what has been referred to as autopoiesis by Christina Toren (1999). These identities are emergent and developed through the intersubjective relations within the Federation, through dealings with the communities and other leaders. So the meanings of these acts are constituted through the encounter between the meanings already made and those being made by others (Toren 1999: 10). The leaders are at once the products of those encounters between meanings and the producers of meaning. When I refer to the adoption of traditional dress as an internalisation of their position of leader, I want to stress that the received meaning of the dress in terms of authenticity (i.e. that meaning which is assigned to dress by the wider public and NGOs etc., as seen in articles such as Conklin 1997) is transformed in the process. So internalisation is a way of constituting meaning or making sense (Toren 1999: 18) of the action of putting on the traditional dress. This was demonstrated through the quote by César Augusto (above), in which he interpreted the meaning of dress for himself, indicating that it meant more than just playing Indian for an audience. It demonstrates a leader’s ability to be consecuente to his own Pueblo and shows coherence between thought and action and a compromise to work towards the interests of the communities. It also signifies and visibly marks the new identity position of the leader as dirigente.
In many of the interventions people made references to age and maturity using words and phrases such as “ya somos grandecitos”, “grandes” or “maduros” when referring to leaders actions or behaviours. When speaking to the Ese Eja delegates after the voting was over on the last day I asked them why they had not voted for the second panel and the response was that the panel was made up of puro “eshoi” or “eshoi dei dei” literally meaning “only children” or “very young” as eshői means child in Ese Eja. By referring to them in this way it did not only mean that they were young in age but that the majority of them had little experienced of being leaders. In a similar vein in a private conversation with Antonio about one dirigente, he mentioned that some of the shortcomings, which had been noted by delegates during the Congress, were related to the fact that he was still joven (young/youth). I see reference to maturity as reflecting the idea that becoming a leader is a process (and a continuous one at that), and in fact also a social process which is much like growing up. As noted in Chapter 1, in Amazonia it is considered that people cause children to grow (Peluso 2015b; McCallum 1996). Rather than growing being just a natural process, it requires intervention on the part of others. So growing up and developing into a fully social being involves learning and the assimilation of knowledge and experience, knowledge is embodied and able to transform the person (McCallum 1996: 348). Similarly I would argue that a leader is made to grow through their interactions with others. This further emphasises what is meant by reference to age,
as knowledge and experience are gained over time through interactions with communities and seen in terms of maturation and growth, which correlates with a leader’s ability to make better decisions.

**Conclusion**

By reflecting on the actions of the state and others we are able to see how leaders in the Federation position themselves in terms of what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Behaviour deemed as unacceptable for indigenous leaders (and which has resulted in sanctions in the past) therefore includes accusations of dividing the indigenous movement, making land available to external agents such as oil companies or the state, and using the position of authority for personal gains (e.g. for monetary gains). Leaders in turn make great efforts to deny such allegations, which are often based on rumours, during visits to the communities (thus emphasising the significance of *presencia en las comunidades*) or during events such as the Congress. The need for transparency before the communities stresses their importance in terms of decision making and their instrumental role in the formation of leaders. During the Congress different leaders made a point of reiterating their compromise to the communities and debunking accusations levied against them in order to distance themselves from the others.

Similar to other authors (Ester López Pila 2014; Erazo 2010: 1018; McCallum 2001) I found that there was a certain moral aspect to being indigenous, which was stressed in discussions about the national politicians or oil companies during both Congresses and in other internal meetings. This moral aspect also serves to reiterate expected behaviours and further delimit the boundaries of the inside and outside spaces. The indigenous leaders in the Federation need to distance themselves from the types of behaviours associated with the outside in order to emphasise their position as insiders. In this way leaders during the Congress took time to reiterate their intentions and prove themselves to be *consecuente* before those present. A change in dress manifested the internalisation of the role and served to emphasise this new identity, as leader and as *consecuente*, working towards the interests of their own *Pueblo*.

I have tried to show how the Federation leaders and communities use the term *hermano* in order to create a shared social space (and stable social body) with an emphasis on equality and in this way they are able to incorporate the potentially dangerous others, i.e.
those from different ethnic groups, into the inside space. This inside space is important for dialogue to be productive and to further the shared goals of the Federation. By extending the inside space to include all the indigenous peoples in the region, despite their differences, it is then possible to define an outside space. While the inside space is maintained through work on the part of the leaders to make kin and “protect kinship” (McCallum, 1990: 429) similarly the outside space needs to be defined and redefined continuously in relation to this. The others can then be identified as those whose allegiances lie outside of this community, and they can be seen as “threatening others” (cf. Froerer 2006: 40). This was seen with references to unacceptable behaviours and interference of oil company workers, the state, the involvement of certain NGOs and even myself and the other support staff in the Federation. This was exemplified in the example given earlier where the staff were asked to leave the Federation offices in order for an internal meeting to take place only between indigenous people. It can be argued that the social body is further made by purification so the purity of the inside space is achieved through expelling the bodies of outsiders and enclosing the bodies of insiders.

One leader pointed out “What’s happening here, brothers? We are fighting over just anything, or are there political interests or on the part of the oil companies or environmental NGOs who have interests in manipulating the native communities. What do we want now, brothers? Why so much fighting? […] The líderes are there to strengthen FENAMAD instead of supporting personal interests.”

By shifting the boundaries of the inside and the outside, the negative things which came out of all of the infighting can then be blamed on these Others, who are considered meddling and dangerous, and the inside space can be reconstituted as a space where the higher moral standing and togetherness of the indigenous people can play out.

In the following chapter I will undertake an analysis of the significance of knowledge, both produced in the Federation for the communities and for the state and how knowledge comes to be tied to power.
Chapter 5

Producing knowledge and constituting power

In the previous chapters I have shown the important role that Federation leaders play in working to establish the boundaries of the inside and outside spaces for indigenous politics. The establishment of these spaces is also significant in highlighting how leaders and communities actively work at creating each other. Leaders aim to produce a coherent social body working towards the same aims, and communities ensure that those leaders are accountable and addressing their particular needs. In this chapter I will focus on a different aspect of how FENAMAD leaders are both producers of knowledge and the product of knowledge obtained from the outside, and how this knowledge comes to be used instrumentally in the production of people. Producing leaders then takes the form of leaders acquiring knowledge and cultivating attributes of power as this relates to the “power to” (Kracke 1992) and distancing themselves from the “power over” as associated with the outside. The “power to” manifests itself in the ability to enact changes, mobilise people, empower communities (especially in terms of decision making) and work towards the well-being of the communities. By extension the knowledge that is generated in the Federation feeds back to the communities and establishes a common understanding of indigenous history and futures. This is expressed in terms of the shared inside space, which is reiterated in their publications and engagements, and ensures that the leaders are able to draw on the communities in mobilisations in support of the ideologies and perspectives that are generated through the Federation. This knowledge is also utilised in the presentation of the indigenous people to the state and others.

As mentioned in other parts of the thesis I argue that FENAMAD functions much like a school for leaders and communities. The leaders in the Federation use this space to learn about the different others with whom they come into contact and are then able to transfer this knowledge to the indigenous peoples in the region through trips to the communities, meetings and workshops. They also draw on the auxiliary staff and their links to other indigenous organisations, the state or NGOs as a resource for information about these others. The information which is gained relates to legislation, national and international programmes and projects, and wider knowledge about national and international politics. The leaders spend a lot of their working time attending meetings and workshops in Puerto Maldonado, Lima or other locations in Peru and even further afield. Some leaders have attended the UN Conferences for indigenous peoples held
annually in New York and past leaders were involved in the working groups for the establishment of the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples.¹ These spaces for interaction allow the indigenous movement to develop through relations between different indigenous peoples from around the world and give the leaders first-hand opportunities for knowledge exchange and development (see also Brysk 1996).

The role of the leaders as agents who have been empowered by these experiences is highlighted by their ability to motivate people and effect changes. This ability is understood as part of their role in strengthening communities, something that was mentioned by both leaders and community members during interventions in the Congress and in interviews. Jaime Corisepa in an interview undertaken by Paula Letts (2012: 59) demonstrates an understanding of his role as leader in the Federation in the following quote, in which he defines his task as “Strengthening the communities to defend their territories, knowing that territory is part of the existence of a people, everything is there, it is the source of life” (2009, my translation).

Knowledge, agency and empowerment

Foucault (1980) speaks about how power is based on and makes use of knowledge, yet power redefines knowledge for its own ends and defines what knowledge is important. In Amazonia privileged forms of knowledge were those possessed by shamans, or dreamers, as it was through these other mediums (spirit entities or other worlds) that they had access to the specific types of knowledge necessary in order to ensure the wellbeing of their community. Langdon (1992b) described how power was understood by the Siona to be related to shamanism as the shaman is considered to possess dau. It is through “possessing dau, that a shaman is able to understand and influence the forces responsible for well-being” (Langdon 1992b: 42). The shaman aims to possess knowledge and in this way power. I analyse how it is power in terms of empowerment and agency (through cultivation of the “power to” as described by Kracke, 1992) that is constituted through the work of the Federation in producing knowledge. The inside and outside spaces are then further defined through their different uses of power.

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“Power is implicated in meaning through its role in upholding one version of significance as true, fruitful or beautiful, against other possibilities that may threaten truth, fruitfulness or beauty” (Wolf 1990: 591). Therefore knowledge cannot be considered neutral. Knowledge is situated in the power relations in which it is constituted and itself helps to perpetuate. This means that power does not simply act on an agent but it also produces this agent. In making the connection between knowledge and agency, through dialogue and the social construction of meaning, Hill and Irvine (1993) suggest that “Interpreting events, establishing facts, conveying opinion and constituting interpretation as knowledge are all activities involving socially situated participants, who are agents in the construction of knowledge and agents when they act on what they have come to know, believe, suspect, opine” (cited in Ahearn 2001: 130).

There are two aspects of agency which are produced by different kinds of power that are useful to consider in the context of the Federation: the ability to act (power as empowerment), and the imperative to act (resistance to certain forms of power). Rubenstein sees “politics as the formation and deployment of different kinds of power, including power to incite desire [which is] behind new relationships between both states and indigenous people and their biotic environment (Rubenstein 2004: 134). Gray proposes that “It is ‘power’ which the Amarakaeri would recognise in the term ‘resistance’” (Gray 1986: 117). So power has many guises but how do the different forms of power come to be manifest through the workings of the Federation and through what are considered acceptable (collective action, resistance, empowerment) and unacceptable forms of power (coercion, domination). The Federation facilitates the collective power of the indigenous peoples to resist and empowers people with the knowledge needed to solve their problems and define their own futures. The Federation is not seen to be about empowering individual leaders to control or manage people. This is something which is associated with the state as experienced in interactions with state politicians (see Chapter 4). The distinction was made evident during the Congress in Puerto Maldonado by a community delegate who called for the Federation to concentrate more on the politics of the communities. He said,

We only want to see that there is a change in FENAMAD, that it is more engaged in the politics of the communities, a FENAMAD that is not only devoted to state politics. In the communities we have many problems and we are in need of the directivos from our Federation… We don’t want that kind of politics. We only want politics that helps the communities to advance until we get there (avanzar hasta llegar) (delegate from Puerto Luz, Pueblo Harakmbut).
Knowledge is power and is empowering and so by gaining knowledge about the others the leaders feel that they are able to empower their communities in their decision making (see also Erazo 2010; Rosengren 2003). In some respects this helps to win back spaces of power from the state, as this relates to greater possibilities for decision-making powers over their territories. The indigenous Federation is actively involved in generating knowledge and using this for their own ends. Juliet Erazo (2010) draws out Foucault’s idea of governmentality by looking at governmentality within the indigenous social movement. Governmentality operates to produce a governable subject and this opens up the possibility that its mechanisms can be used by agents other than the state. Addressing this, Erazo argues that “subalterns (usually seen as the objects of governmental action) can also be the agents of governmentality, rationalizing and disciplining their fellow group members while enlisting them in projects of self-rule” (2010: 2019). She undertook an analysis of the ways in which the Shuar Federation in Ecuador acted more like a governing organisation with the leaders working towards empowering their members through the production of different subjectivities to those produced by other governing agents (Erazo 2010: 1020, 1022).

For Turner (2002), contrary to Foucault’s proposition that representation is an effect of power, power is an effect of representation (ibid. 246). It is through representation that power is produced and mobilised in so far as representation then becomes a mediator of social relations of political struggle (Turner 2002: 245). Representation can therefore be used in the mediation of social action through the management of the representations that come to be used in different contexts. This argument adds weight to the significance of the types of knowledge produced by FENAMAD and used by the leaders, as the rewriting of history, the interpretation of the present and futures as representative and legitimate, works to create unity in the indigenous movement by influencing individual subjectivities. In a separate argument, Turner discusses the role of new media in the empowerment of communities. He states that “the power of representation through these media thus become associated with the power of conferring value and meaning on themselves in the eyes of the outside world, and reflexively, in new ways, in their own eyes as well” (1991: 307). So while the others and the outside are considered dangerous and kept separate from indigenous affairs (i.e. meddling is not allowed, see Chapter 4), they are useful as they are an external source of power (see also Gray 1997a, 1997b; Alexiades 1999). It is all about the correct ways of mixing and engaging with outside others, which in this case involves learning from them and about them.

Federation leaders are driven by the need to get to know the other in order to make dealings safe and productive. The function of the Federation then becomes teaching the
leaders and communities how to interact with these others to get the results that they want. As Tomas, a Harakmbut man from San José del Karene, who is university educated and has worked in the Federation in the past, stated in 1986, “The only hope for us is to learn to deal with the authorities, to raise our level of education. Already there are native students studying in Puerto Maldonado. We must therefore use their knowledge to fight for our lands and our right to live. We must organise ourselves while we still have the chance and the best way to do this is through the organisation FENAMAD” (Tomas Arique Simbu, in Gray 1986: 3). For the Arakmbut, knowledge gained from the outside is considered beneficial if this is used for the benefit of the community. The emphasis on schooling from early on in the Arakmbut interactions with others also supports this view of knowledge (Aikman 2003: 17). Sheila Aikman (2003: 12) states that to be knowledgeable, ser sabio, for the Arakmbut involves knowing how to use knowledge for beneficial ends, whether that knowledge is about how to be a gardener, hunter, healer (curandero/wamanoka’er) or dreamer (soñador/wayoroker). She highlights the significance of using strength (fortaleza) to give strength for the benefit of the community. In this way the students can become wairi, a term used to describe leaders who are engaged in the external relations of the community and who use their knowledge of the “exterior” to look for solutions to the problems originating from outside the community (Aikman 2003: 19).

Following Townsley’s (1993) argument that shamanism is a way of knowing rather than a system of things known, I argue that leadership too relates to the development of techniques for knowing rather than being a system of things already known. Leaders are furnished with the tools for knowledge acquisition and dissemination. If considered in this light then the fact that leadership styles change over time is unsurprising. Leaders, adapt, modify and incorporate new techniques, knowledge and apparatus as they deem necessary in order to deal with the changing nature of the others. So being a leader in the Federation is about learning about the others and gaining the necessary knowledge in dealing with them. It is for this reason that once a person becomes a dirigente, it is difficult for them to unlearn this. It is about the development of qualities and skills which inhere in a person rather than about the role undertaken. These people are called on constantly in their communities, in meetings in the Federation and in the Congress even after they are no longer officially dirigentes in FENAMAD. Through their role in the Federation they have been equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills which are
needed to manage relations with any outside entity and the communities trust their abilities to interpret the situations and guide (or orientar) their responses.²

Acquiring new knowledge provides new frames in which to place indigenous demands on the state (managing shapeshifting by the state), and learning to shapeshift. Federation leaders are tasked with managing relations with the state, managing social boundaries and securing land rights for their communities. A good leader therefore learns from others and brings knowledge and resources back to his community. Encouraging people to follow and act also highlights the significance of knowledge transfer, and it attests to the leader’s ability to be present, consecuente and maintain allies in the communities. In this chapter I will examine how leaders use the knowledge gained from and about the outside to present the demands for territorial security and self-determination of the indigenous people to the state, thus demonstrating their cultivation of the “power to”. I outline two case studies that relate to territorial demands for access to and participation in decision-making over the ancestral lands of the Ese Eja and Harakmbut peoples. Through these examples I show that leaders are able to shapeshift, moulding their petitions to the structures provided by the state in order to secure greater decision-making powers for the communities.

Case study 1– The “reivindicación del Pueblo Ese Eja”

Becoming a dirigente is a process as I described in Chapter 4. Leaders position themselves strategically and take up opportunities to learn from others, building on that experience to create themselves as leaders. I here present a testimony from César Augusto Jojaje where he outlines the various steps which he undertook along his path to becoming a leader. It gives us insight into some of the characteristics looked for in a dirigente and the various others who play a role in a leader’s formation. The communities and other leaders help to build up community leaders to become dirigentes.³ Similar to what has been observed by other authors the dirigentes in the Federation need to have attended school and speak Spanish, or the dominant language of the region (e.g. Brown 1993; Gow & Rappaport 2002; Jackson 2002; Virtanen 2009, 2010). One difference though is that they must have demonstrated leadership roles in their own communities.

² Alfredo confirmed this view when he said “we give support from wherever we may be, that’s why we passed through FENAMAD”. Facebook chat, 20/7/2016.
³ They may also work against someone taking up a leadership role, see Chapter 4 for examples of the power of the communities in determining a leader’s possibilities for ascension to roles within the Federation.
In fact in the Federation statutes it is a requirement that any potential dirigente needs to have taken on a leadership role in their community in order to be eligible to be presented as a candidate. This attests to their potential to have people follow them and their capacity to organise. Generosity is also considered important. Many of the characteristics of a dirigente therefore coincide with those noted for leadership in Amazonia more widely (see Chapter 1).

It was a hot afternoon in the community of Palma Real when I undertook this interview with César Augusto as we sat on the porch in Florentino’s house, which also doubles as a shop. I had accompanied César Augusto on a trip to his home community for a meeting, which had been planned in relation to his role as coordinator for FENAMAD’s project on people in voluntary isolation. When I asked him “how did you become a dirigente in the Federation?”, his response was as follows.

I am not a professional, on that account I was discounted. I won because of my participation in the struggle for the [establishment of the] Amarakaeri Communal Reserve. I was a member of the Palma Real community. It was during the time when Antonio Iviche [a previous president of the Federation] had a program for the formation of leaders. He gave me the responsibility of coordinator of the Ese Eja, and to provide meat and fish during the strikes in 2000. My commitment was to give meat. I tried to coordinate since I was in the leadership program [at the time], I was leader of the theme of territory – territorial rights of indigenous peoples was my course. It was a course for organisations. I was able to resolve the territorial problem that there was between Palma Real and Sonene. This capacity was testimony to my ability to be a dirigente. And that is why Antonio sent me to Lima for 3 months to take the course. At that time it was Elisa [Antonio’s wife at the time from Palma Real community] who said to me, “there is nobody else who can handle themselves like you can, you have to go to the Congress.” There were challenges which I assumed without being a dirigente and so I went and accepted when they told me that I was going to be on Jaime’s panel. We won for it and we won. [...] I had to make the indigenous people understand, search for strategic allies with the Harakmbut to be able to continue in the dirigencia [...] So it was in 2013 that I had more tranquility and space to be able to handle myself with any entity. I was dirigente in FENAMAD again. I took the role of Secretary to be able to have more responsibility. I hadn’t expected to be given the role of coordinator of the Peoples in Voluntary Isolation project but Klaus [current president of the Federation] assigned me this role as my commitment. It has been difficult for me to continue assuming this role but up until today I am assuming responsibility for both projects related to the peoples in voluntary isolation. I continue undertaking the activities in order to llegar bien a la comunidad [...] I have strength to continue giving and assuming [responsibilities] and hopefully by the end of the year I can achieve the creation of the Consejo de la nación [Council of the nation Ese Eja]. I can leave a technical report about the Nation Ese Eja. Then from outside [the Federation] I can
assume the presidency of the Nation Ese Eja. That is my dream (interview, 3/8/13).

During my fieldwork I observed that he was instrumental in organising different meetings involving delegates from all the Ese Eja communities. The first meeting took place in Palma Real on the 4th May 2013 when they discussed their common goals with respect to their ancestral lands. Later, on the 7th June, they met again this time in the native community Infierno to establish the “Comité de la Nación Ese Eja”. During this meeting they elected a Junta Directiva presided over by Carlos Dejaviso from the Infierno community. César Augusto used his position as part of FENAMAD and the knowledge gained about how to organise a meeting that would have impact. He invited different actors such as the National Parks staff, local government officials, NGOs and the press to be present at the meeting. He also held a press conference the day before in the FENAMAD offices. He aimed to show that the Ese Eja communities were united in reclaiming these spaces and were ready to engage fully with the state in the management of the area. It was also testimony to his ability to mobilise people, creating a group of followers.

**Steps to reclaiming Ese Eja ancestral lands**

The press conference was poorly attended, although they did manage to make local news, but the meeting the next day was attended by the National Parks services staff and the NGOs that have major stakes in the area and in particular those who have interests in negotiating the carbon stores through the REDD+ (Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) initiative. The jefes of the Tambopata National Reserve and the Bahuaja Sonene National Park were there, even though this meant a 14 hour trip from Puno for the latter. This attendance was unusual, meaning that the meeting was generating a certain level of uncertainty in these state officials. The National Reserve lent their 4x4 van to transport the community members from Puerto Maldonado to Infierno, some 20kms away along a dusty road. People piled into the back of the 4x4 early on the morning of the 7th and made their way with anticipation to the meeting. I hitched a ride in the back of the van along with the representatives from Palma Real and Sonene, and some other students, who were in the area visiting. Upon arrival the Infierno community was keen to show off their new sala comun, which was still under construction and was substantially larger than the old wooden one. It had a corrugated iron roof and cement floor, but as yet no walls. Amongst those present in greatest numbers were members of the Infierno community, along with delegates from the other
two Ese Eja communities. There were the Peruvian linguist, María Chavarría, who has worked with the Ese Eja since the 1970s and Oscar Gutiérrez who was acting as advisor for the Infierno community, the heads of the NGOs AIDER and the Frankfurt Zoological Society, and the vice president of FENAMAD, Alfredo Vargas Pío. The jefe of the National Reserve looked decidedly nervous about what was going to transpire and it just so happened that we ended up sat next to each other. The Ese Eja representatives included César (César Augusto’s father) from Palma Real and other leaders from Infierno who had served as dirigentes in the FENAMAD during times past such as Miguel Pesha. It was during this meeting that César Augusto proposed that they form a committee made up of only Ese Eja leaders who would be able to offer a united front to the state in furthering any specific Ese Eja claims. Various people stood up to voice their opinions about their history as a people and their land use, sometimes speaking in Spanish and other times exclusively in Ese Eja. César Augusto also made a point of speaking in Ese Eja for lengthy periods. His use of Ese Eja here served two purposes, firstly, it was a sign of authenticity and his legitimacy to be able to represent the Ese Eja in their claim to the state for their ancestral lands. Having a native language and using it in this way taps into Western ideas of authentic Indianness (see Graham 2002 for a discussion of leaders’ choices with regards to language and contexts of use). The second purpose was to convey a message to the Ese Eja present, making manifest the basis for his claims to represent the Ese Eja, as well as interpreting the meeting for them. The presence of the outsiders was necessary for César Augusto to show his ability to gather allies, adding weight to his position as representative of the Ese Eja in the Federation and also his ability to be an effective Ese Eja leader. Those present in the meeting decided that the committee should have two members from each of the three Ese Eja communities and they spent a long time proposing names of suitable candidates from each of the communities. These people either accepted the nominations or not, depending on their personal circumstances, and finally six people were put forward as the new committee. One of the main aims of the committee was to be able to represent the three Ese Eja communities in meetings and interactions with the National Parks service. The jefe of the National Park, when he was asked to speak, reiterated that this was a great initiative which would make relations easier between the two parties and would facilitate communication. He stated that he himself felt close to indigenous issues

4 The use of Ese Eja as opposed to Spanish could also be interpreted as ideological resistance to a capitalist ideology, an ideology indexed by the use of Spanish. Ahearn (2001) sees shifts between languages used as “locating multiple socially embedded voices among and within individuals” (Ahearn 2001: 129). Spanish is used as the language to articulate resistance in the federation, in published articles etc., which become part of the set of practices related to a specific context.
and welcomed greater participation. Similarly the jefe of the National Reserve welcomed the initiative.

For the state this was beneficial in that the communities, which have had a conflictive relationship with the national park and reserve staff in the past, were now proving to be open to greater coordination and I am sure the officials hoped that this would engage the communities in the conservation of the areas. Conservation, according to the legislation, is the ultimate aim in the creation of these spaces. For the Ese Eja, they saw the creation of a committee as a way to organise themselves better to enable them to participate in meetings to air the opinions, necessities and demands of all of the Ese Eja communities. However, as I will now outline, conservation of the area is not their main concern but rather self-determination, use of resources and participation in decision making about what happens in these areas.

Figure 20. César Augusto addresses the audience- meeting in Infierno, 7/7/13 (Source: Area de Comunicación/FENAMAD)
The main idea behind the committee and the way that this idea was presented to the community members during the various meetings running up to this big “historical” day revolved mostly around issues of access to the National Park and most importantly access and rights to the resources within. Emphasis was placed on the fact that this area is Ese Eja ancestral lands. Additionally, it is considered that there may be indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation in this area. The area in question is huge and the majority of the Ese Eja people no longer migrate up river for months at a time during the dry season to take advantage of the hunting and collection of the taricaya (turtle) eggs, as they have done in the past. Nowadays due to increased responsibilities in the community, the children being in school and the amount of petrol needed to make such...
journeys, it is more common for small groups to take shorter trips of a few days (or weeks) into the Reserve or Park to hunt, fish and look for eggs. Nevertheless, there is still a very strong feeling that this whole area belongs to them to make use of as they please. Gregorio, from Palma Real said what he thought the meeting in Infierno was about, and it may be that these points were made by César Augusto during his speeches in the Ese Eja language.\(^8\)

The state prohibits everything, mining, hunting, fishing. That day when we went to Infierno, we went to have a meeting so that they do not prohibit our customs. We are free (interview, 2/8/13).

The rationale behind the formation of this organisation was made clear by César Augusto who felt that eventually this organisation would change from being a Committee to being a Consejo (Council) which, according to him, would increase its ability to speak for and represent the wishes of the Ese Eja as a collectivity or as he put it, as a Nation.

I want to change it so that it is not a committee but “Council of the Ese Eja nation”. It is important in order to confront the big threats – dispossession, the displacement of the nation from its territory, despite the fact that it is fragmented there are intentions to take it all. There is no respect, there is no consultation when law packages are issued which are going to affect sacred sites of the Ese Eja people. This [the council] is so that they respect the Ese Eja. [And so] that we can be consulted when they want to invite a tourist company or legislate about (reglamentar) the area, we have to be participants through the Committee. That way they will respect us, not through the native communities, but having a political representative at a political level, as a nation, as legal representatives.

As a continuation of the push for visibility and control, the “Ese Eja Nation” have recently filed a case before the Inter American Court for Human Rights (CIDH) in Washington in which they are taking the Peruvian Government to court to gain access to their lands under the condition of “indigenous peoples excluded from their ancestral territories because of conservation.”\(^9\) The case is also specifically in relation to the sale of carbon reserves (through the REDD+ scheme) from the National Park and National Reserve by

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\(^8\) In hindsight I should have spent time during my fieldwork on translating these sections of the proceedings from Ese Eja. I would certainly like to return to them at a later date to know exactly how the argument was framed by Cesar Augusto so as to garner the support of all of the Ese Eja communities.

\(^9\) César Augusto has also referred to the Ese Eja as refugees in some instances in order to highlight his position that they were forced from their lands due to conservation. This is a strategic use of language employed in order to reflect the creation of the political position of the nation.
the state and the NGO which manages these areas, AIDER with no prior consultation with the Ese Eja and no consideration for their claims to this area as ancestral lands.\textsuperscript{10}

Figure 22. Carlos Dejaviso Poje, President of the Committee (left), César Augusto Jojaje Eriney (right) in Washington DC. (Source: Augusto Jojaje, Facebook page 24/10/2014)

This case study, and César Augusto’s actions, can be interpreted in terms of controlled equivocation (Viveiros de Castro 2004) and the establishment of a middle ground (Conklin & Graham 1995). Additionally for César Augusto this was very much part of a personal project, part of his development as an Ese Eja leader. He plays a role in motivating the communities to be active and participate in the state agenda. The state feels that the establishment of a committee will help them in the coordination which they feel necessary to ensure the conservation of the areas. While for the Ese Eja people the Committee means greater control over decision making and quite possibly a legal

\textsuperscript{10} Newspaper article from 12 September 2013 which shows that this area is to be the first in Peru to negotiate carbon on the market through a collaboration between the National Parks services (SERNANP) and a Peruvian NGO, AIDER. https://www.inese.es/noticias/pacifico-seguros-adquiere-bonos-de-carbono-del-estado-en-areas-naturales-protegidas#.V2qAtThdFjo (Date accessed: 22/06/2016).
process to have this area considered an ancestral land under a different regimen altogether, such as that of a communal reserve or other, in order to give primacy to its cultural significance. César Augusto uses his knowledge about what each party wants to develop a discourse in which he is able to marry the two, thereby establishing a middle ground. César Augusto weaves a tale that includes both discourses presented differentially to each side but when put together through the meeting both sides were able to feel that their demands were being met.

As this area is classified as a national park the state has stipulated a specific provision for indigenous peoples to have access to these areas which form part of their traditional areas of use. As such they are allowed to continue to use them in a “traditional” manner for hunting, fishing and gathering. This provision is regulated by law and included in the National Parks legislation which governs the management of the area (Ley de Areas Naturales Protegidas, Ley No. 26834). This has come under debate, because the definition of “traditional” means that they are unable to use fire arms to hunt, or to sell fish or meat which they have hunted; hunting and fishing can only be for subsistence. This is problematic because indigenous people feel that subsistence now means being able to buy products such as rice, oil, soap, clothes and being able to school their children to secondary level if not beyond. Despite this legal provision for “traditional” activities, the Ese Eja talk about the Park as if they are excluded from it; they also complain about having their things searched when they leave by park guards who are, they claim, not even from the local area but are from the highlands region of Peru.

The problems related to access and restrictions on the use of resources are not new and have been present since the creation of these state reserved areas. One story speaks of Luis Sonihua, an elderly man from the native community Sonene who, after being refused entry to the protected area to hunt and out of sadness, refused to eat and eventually died of malnutrition according to his family members (Patricia Urteaga, n/d). These types of stories highlight that restrictions, both perceived and actual, have added to the negative feelings that community members have towards the presence of the state-protected areas and this has made coordination with the state officials with respect to the area more difficult. Here an Ese Eja man describes how he feels about the area.

11 The National Park and National Reserve were officially created in 2000 after Mobil Petroleum released the oil block 78 back to the state. Previously this area was known as the Tambopata Candamo Reserve and parts of the river Heath (now part of the Park) were conserved as a Sanctuary since the 1980s. This means that the area has been managed under different conservation regimens for a long period of time.
We get angry because they almost don’t let us enter, it is a reserved zone. We live from hunting and fishing, we don’t live off of wood (logging). Others do live from logging. We say to the Park [meaning Parks guards] “we are entering to eat, it’s like our market”. Now the Park has prohibited us, “the animals are going to disappear, the same with the fish” they say, but they are not going to get finished. In any case how are the fish going to get finished? There are lots. It is our custom, just like our grandfathers. In that time we only went to hunt and to fish. It is only recently that our children are learning how to sell, the grandfathers didn’t know about business. One day we had an argument, and now they don’t prohibit us. “If you are going to prohibit us then we are going to shoot you with our arrows” we said. We spoke with the jefe (boss) of INRENA [the state department for natural resources which no longer exists in this form, it is now the Environment Ministry] and now we don’t want them to prohibit anything. Before they searched us, confiscated our meat and fish. Not anymore (Palma Real, 2/8/13).

Celebration of the Anniversary of the Tambopata National Reserve

The two different perspectives on the area came together again through the state-indigenous interactions that occurred as part of the anniversary celebrations for the Tambopata National Reserve, which were held on the 4th September 2013. The Reserve forms the buffer zone for the Bahuaja Sonene National Park and unlike the Park has a less restrictive conservation policy, which allows for sustainable resource use such as Brazil nut collection and tourism. The Ese Eja native communities border this area directly (and in fact are considered to act as part of the buffer zone) and as such the majority of their activities are undertaken in this area. The National Parks service (SERNANP) is eager to engage the indigenous population in the conservation of the area and its officials refer to the communities (along with other riverine, non-indigenous communities) as aliados en la conservación (allies in conservation). They use this image of inclusiveness and participation in their materials, such as the Master Plan for the management of the area. On the other hand, as I have shown above, the community members have differing understandings of what the word conservation actually means and how this conservation and lack of participation in decision making impacts on their daily lives.

For the anniversary of the Tambopata National Reserve there was a big event planned in the city of Puerto Maldonado and invitations were sent out to the different local government institutions, educational establishments, and Federations, as well as the
public in general. The event was held in an auditorium hired out from the private university, Universidad Andina. There were some community members who were brought to the event to participate by performing “traditional dances” and for the main part these were children and teenagers from the native communities Infierno and Palma Real. César Augusto, aware that the event was going to involve the communities and other important actors, asked to be able to contribute to the proceedings through showing a video. So for a week before the event he worked with the communication team in FENAMAD to develop a short video about the Ese Eja in which he describes the area as the ancestral territory of the Ese Eja with images of Ese Eja communities (past and present) interspersed with wildlife footage. He reaffirms the position of the Ese Eja as original owners of the territory through a historical connection and as contributors to the conservation through a spiritual understanding of the area. There was also a line in the video which stated that the Ese Eja are not allowed to use the park, are not involved in the management of the area and importantly are denied access to their ancestors cemeteries. I questioned him about this, after he had proudly shown me the finished product one afternoon in the FENAMAD office which I shared with him, and I highlighted that actually according to the law the Ese Eja do have the right to use the area and are not prohibited from entering. Rather they have a privileged position as, due to the strict regulation of the area, anyone else who wishes to enter has to apply for special permission from SERNANP. I rewrote the statement (in four different ways) to try to reflect what he was trying to say emphasising that the Ese Eja felt marginalised in the management of the area and suggested that he modify the spot.

I handed the paper with my suggestions to him and he said he would have a look at it but in the final edit of the spot he maintained his version. He gave this to the person in charge of the audiovisual material in the offices of the Reserve. On the night the whole section was cut out of the video by the Reserve staff who were eager to show that they have a good relationship with the native communities and local people and were not going to let the spot spoil that image, especially given that the event was attended by top officials from Lima, including Pedro Gamboa, the president of SERNANP. Here we see an interesting negotiation taking place between the very different agendas of the actors. When I asked César Augusto about how the viewing went he seemed very pleased to have had the spot shown on the night, as his contribution to the understanding of the area, by placing the Ese Eja in the middle of it, and did not mention the omission in question. Incidentally there were very few Ese Eja in the audience on the night, with only a handful of people coming from Infierno. The young dancers waited outside the auditorium before their slot, came on stage to dance and then left the auditorium to wait
outside again to be taken to their hostel. The Ese Eja did not really participate in the event despite being shown as one of the major actors in the conservation of the area and having been mentioned in the speeches.

With these examples I have tried to show that the Ese Eja leader actively works on establishing a middle ground, a space where there can be interactions between the Ese Eja and the state and uses this space to put forward an Ese Eja agenda as this relates to greater participation in decision-making over resource use. While the state uses the space to promote its aims of inclusion of local populations in the conservation of the area. Both sides are aware that there is a difference between their ultimate aims but it serves them both to continue in this middle ground. César Augusto actively draws on the knowledge gained through his work in the Federation, knowledge learned from other leaders, auxiliary staff and the state about the state system, legislation, conservation, REDD+ and the like to feedback to communities. He demonstrates agency through his personal empowerment as a result of this knowledge of how to deal with the state by organising his own agenda as this relates to the court case filed in the Inter American Court of Human Rights, and the push to establish a separate indigenous organisation to further the Ese Eja claims to their ancestral lands. These actions attest to his ability to create a group of followers and encourage action through words, which demonstrate his capacity for leadership to the communities.

Additionally through this case study we have seen some of the characteristics which are looked for in a dirigente and how leaders work towards developing these skills and capacities. Their ability to align themselves to these helps to facilitate their ascension to and permanence in leadership roles. We have seen the significance of knowledge gained through work in the Federation in order for leaders to be able to position their demands on the state, and establish a middle ground between the two significant actors, the state and the communities. In the next case study of the Reserva Comunal Amarakaeri (RCA), I will talk about the Harakmbut leader, Antonio Iviche, his leadership trajectory and how he also worked towards the establishment of a middle ground, allowing us to gain further insights into what leadership in the Federation entails. Through this example we are also able to see how knowledge of the others becomes significant for being able to place the communities’ demands before the state, as well as for being able to mobilise the indigenous communities. The examples of the RCA and the REDD+ programme also illustrate the role of the leader as empowered and empowering, where decision-making and autonomy are seen as the end result of empowerment.
Case study 2: The establishment of the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve

Antonio Iviche Quique is an Arakmbut leader from the San José del Karene community located on a tributary of the upper Madre de Dios River. His parents were part of the group first contacted by the Dominican missionaries in the 1950s who went on to live in the mission in Shintuya in the upper Madre de Dios region. They also formed part of a group of Arakmbut people that later left the mission to set up their community in 1969 (see Gray 1997: 6). He himself was sent to be schooled with the missionaries with the aim of gaining “Western” knowledge. He later went on to gain a scholarship for further study, one of a handful of young Arakmbut at the time who had that opportunity. In the past he acted as President of AIDESEP in 2002 and was President of FENAMAD when I first came into contact with this organisation.

In the 1990s FENAMAD initiated the first steps towards the consolidation of the ancestral lands of the Harakmbut peoples which are located in the headwaters of the Madre de Dios river. The area was used as hunting and fishing grounds for the different Harakmbut subgroups and clans before contact and before their settlement into clearly defined territories as “native communities”. Between the 18-20th of July of 2000 this struggle took the form of an indigenous mobilisation to reclaim territorial rights, greater participation in the administration and management of natural protected areas and the suspension of mining rights given to third persons on titled native community lands (García Altamirano 2003: 301). The event had some media coverage on an international level, with press from Europe present. Some of the banners during the strike read: “no a la zona reservada, sí a la Reserva Comunal Amarakaeri”, “vida, naturaleza e historia nos pertenecen”, amongst others (see Figures 23, 24). The result was greater attention given to the subject of the communal reserve on the part of the different state departments which called for talks to begin to resolve the various issues which led to the march. Amongst other accords, during a meeting on the 19th July with government officials, the first steps were put in place for the establishment of the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve (RCA). This would involve the co-management of the area with indigenous input under the rubric of Ejecutor de Contrato de Administración (ECA), rather than its remaining under the designation of a reserved zone, which meant complete state control (see Alvarez et al 2008).
Figure 23. General Strike in Puerto Maldonado (Source: Archive FENAMAD, 18 July 2000)

Figure 24. Indigenous people taking part in the strike (Source: Archive FENAMAD, 18 July 2000)
The Federation leaders at the time and Antonio Iviche demonstrated a capacity to mobilise the people to face the state and they headed the talks with the officials as seen in the photograph above (Figure 25). In particular Antonio Iviche is closely associated with the struggle for the establishment of the RCA which gained official recognition in 2002 with a total area of 402,335 hectares. Recently the Arakmbut people have been working on creating detailed maps of the area in an attempt to document places of cultural, archaeological, mythological and historical significance in particular as a response to the presence of an oil-drilling concession, block 76, assigned by the state in 2006. Prospecting work has already been carried out by Hunt Oil (Figure 26).
There are stories about Antonio that circulate in the communities, which suggest that he was chosen and primed to be a leader from a young age, a claim which he supports. In an interview published by the indigenous news portal Servindi, he states:

> When I was just a boy the old people from my tribe sent me to study the Western culture (*cultura occidental*), along with other native brothers from my people. Neither my parents nor I knew what Western education was but we understood that it was part of my training. My people needed to know how the western world thought and acted (Servindi, 24/10/2010).

One day he recounted that when he was little, as part of this training as leader, his parents took him into the forest and asked him to listen to the animals in the forest. He

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1 Lotes 111 and 113 were given to Sapet, a Chinese Company, who undertook some prospection work before abandoning plans for exploitation. Lote 133 was never explored. The area has been sliced up again with new blocks assigned and up for licitation as of 2015.
had to stay the night there all by himself and then the next day they asked what he had heard. He talked of the big animals, maybe the jaguar, that he had heard, probably out of fear, and he was told not to listen out for the big animals but to listen out for the small ones. He used this story to illustrate how he strived to be a fair and approachable leader, a position which has earned him respect from people within different communities in the region. César Augusto when speaking about him said:

I respect each of the leaders who have gone through FENAMAD but I have more respect for Antonio Iviche because he has been able to give attention without discriminating against people or families, [he worked] with a clear position to respect their territories – that territory doesn't have a price. (interview, 3/8/13)

Through this example we can see that becoming a leader is a process, and involves acquiring different kinds of knowledge from many different actors, but also ultimately becomes a project of self-creation. The struggle for the recognition of indigenous territory has been a constant since the foundation of FENAMAD and participation in that struggle helped in positioning Antonio as a leader. His ability to use his knowledge for the benefit of the communities is demonstrated in his being elected as president of FENAMAD on four occasions, more times than any other leader in the region. He also proved his ability to represent the indigenous communities both to the state and to the other actors in the region, through his ability to mobilise the communities. This ability was useful in positioning him in relation to the other federations in the region. He was able to play a central role in organising the coalition of Regional Federations and organisations under the Alianza de Federaciones, before running for regional presidency of Madre de Dios in 2010, and literally, as his campaign slogan said, putting the reivindicación en marcha.

**Amarakaeri Communal Reserve and REDD+**

In the following section I will look at how the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve (RCA) has been used by indigenous leaders to continue the demands of the communities on the state, in light of the great unrealised expectation that the area would be under their control. Now with the additional international project promoted by the United Nations related to carbon trading, the leaders use knowledge which they have gained through their development as leaders to push to maintain a level of control over the area through their participation in the programme, but only on their own terms. By combining the different knowledges from indigenous and non-indigenous sources, the Amazon Indigenous REDD+ is a prime example of the negotiation of a successful middle ground.
The different perceptions of the area are noted by Fermin Chimitani, the President of the ECA:

The RCA is the territory of the Harakmbut peoples: it is the territory where Wanamei was born, the mythological and sacred tree which saved the Harakmbut people from floods and fire millions of years ago and it gave us new hope for life. This territory is in danger from different activities, from man’s greed, putting our existence at risk, our water, biological and cultural resources. Our myth, according to the ancestors, testifies that Wanamei appeared to save my people from this threat.

It is our home, where the spirits of our ancestors are, our history, our life, our reason for being is there, where we develop our economy, culture, and we have clean water, clean air, animals and plants that give us food, medicines for our health. For all this we understand that the reserve is a natural bank that gives to us in order to be able to continue to exist as peoples. For SERNANP it is a protected natural area, created to achieve a specific conservation objective, a view which in some way or another is shared with indigenous people, and that is why we signed an indefinite management contract with them. While for the oil company it is an area whose only use is for the extraction of oil and gas and to gain money and then leave, and for this reason they are not interested if the communities continue to live.²

As noted by Andrew Gray, “When myth is performed, a historical act brings the timeless past into contemporary relevance” (Gray, 1996: 199). So the myth is itself a reflection of human experience and as such its meaning lies in the relevance of its message to life as it is experienced by the Arakmbut. The myth of Wanamei therefore frames Arakmbut understandings of the area and is producing a world for the Arakmbut which only takes on meaning when the listeners recognise its message (Gray 1996: 220). The fact that it is believed that the special tree of Wanamei is located in this area provides us with two significant aspects which frame the Harakmbut engagement with the state and the REDD+ programme. Firstly, as the tree provided shelter for the Arakmbut, in the mythic past, it is considered imperative that the Arakmbut people in the present day work to protect the area, as a resource for future generations and a means for the continued survival of their people. At the same time, the Harakmbut are pushing for decision making powers and control over their resources, working towards a more prosperous and productive future for themselves. By engaging with the state in the co-management of

² Excerpt taken from an interview in an article published online: https://arsenico.lamula.pe/2014/10/08/entrevista-a-ferminchimatani/siriusblack1603/ (Date accessed: 22/4/2016)
the Communal Reserve, the Arakmbut hope to play such a role, as this relates more widely to indigenous petitions for the right to self-determination.

As history is perceived as cyclical rather than linear (Gray 1996; Moore 2003), the myth helps the Arakmbut to make sense of both their present and past experiences and can be revisited in different moments to frame their interactions and decisions in the present. For Terence Turner (1988) mythic and historical consciousness are often complementary ways of framing the same events. Demonstrating “the dynamic role of historical consciousness as the repository of alternative courses of action in the present, which may […] become decisive ingredients for present action” (Turner 1988: 212).

**Amazon Indigenous REDD+**

The REDD+ or the “Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries” programme is promoted by the United Nations (and World Bank) with the aim of providing financial rewards for the protection of forests in order to mitigate the effects of climate change. The idea is to put a financial value on carbon stores, by quantifying emissions reduction from not cutting down trees and then selling this on a carbon market. Local stakeholders are thus encouraged to see trees as more valuable when left standing and in theory would be rewarded for their role as protectors of the forest. In reality the implementation of the REDD+ programme in Peru has been complicated by the high costs of developing the projects; this necessitates intermediaries, in the form of NGOs, meaning that the financial rewards to local stakeholders have so far been negligible. Also at the start of the programme, and before state regulations and interventions were in place, there were a number of private companies and national and international NGOs who approached communities directly. Some offered 100-year contracts, complicating the issue of resource ownership and use over time, especially since many communities are still in the process of gaining official land rights.

Initially the response from indigenous organisations was to oppose this programme completely, and prohibit NGOs and private companies from entering communities with project proposals. This was evident in the Iquitos Declaration of 2011, which resulted from a meeting between regional indigenous organisations coordinated by AIDESEP, the national indigenous organisation of Peru. According to this declaration, they stated:
We object that, instead of recognising and paying the historical ecological debt, global powers keep on polluting, deforesting and pillaging, and intend to cover this up through the “carbon market”, through contracts between companies that falsely “compensate” such damage with payments to indigenous communities and local people for conserving their forests which clean up this contamination. [These are] contracts which serve to accentuate the loss of control over our ancestral lands, forms of life and rights, which will be traded on the stock exchange with huge profits. It is unacceptable to risk the suicide of our forms of life by insisting on more and more business.3

This position was taken in response to the emergence of so called “carbon cowboys”, NGOs or private companies which saw the possible financial gains from developing such projects with indigenous communities which had little knowledge about what the programme was. One example is the Matses people, who were convinced by a private company to sign a contract in English giving over their rights to their forests in exchange for a single payment of US$10,000 (mentioned in the Iquitos Declaration, 2011).4

In the FENAMAD Congress held in San José del Karene in 2012, there was a presentation about REDD+ given by COICA. During the event indigenous people commented on their experiences so far with the REDD+ programme. There was a general consensus that more information was needed about the programme before communities could make informed decisions about how to engage with it. Klaus, the vice-president (and soon to be president) of FENAMAD said “ever since 2008, REDD has become fashionable. It’s all about carbon. The NGOs have besieged the indigenous communities. But first we have to get to know the topic of REDD”. Similarly Antonio, said “there is no clarity in the communities about REDD. However there are contracts when there is no clear information… They coordinate with the communities in order to be allowed in and then tell the communities that they are doing environmental services. FENAMAD needs to open up workshops about this and the NGOs should approach FENAMAD first”. These statements further highlight the role of the Federation in teaching the communities about the others and transferring knowledge in an attempt to empower communities in their decision-making. They also highlight an understanding of the role of FENAMAD in establishing boundaries for interaction.

4 See this article about the specific Peruvian case, http://www.redd-monitor.org/2012/09/18/judge-in-peru-issues-warrant-for-carbon-cowboy-david-nilssons-arrest/ and this one which documents the emergence of carbon cowboys around the world http://www.redd-monitor.org/?s=carbon+cowboy (Date accessed 20/6/2016)
The call by FENAMAD for communities to refrain from entering into discussions and negotiations with NGOs or private companies spurred some local communities to accuse the Federation of trying to monopolise the financial rewards of this programme. There were communities that wanted to gain financially directly from these companies and that saw the REDD+ programme as a means to benefit and aid their own development. In fact some communities signed deals with NGOs independently. FENAMAD took the position that REDD+ was, firstly, not a solution to the climate problem and, secondly, served to violate important indigenous rights such as the right to land security and control of resources.

A news report from a meeting about REDD+ with indigenous peoples in FENAMAD published on their Facebook page (25.2.2013) said that the “indigenous peoples are worried by the commercialisation of the environment and the control of lands and resources. We announce that this mechanism violates our rights and could have impacts on the governing structures of our indigenous peoples and communities who depend on the forests”. But faced with growing pressure from the indigenous communities and in an attempt to avoid disadvantageous agreements being signed, a middle ground was needed. It was for this reason that the regional, national and international indigenous organisations began to issue statements with respect to REDD+ emphasising that “we cannot talk about REDD+ without taking into account the autonomy, self-determination and judicial guarantees of indigenous peoples territory” or as one slogan said “without land titles there is no REDD+”. Similarly they questioned the role of intermediaries in receiving payments and demanded that any payments be directly negotiated with the local actors involved and not through NGOs. Out of this discontent the Amazon Indigenous REDD+ programme was born, as the leaders supported AIDESEP in its attempts to convert “the threat of REDD+ into an opportunity for indigenous people”.

The Amazon Indigenous REDD+ programme was developed through coordination between COICA and AIDESEP and one of the pilot projects was to be developed in the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve in collaboration with FENAMAD. The main aim of this new approach was to shift the emphasis from value being measured only in terms of

5 This was one of the points placed on the Plataforma de Lucha and published in one of the pamphlets printed during the Regional strikes in 2009. The plataforma de lucha was developed in association with other local organisations and Federations such as the Regional Agrarian Federation (FADEMAD), Regional Mining Federation (FEDEMIN), the Association for mototaxis, Club de Madres and others, who were coordinating their activities through an organisation which was called the Alianza de Federaciones.
carbon stores to what they refer to as a holistic approach which serves to place value on the whole territory, giving importance to all the plants, animals, water and people as well as carbon. Due attention to territorial security and indigenous rights is included as they push for integral management, integrating the environment, culture and society, with indigenous peoples being associates in the development of the programme. Klaus manifested his discontent by saying “They always talk to us about pilots but we never have the plane” (fieldnotes, 21/2/2013). The Amazon Indigenous REDD+ counter-programme aimed to rectify this situation. The leaders emphasised that the programme grew out of a particularly indigenous view of the world, a cosmovision that set it apart from the other REDD+ programme. By cosmovision the Arakmbut, and many other Amazonian indigenous peoples, mean that humans are only one of the many different actors with agency who interact on and with the environment. Plants, trees, animals, fish, spirit beings and other non-humans cohabit the space. The environment is not a static entity to be acted on, but is a dynamic system of relations and interrelations that have to be respected. Present climate change is understood as resulting from a rupture in the correct balance of interactions between humans and the other beings and spirits which inhabit the forests.

Since its inception, the REDD+ Indígena programme has been promoted at all of the UN Climate Conferences and Fermin (President of ECA-RCA), along with other leaders from COICA and AIDESEP, have been engaging directly with the UN Climate talks.

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6 Gow & Rappaport (2002: 58) suggest that “it is precisely this appeal to cosmovision (worldview) that constitutes the basis of indigenous cultural politics, whether in the legal sphere, in education or in territorial administration”.

7 The myth of Wanamei underlines a move from chaos to order. The chaos at the beginning of the myth relates to a breakdown of normal categories of organisation in the Arakmbut world, which is manifest in changes to climate – prolonged fire, intense rains etc. The myth also serves to highlight the importance of communication with the spirit world for human existence, exemplified by fire being given to humans as the result of a woodpecker stealing it from the invisible spirit world (Gray 1996)
Figure 27. UN Climate Change Conference-December 2015. Indigenous leaders: Fermin Chimitani and Jaime Corispea (ECA), from left (Source: Ricardo Burgos, Facebook page 30/11/2015)
I went to the FENAMAD offices one morning to speak to Luis Tayori, a young politically active Arakmbut leader and President of COHARYIMA, about his experience of climate change. He had been diligently working on collecting life histories, and cultural and historical information about the Harakmbut and had coordinated field trips in the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve with the aim of documenting and producing maps about their ancestral lands. That day he was sat at his desk in front of his computer working on translating some interviews from Arakmbut into Spanish. When I asked about the REDD+ programme and Amazon Indigenous REDD+ he stressed the importance of placing indigenous peoples in these discussions saying “why can’t indigenous people be involved if this is the language used at a national and international level? We modify the use of the words with our indigenous vision. So we want to put a value not only on carbon but on every organism, even ants”. He then smiled and said “it’s a different pollera but

**Diferente pollera pero la misma chola?**
the same *chola*. *Pollera* refers to a specific type of traditional skirt worn by highland indigenous women in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, mostly Quechua speakers; *chola* is used to refer to these same highland people, sometimes with a slightly pejorative connotation. The phrase is a common colloquial expression in Peru, used to mean that the same basic reality is being presented under a new guise (and usually implied is a motive of deception or cynical repackaging). So why would he choose to phrase his engagement with the REDD+ programme in these terms and what did he mean?

For indigenous peoples the REDD+ programme has come to be seen as a new type of economic activity, following closely on from other extractive industries which served to appropriate indigenous resources and marginalise indigenous people’s involvement in their resource management. So REDD+ places a financial value on carbon as opposed to wood, oil, or gas, as the next step in the commercialisation of the forests. The introduction of the programme meant territorial insecurity for indigenous peoples and instigated in-fighting and divisions in communities much like the other types of extractive activities had done. Their role as “protectors of the forest” was inscribed into the programme, making this another top-down initiative with indigenous peoples’ involvement in design and management limited by NGO involvement, such that indigenous people only received limited benefits. So in many respects it is felt that this programme allows for business as usual without addressing the main causes of climate change, offering a new mechanism for financial gain from the environment and a form of green-washing for companies. In this way the REDD+ is a different *pollera* that masks the same *chola*, which is the business agenda and natural resource exploitation.

However, I would argue that *diferente pollera pero la misma chola* has another meaning here. I think that Luis meant that the Amazon indigenous REDD+ programme was the new skirt and the indigenous people and their agendas the *cholas*. Amazon Indigenous REDD+ sought to upset the balance of power by affirming the indigenous peoples’ role in the design and management of any such programme. By using and adapting the new mechanisms introduced by the state and the international community, albeit with a critical perspective, indigenous peoples are able to further their same demands of territorial consolidation, autonomy and self-determination. Changing strategies, or putting on a different skirt allowed them to continue their political struggle for visibility and control of their lands and resources. *Chola* implies a specific type of power relation of domination and subordination, but more recently *chola* has come to be understood as empowerment through a new pride in indigenous dress and identity. Therefore by using *chola* in this sense the leader was emphasising a reversal of roles from dominated to empowered.
These indigenous leaders feel that Amazon Indigenous REDD+ may offer greater decision making opportunities for communities and allow indigenous peoples the possibility of becoming at least co-pilots of the plane.⁸

From the example of Antonio Iviche and the RCA we are able to see that indigenous leaders are constantly developing knowledge and studying the state and others. They analyse the initiatives and draw on allies from other indigenous organisations in deciding whether or not to go along with them. This process of study is developed in consultation with the communities and the leaders draw on community opinions as to the best course of action, sometimes modifying their agendas based on these. By highlighting the significance of national and international allies we can see that knowledge is in fact coproduced with others and shared. Leaders in the Federation are taught by leaders in AIDESEP and COICA and in turn they teach the communities what they have learned about the others and how best to engage them. This is put together in the response to the state with a re-presentation of history foregrounding their particular understandings of the present. We have seen how the indigenous leaders instrumentally use the tools at their disposal to further their own aims and those of communities when placing indigenous peoples before the state. They draw on the knowledge produced about them as this relates to culture and history and then use this to produce their own version of knowledge about themselves, as empowered. This demonstrates that leaders are producers as well as products of the knowledge produced about them, which they use in reclaiming spaces for representation based on their differential understandings of the material.

**Conclusion**

Knowledge, practices and ideas gained from others are significant in indigenous self-production. In this way knowledge can be power and empowering. In this chapter I have

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⁸ Not all indigenous people see the Amazon Indigenous REDD+ programme in the same light, but rather some see both the REDD+ and Indigenous REDD+ as being polleras covering the basic chola reality of capitalist exploitation of the forest (See: http://www.movimientos.org/es/madretierra/show_text.php3%3Fkey%3D21905 ). The leaders in Madre de Dios were faced with a difficult decision as if they continued to prohibit NGOs from entering they were losing approval from their bases (see letter from COINBAMAD in Chapter 3) and in fact many communities criticise FENAMAD for not offering economic solutions to communities. Amazon Indigenous REDD+ was seen as an opportunity to further indigenous demands on the state as this relates to land rights but also to offer possibilities for financial rewards in communities who presently are faced with options limited to oil exploration, logging or gold mining.
shown the role of the indigenous leaders in the production of knowledge and the sharing of knowledge in order to empower the communities in their decision-making, compelling and creating opportunities for action. It is through the ability to access and control relations with outsiders that leaders are able to gain access to goods and attention to indigenous demands. Power is gained through access to privileged forms of knowledge and prestige is based on a leader’s ability to do so. By considering two case studies which are related to indigenous-state interactions I show that the Federation leaders are able to adapt and aim to modify the conditions of their involvement with the state. They do so through actively engaging with the state departments and programmes such as the REDD+. In both case studies the leaders are trying to gain greater participation in decision making over natural resource use (something which is pushed for by the communities) and this often involves colluding with the conservation agenda despite their understanding that what the communities seek may not ultimately be conservation. Their participation in and active development of a middle ground offers novel spaces for steps towards self-determination which has been the indigenous agenda since the formation of FENAMAD. The leaders develop themselves and their knowledge, drawing on traditional types of teaching, interactions with other leaders and with the state and national and international organisations. They study the national legal system and international legislative framework as this relates to specific rights for indigenous peoples. They then use this knowledge to present their agendas to the communities in order to obtain consensus and to gain their support. It is through the establishment of a middle ground that leaders are able to maintain their powers of representation before both the state and the communities, and in turn are formed by their experience. This demonstrates how “People come to be at once products and producers of a specific and inherently dynamic cultural history” (Toren 1999: 88).

These examples also serve to show the way in which indigenous peoples engage with and disengage from the state, as a result of understanding that the state can be both friend and enemy. The indigenous leaders work towards state agendas when these are aligned with the indigenous agenda but are willing to resist state agendas when the aims diverge. This allows us to revisit the permitted Indian argument put forward by Hale (2004), as leaders actively push the boundaries in interesting ways to secure greater involvement in decision-making, oscillating their practice between permitted and unruly Indian. The communities play a role in influencing which type of leader is most appropriate for furthering their demands and the leaders adapt and modify their actions. Here we have seen that conforming to the permitted Indian role offers leaders symbolic capital in the communities as they demonstrate that they are able to develop allies and
maintain peaceful relations with outsiders for the benefit of the communities. However, when this is unsuccessful in getting results then they use their influence to mobilise communities and undertake strikes and demonstrations to push for greater state attention to indigenous issues. It is through the leader’s ability to manage relations with others that they attempt to satisfy the needs and desires of the communities. The significance of the production of knowledge is that it is producing a specific indigenous subject who is able to resist where necessary whilst also collectively organising to further shared aims for inclusion in the state. This quote from an interview with Antonio, reiterates the significance of knowledge and the capacity for indigenous action based on this.

We started this just struggle in Madre de Dios [referring to strikes in 2009] and today we are being persecuted for our claims. But no one can silence the indigenous peoples because we have the capacity to organize ourselves.
The government under President Alan García believes that we are ignorant, that indigenous people have been influenced (manejados) but with this action we have shown otherwise (Servindi, 24/10/2010).

Through the vignette about the diferente polera we have come to see how the indigenous people in turn have been able to limit state power (and that of the international programme) through their refusal to participate unless the programme was reformulated with their changes. It was also an opportunity for the indigenous people to put forward knowledge that they have formulated about themselves and use this to gain significant spaces at an international level during the recent Climate Change Conference in Paris. Similar processes are made manifest in the case study about César Augusto, who is using the mechanisms offered by multicultural reforms, and preferential legislation based on heritage and ethnicity to gain ground to reclaiming control over Ese Eja ancestral lands. Both cases are about changing strategies for engagement with the state through studying the state and the others, and using that knowledge to place themselves in the spaces opened up by state legislation and international programmes to further indigenous causes. The leaders in both case studies have shown their ability to control the equivocation about territory in order to bring about tangible benefits to the communities, which is ultimately what the communities seek from a good leader. This underlines the significance that they place on territory, as it allows for social reproduction over time through what they interpret as the correct dealings with both the human and

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non-human entities that inhabit it, referring specifically to the “networks of emplacement that make life locally possible” (de la Cadena, 2010: 357).
Chapter 6

Conclusions

In the introduction I discussed the ways in which references to tradition and modernity can help us to uncover processes of change. Through the thesis my aim has been to develop an understanding of what being a good leader entails within FENAMAD presently. In particular I have given primacy to the role of the communities in the formation of a specific type of leader called dirigente. It has been possible to see that what might appear to be a shift in leadership style through the institution of the indigenous organisation, FENAMAD, and as a result of increased contact with the state, NGOs and extractive industries actually comes to be framed in terms which are understood locally by communities. I have looked at agency and specifically how knowledge, as empowerment, develops the agency of both communities and leaders, as this is seen in terms of the ability to act. So both modernity and tradition become frames for understanding cultural change. Culture is not static or fixed but is constantly being made in the present and made useful to the individual actors. Christina Toren suggested that “if tradition is appropriate action then the notion of transformation is contained within that of continuity” (Toren 1999: 65). This phrase sums up nicely what I have tried to show through the analysis of the Federation and the role of the dirigente. Tradition, therefore cannot be considered as something in the past, but rather it frames responses to the present through agency and is transformed by that action. This helps us to understand how cultural elements are able to remain the same whilst at the same time undergoing change (Floyd 2007: 130).

By focusing on the role of the indigenous leader in FENAMAD it has been possible to see both the differences and similarities between this new type of leader and other modes of leadership in Amazonia. By giving primacy to the communities who are affiliated to the Federation and make up the base, I have been able to explore their role in the production of a dirigente. Whilst the state, national and international agendas work to influence leadership styles, we have been able to see that these modifications are only effective if the leader is able to maintain powers of representation and legitimacy in their home communities. To be a good leader, I have shown that the community approval is necessary, as a leader creates groups of followers by being able to lead by example and this is manifest in a leader’s ability to mobilise both kin and others. In particular, I have analysed the significance of being consecuente in Federation politics and how this is used to establish the boundaries of acceptable behaviour of a leader. In turn, by
striving to be consecuente, the leaders work at demonstrating their abilities to their communities. In particular, I looked at the importance of “doing right” by the communities (llegando bien a la comunidad) and being present in the communities (presencia en la comunidad). These are two aspects to leadership which are emphasised by both leaders and communities and affect how the leader undertakes their role. These aspects ensure that a leader maintains links to their home community and forges allies in other communities, which are significant for creating a group, obtaining consensus and consent. Additionally, being present in the communities, counters the possibilities of a leader “becoming-other” and relocates him within community politics, overcoming the problems associated with distance due to the Federation offices being in the city.

One reason why the context of FENAMAD is interesting and unusual is because it entails interethnic interactions on different levels. The Federation leaders work at establishing and maintaining the boundaries between communities and the state but also need to work at managing the internal space which, in itself, is multi-ethnic. This means that sameness and difference, or othering, needs to be selective in order to maintain a clearly defined inside space for indigenous politics. Whilst in interethnic interactions between communities and Pueblos they may see each other as “other”, I have argued that it is through the use of the term hermano, that an inside space can be constructed. This is necessary to overcome the possibility that internal difference will result in definitive fragmentation of the Federation. By constructing an inside space out of hermanos, the outside becomes the space for the others. These others are considered threatening or dangerous, and a combined response and unity is needed to overcome problems which present themselves. By framing their engagements with the others in terms of lucha or struggle they are able to consolidate the inside space for interaction and reiterate the shared goals in opposition to them.

Another particularity of this multi-ethnic context is manifest in the fact that a good leader is not able to solely rely on kinship or community alliances for success. A leader needs to be able to extend his influence outside of these networks and so then his success depends on his ability to unite the different groups. It comes as no surprise that the majority of the names given to individual Congresses and expressed in their titles and the banners etc. relate to unity and consolidation. Foucault reminds us that the “State’s power (and that’s one of the reasons for its strength) is both an individualizing and a totalizing form of power” (Foucault 1982: 782). Herein lies the strength of the Federation as it challenges the power of the state on its own level: through working to construct a unified collective of people they are able to disrupt the individualising aspects of state
power. This is most clearly seen through their understandings of the significance of the power of division. Unity is something which is stressed during inter-community meetings such as the Congress and steps towards unity are undertaken by leaders travelling to the different communities; unity is demonstrated in their ability to gather and mobilise community members. It is through the indigenous understanding of this type of power and in an effort to distance themselves from it, that an emphasis becomes placed on power in the form of empowerment. For this reason I chose to differentiate between the “power over” and the “power to” (Kracke 1992). This helps us to see that, through their work, leaders aim to cultivate a different type of power, and indeed are pushed to cultivate this power by the communities who are quick to limit any attempts at individualising or authoritative power in a leader. Herein lies the role of rumour and public criticism of leaders, as this serves to reduce the possibilities of any one leader attaining too much power. There are combined efforts to shift power away from individual power and towards collective power. This is seen most clearly in the comments about the indigenous movement being greater than any individual leader, and serves to highlight their understanding of the short-lived role of the dirigente within the Federation. So it is not individual power that needs to be cultivated but collective power and the ability to act.

Reference was made in Federation publications and in interviews given by leaders to their role in strengthening the communities. This highlights the type of power which is sought. Power is conceived in terms of empowerment and increasing the ability of the communities to act, and this is inscribed in the leadership role. Gray suggested that power is understood as resistance by the Arakmbut adding that “Resignation for them is not, as in some religions, a virtue, but a weakness, as a lack of power initiative which comes when there is no person able to ‘cure’, help or make decisions” (1986: 117).

I have referred to the links between power and knowledge and one important aspect of the Federation is in the production of knowledge, both about indigenous people and about the others. In this way the totalising power of the state is challenged through the production of an alternative understanding of the world. Leaders produce a certain knowledge about the state, offering a critique of state power and reiterating the salience of indigenous forms of knowledge and ways of being. An understanding of legislation provides support for their claims based on indigeneity or whichever framework allows them to continue with their aims of self-governance whilst being accepted as state citizens. This allows us to see that resistance does not always have to mean resistance to the state or “development”. There are times when there is active collaboration with the state, NGOs or other entities. What the Federation is doing is using knowledge to question these frameworks and to adapt, accommodate or modify the terms of their
engagement with the others. The leaders are swayed by the communities to satisfy their needs, and sometimes the communities challenge outright resistance and push for accommodation, as we have seen through the engagements with the REDD+ programme. So knowledge generated in the Federation and imparted to the communities aids both leaders and communities in their attempts to negotiate the best deal possible based on an understanding of the specifics.

New political contexts in Amazonian politics need new ways of knowing and present new others to be known. The new social condition brought about by increased interactions with others has generated changes in political organisation within indigenous communities who sought guidance and help on various levels. In much the same way, McCallum (1996) observed that new bodily conditions of pain and illness require new material substances and forms of knowledge to cure them. The new political context is seen as a social disorder experienced by the community, understood in terms of dividing, internal fighting etc., as a result of the contacts and incursions of others into indigenous territories. The new indigenous leaders are therefore the indigenous response to this new context.

Through the acquisition of new types of knowledge and interactions with both communities and others, I have shown that the Federation leaders are in the process of becoming. This is a process that involves the communities as well as the Federation itself which I liken to a school for leaders. Becoming a leader is a social project as growth and maturity are social processes. This emphasises the important role of the communities in forming leaders, something which was mentioned in the comments in the Congress, e.g. “that leaders were formed in FENAMAD.” Leaders are made to grow through their interactions with the communities who influence what is expected from a good leader in the Federation. This is reiterated in discourses by community members during meetings, and leaders who are able to demonstrate their abilities are pushed forward to undertake roles in FENAMAD. Similarly, once in FENAMAD the leaders learn from each other, they learn from the auxiliary staff and from the others who they come into contact with. In this way FENAMAD offers opportunities for teaching the leaders about others and also about themselves. In effect the leaders are studying us (the outside) as much as we are studying them, maybe even more so as they consider that their very survival depends on being able to manage their relations with others well. The process of learning about the other is never complete. As the others morph and change, so do the indigenous responses because through FENAMAD they have set up a system for knowing the other.
By extension, becoming a leader also involves an attempt to strengthen the communities. This takes on two different forms, on the one hand it is hoped that through imparting knowledge and sharing experience the leaders can develop an awareness of the outside in community members and offer options of how best to deal with the outside. Knowledge here is power, and leaders aim to empower community members to be able to make decisions and to obtain spaces for decision-making on a national and international level. It is through their work in the Federation that leaders try to influence the formation of a united, collective social body out of people from the different communities. This opens up the possibility for the collective to be capable of undertaking combined actions. This involves the formation of the social body, understood as empowered through knowledge, training and teaching, and thus able to act on the world.

The other way that leaders aim to strengthen the communities is through demonstrating their ability to unite groups and encourage cohesion, developing a stable social body of followers. The indigenous people feel that there is safety in numbers, and their combined forces have worked to influence the state and others. A good leader is therefore one who promotes and encourages unity and is able to ensure that the communities remain united, as a strong interethnic alliance. I have stressed the significance of language in the production of people, as language moulds behaviour and acts on the body by making known expectations. The language used by leaders and communities in meetings serves to maintain unity and delimit the behavioural expectations necessary for sociability. It is through the public performance of these utterances during interethnic meetings that individual experience is made into a collective experience and an understanding of the particular reality is constructed. There is a need for good relations with the communities, as good leaders emerge through their ability to mobilise people. People follow a good leader. This goes against popular interpretations of indigenous communities as gullible and coerced into participating in strikes, as in fact the reverse is true. It is not coercion that motivates the communities to follow the leader but rather a distinct lack of coercive behaviour, and demonstrable ability to provide, share, be attentive and present in the communities which guarantees a leader his followers.

A leader demonstrates that he is on the path to becoming a leader through a transformation in his identity. I have looked at the significance of wearing indigenous dress during interethnic meetings. I move away from seeing this only in terms of attaining symbolic power from the outside, and bring in what the leaders themselves think it means. The change in dress is a manifestation of their personal project of becoming a
leader. Wearing indigenous dress then comes to signify that a leader is *consecuente* and able to work towards satisfying the community’s needs. To be able to identify and be proud of one’s ethnic identity by wearing these clothes serves to reiterate the role of the leader as setting an example and creating the path to be followed, which serves to motivate followers.

In this thesis, although I have highlighted the specificities of current indigenous leadership in FENAMAD, it has been difficult to distinguish many of the aspects I have discussed from those associated with the other types of Amazonian leadership as described in the literature. Shamanic systems, and relations with others more generally, have been characterised by getting to know the other and appropriating knowledge and tools from the other in so far as these are useful in maintaining possibilities for social reproduction, wellbeing and survival. The increased presence of the state, NGOs and extractive industries have certainly had an influence on the contexts of engagement and the mechanisms for indigenous engagement with others but the indigenous response has been just that, a modification and extension to indigenous ways of organising. New indigenous leadership has to be understood in this way. As Gray noted thirty years ago, “Even though non-indigenous interests set the framework for any indigenous response, it is the indigenous response itself which will set the framework for any solution” (Gray 1986: 10). We have seen how the indigenous response has enabled the creation of an indigenous organisation with leaders who are schooled for their role, both by the communities and in FENAMAD, at the same time that it has worked to create a united social body able to work collectively for common interests. The current indigenous leader is therefore a new creation which was built out of other Amazonian leadership styles in order to be able to influence and affect current political contexts. In this way the indigenous response can be understood to be changing in order to remain the same, and indigenous peoples are actively involved in debating the form that these changes should take.
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