

**INDIGENOUS FEDERATIONS IN THE PERUVIAN AMAZON: PERSPECTIVES
FROM THE ASHÉNINKA AND YINE-YAMI PEOPLES**

by

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Abstract

The emergence of a globalized model of development in Peru, based on extraction of natural resources, has led to the rise of indigenous movements. One of the strategies to address the negative impacts of public policies created to support this model is through the creation of indigenous federations. Indigenous federations have emerged as a strategy of indigenous peoples to make their voices heard and determine their own future.

Scholars, federation representatives, and community members themselves have identified the strengthened relationships between representatives and community members as a major challenge for indigenous movements. The question that frames this study is: how could representation by indigenous federations be improved, from the points of view of indigenous peoples' epistemologies, ontologies, axiologies, and methodologies?

In alliance with six Ashéninka and Yine-Yami indigenous communities and their local federations, we investigate their federational system of self-government. Through innovative and culturally sensitive methods of co-creating knowledge using emancipatory theories, this study addresses two objectives: (1) to identify factors that contribute indigenous federations' representatives to effectively achieve communities' objectives; and (2) to articulate recommendations to improve indigenous federations. These two objectives were attained with input from community members and federation representatives. Results show that the principal factors that explain representatives' sources of capacity to address member communities' objectives are primarily to establish close interpersonal relationships and to cultivate spiritual, ethical, and moral behaviours between representatives and community members. Five recommendations are identified by Ashéninka and Yine-Yami peoples to enhance their institutions: (1) to define the jurisdiction of the federations; (2) to formalize the federations; (3) to improve the processes of interaction; (4) to strengthen their self-determined indigenous economies; and (5) to increase political participation.

The results inform current indigenous politics that aim to have a larger influence on the regional and even national formulation of public policies that impact the Peruvian Amazon. The

recognition and practice of a pluri-national state and the need to establish more meaningful indicators of ethno-development are important in the formulation of the factors influencing a positive change and a way to address current and future conflicts around use of natural resources.

Preface

This dissertation is an original, unpublished, independent work by Andrea M. Vasquez Fernandez in collaboration with six Ashéninka and Yine-Yami communities, and their local federations (FECONAPA, OIDIT and FECONAYY). The fieldwork was conducted between September 2012 and April 2013.

The methods were co-designed in collaboration with the research team formed by Mrs. María Shuñaqui (principal co-designer of methods and cultural advisor for support in the visits to OIDIT's member communities), Mrs. Miriam Pérez (cultural advisor for support in the visits to FECONAPA's member communities), and Mr. Raúl Sebastián (cultural advisor for support in the visit to FECONAYY's member communities). The study was elaborated in collaboration with six Ashéninka and Yine-Yami communities' members and their federation representatives.

This study was approved by the UBC's Behavioural Research Ethics Board, certificate number H12-01907.

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List of Abbreviations

APHU	Alianza para una Alternativa Para la Humanidad
CARE	Asháninka Centre for the Ene River
CORPIAA	Regional Coordinator of Indigenous Peoples Aidesep from Atalaya
CORPOAMAZONIA	Corporation for the Sustainable Development of Southern Amazonia
DAR	Rights, Environment, and Natural Resources
FABU	Federations of the Lower Ucayali
FECONADIS	Federation of Native Communities of the District of Sepahua
FECONAPA	Federation of Ashéninka Communities of the Atalaya Province
FECONAYY	Federation of Yine-Yami Native Communities
FSC	Forestry Stewardship Council
GIZ	German Development Cooperation
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture
ILO	International Labor Organization
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
MFS	Sustainable Forest management in the Andean Region
MRTA	Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OEFA	Agency for Assessment and Environmental Control
OIDIT	Indigenous Organization of the Tahuanía District
OIRA	Indigenous Organization of Atalaya Region
ORDECONADIT	Organization of Indigenous Communities from the Tahuanía District
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
TRAFFIC	The Wildlife Monitoring Organization
UNAM	National Autonomous University of Mexico
URPIA	Regional Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon from Atalaya Province
WWF	World Wildlife Found

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all the anonymous sisters and brothers who fell defending their families and Mother Earth. It is also dedicated to each tear and cry of indignation of indigenous peoples who continue the struggle.

Chapter 1: Introduction

“He didn’t teach me to hunt because civilization had arrived. He said, ‘I won’t teach you because with civilization, we aren’t going to use arrows or even rifles because there won’t be animals to hunt, or even jungle in which to hunt.’”
(GER¹)

1.1 Introduction

In the Peruvian Amazon, indigenous peoples are experiencing unprecedented challenges due to a particular national development approach that has been driven by extraction of natural resources. This model of development is seen as antagonistic by indigenous peoples because it is incongruent with their worldviews and values (Chirif & García, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009). In the face of the current challenges in Peru, indigenous federations have emerged as a strategy to make indigenous voices heard, and to influence decisions that will inevitably impact their own futures. These federations are comprised of representatives that act as spokespersons for numerous communities. Planned and carried out in alliance² with indigenous federations and six of their member communities in the Peruvian Amazon, together we set out to gain a better understanding of indigenous peoples’ voices and thoughts, and to collaborate in prioritizing the Amazonian indigenous communities’ agendas to ensure a future as they envision it.

Through in-depth interviews and the use of innovative methods to create knowledge collectively, and using indigenist and indigenous methodologies and theories, we worked with the Ashéninka and Yine-Yami people from the Ucayali region of Peru. This co-created knowledge is a useful reference point for the community members and federations’ representatives in the evolution and improvement of their models of self-government and in strengthening their self-determination.

¹ From the book “Ashéninka stories of change” by Anderson and Dávila (2002)

² I have incorporated the term *alliance*, used by indigenous peoples in this area, to describe the relationship between the research collaborators (community members and federation representatives). However, this term has been challenged by indigenous peoples in Canada who argue that this type of relationship has been objectified by allies who seek to impose their own agenda (Indigenouaction, 2014). Throughout this thesis, I use the term *alliance* as it is the word that indigenous peoples in the Peruvian Amazon still find valuable.

1.2 What is the problem?

The Amazon is an important source of natural resources, such as fresh water and air, and is also home to a constellation of indigenous groups that have lived there since pre-colonial times (Coomes, Barham, & Takasaki, 2004; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009). These two factors create a potential source of conflict. “Fear, restlessness, territorial fragmentation and contraction, reduction of natural resources for subsistence, lack of food, territorial eviction, intra and inter-ethnic conflicts, spread of epidemics and deaths” result from the continuing imposition of economic development that has not changed since the colonization of America (Castillo, 2010, p. 6). Recent global dominance of this euro-western model of economic development has spread even further with the corporate exploitation of forests and the mineral resources that lie beneath them, with a primary goal of maximizing profits and maintaining or increase capital, often at the expense of the environment and communities living in the Amazon (Castillo, 2010; Dauvergne & Lister, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009).

According to the Peruvian ethnolinguistic map, sixty³ different indigenous ethnicities live in the Peruvian Amazon and their continued existence is deeply interwoven with their forests (Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo de Pueblos Andinos, 2010). The Peruvian Amazon is one of the few places in the world where some indigenous peoples still live in voluntarily isolation, either in sporadic or in initial contact⁴. Against this diverse and multicultural backdrop, two underlying problems are identified: (1) the imposition of a euro-western, globalized model of development in Peru that is seen as antagonistic to the Amazonian indigenous peoples’ models of development; and (2) the formulation of public policies in Peru that are incongruent with indigenous perspectives (Castillo, 2010; Chirif & García, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005).

³ There is a discrepancy between the information provided by the INDEPA (National Institute of Development of Andean, Amazonian, and Afro-Peruvian People) and the Ministry of Culture in the Database of Indigenous Peoples, which identifies fifty-one ethnicities in the Peruvian Amazon.

⁴ These terms refer to the level of contact with a prevalent society who are seen as aggressors and who place these indigenous peoples under “immunological, demographical and territorial vulnerability conditions” (Castillo, 2010; Gallardo, 2009, p.29). For more information about these peoples, refer to the IWGIA (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs) reports 9 and 10, discussed by Castillo (2010) and (2012).

Espinosa de Rivero (2009) characterized this homogenized development approach, dominant worldwide, as antagonistic to indigenous perspectives and archaic because it is based on the same premise that began over two centuries ago with the exploitation of natural resources, the externalization of costs to communities and the environment, and maximization of monetary gains. This approach places the perspective of economic development as the ultimate goal and holds other values, especially those held by indigenous peoples, such as relationships and holistic perspectives of realities where human beings are not paramount in creation, as secondary (Dauvergne & Lister, 2011; Olórtégui, 2007; Van Cott, 2005). Indeed, there is a distinction made between *development* based on prevalent western conceptions and *ethno-development* which challenges the assumptions made by the former (Assies, 2009; Bonfil, 1982). Bonfil (1982) defines ethno-development as the “social capacity of peoples to build their future, drawing on the lessons of its historical experience, and actual and potential resources of their culture, according to a project that is defined according to their own values and aspirations” (p. 467). Implicit in this definition are notions of self-determination and self-government.

The result of such incompatible expectations of development are policies which are incongruent to indigenous ways of being and living and challenge indigenous local autonomies and rights to determine their own futures (de Sousa Santos, 2010; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005). Historically, there has been an imbalance amongst the perspectives taken into account when drafting national legislation (Assies, 2009; Castillo, 2012; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Galeano, 1987; I Puig Martí, 2009). Nowadays, democratic citizenry provides the historically marginalized, oppressed, exploited, and silenced groups with “the right to vote and to organize, but it does not actually grant an equal *voice*. This is not least because the public sphere is not a neutral-free zone. Powerful groups have defined the rules and called them neutral. However, the rules and associated norms in fact reflect, if not favor, the practices, discourses and interests of some groups over others” (Yashar, 2005, p. 51). One example of this is the legal arrangements that the Peruvian state made in order to comply with the free trade agreement with United States of America. These arrangements generally ignored indigenous rights, resulting in violent clashes between Peruvian military forces and indigenous peoples (Chirif & García, 2011; Comisión especial para analizar los sucesos de Bagua, 2009; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009).

Indigenous peoples in Peru have largely defied this “homogenizing national project” of imposing one type of development in favour of the new colonizers – transnational political and economic powers (Van Cott, 2004, 2004, p. 156). Indigenous peoples have rejected the imposed administrative⁵ and legal measures and have demanded respect for their individual and collective rights⁶ (Assies, 2009; Van Cott, 2004, 2005; Yashar, 1998, 2005). Indigenous identities are claimed individually and as a unit, materializing as a pluri-national state that is rich, abundant, heterogeneous, and complex (de Sousa Santos, 2010; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Yashar, 2005).

The conception of pluri-nationality challenges the assumption that there is just one homogeneous nation comprised of citizens (not necessarily residents) that share a geopolitical space in any given state (Assies, 2009; de Sousa Santos, 2010). Instead, pluri-nationality implies heterogeneity and the recognition of collective rights when “the individual rights fail to ensure the recognition and continuity of cultural identities or to stop social discrimination” (De Sousa Santos, 2010, p.119). Hence, a heterogeneous indigenous movement is on the rise in Peru, associating along ethnic lines and forging alliances to “institutionalize an alternative and ‘multicultural’ way of democracy” (Van Cott, 2004, p.157). The most common strategy for the organization and manifestation of indigenous movements is through the formation of indigenous cultural and political institutions, such as federations, in order to defend forms of self-government and the rights to define their own futures (Assies, 2009; Van Cott, 2005).

1.3 General background

Natural forests in Peru comprise a total area of 73.3 million hectares. The Peruvian Amazon makes up 94% of these extensive areas of forests (Ministerio del Ambiente, 2009). Over 75% of the Peruvian Amazon is under long-term leases to private interests for extractive activities (El

⁵ The concession to an extractive project, as well as the decision to build a public school, the establishment of a public clinic, the construction of a road, or installation of street lighting, etc. are decisions made under ministerial or other state agency procedures and permits. Thus, these are called “administrative measures” (Guerreo. Olivos. Novoa. Errázuriz Abogados, 2013).

⁶ International instruments such as the International Labor Organization Convention 169 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognize and describe indigenous peoples’ rights. Also, indigenous customary law is acknowledged and applied in resolving cases by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. Indigenous customary law “constitutes a specific manifestation of political and social autonomy sought by indigenous peoples in some countries of Latin America, in order to resolve conflicts among its members according to their customs and traditions” (Colmenares Olívar, 2006, para. 1).

Comercio, 2012). The Peruvian state has given the go-ahead for these concessions even within communal territories and national protected areas; reserves where indigenous groups are living in voluntary isolation, in sporadic contact, and in initial contact (Lang, 2014).

Land tenure disputes and resource extraction processes have generated a high number of social conflicts⁷ and human rights abuses throughout history (Cardenas Cornejo, 2011; Castillo, 2010; Chirif & García, 2011; de Sousa Santos, 2010; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Galeano, 1987). Since the 19th century, rubber, mineral, oil and gas, lumber, and energy industries have been accessing natural resources in the Peruvian Amazon, and have commercialized them with little or no accountability to the indigenous peoples of the area (Espinosa de Rivero, 2009). In recent decades this *modus operandi* has been deepening, with globalization of corporations, more open trade, and increased consumption all leading to the creation of tools to legalize such human rights abuses against indigenous peoples, increasing and exacerbating social conflicts (Cardenas Cornejo, 2011; Dauvergne & Lister, 2011).

During 2014, the Peruvian government approved a series of laws to expedite the approval of extractive projects, and to promote and protect foreign investments. These laws further deregulated environmental legislation, reformed the tax code, and led to the development of financial aid mechanisms to boost the economy and provide favourable conditions for transnational extractive industries to become established (Cabral, 2014; La República, 2014; Pasquel, 2014). The Peruvian congresswoman, Verónica Mendoza, suggested that, “this project should be returned to the executive committee and be discussed with the indigenous peoples and the environment commissions” because the legal definition of levels of pollution has an impact on the health of citizens and, more directly, threatens indigenous peoples (Cabral, 2014; La República, 2014, para. 7). Under this new legislation, certain extractive projects (such as the exploration of oil lots⁸) do not need an environmental impact assessment, the Ministry of

⁷ According to the Peruvian Human Rights Ombudsman, “social conflict must be understood as a complex process in which sectors of society, the state, and companies perceive their goals, interests, values or requirements are contradictory and this contradiction can lead to violence” (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2014, p. 3).

⁸ For more information, refer to “There is no necessity to make an environmental assessment for everything” (El Comercio, February 13th 2014), “Exploration of oil lots will be exempt from environmental impact assessment” (Gestión, March 6th 2014), and “The Government seeks to eliminate environmental impact studies in oil lots” (IWGIA March 13th 2014).

Environment's powers were reduced, and its influence over the regulation of the extractive sector was weakened, to name only a few changes (Gil Ramon, 2014; Hance, 2014; Radio Programas del Perú, 2014).

Currently, social conflicts related to the extraction of natural resources in Peru are far from diminishing and are most likely to become aggravated in the near-term (Schilling-Vacaflor & Flemmer, 2013). In the Human Rights Ombudsman report for November 2014⁹, 138 socio-environmental conflicts directly related to mining, logging, oil and gas, and energy exploitation were registered with the Peruvian Human Rights Ombudsman (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2014, p.17). The majority of these took place in regions with the highest indigenous populations in the country.

These numbers of conflicts are high compared to previous years, but they do not account for all of the existing conflicts. The Peruvian Amazon is not well covered by the Human Rights Ombudsman. In Peru's three largest jurisdictional regions, Loreto, Ucayali, and Madre de Dios (all located in the Amazon), there are only three offices of the Ombudsman (just one per region) each located in larger towns. In addition, because of geographic and cultural distances, or because the institution of the Ombudsman is not seen as legitimate or credible, many indigenous peoples in the Amazon may not register abusive cases¹⁰.

Global Witness reports that, in the last 4 years, 34 social-environmental defenders were murdered¹¹, the majority indigenous (Global Witness, 2014). Indeed, indigenous peoples in the Amazon fight and have defended—with their lives¹²—their territories and ways of living since the colonizers' first invasions in the 16th century. They have also striven to develop new strategies to make their voices heard and to influence the decision-making that will impact their

⁹ The total number of social conflicts registered in November 2014 was 212, of which 124 had at least one act of violence.

¹⁰ This information is based on multiple conversations with community members and representatives between November 2012 and April 2013.

¹¹ "Due to low levels of reporting of killings, and a lack of official data collection, new historic cases frequently come to light, and existing figures are also subject to revision in light of emerging information" (Global Witness, 2014, p. 6).

¹² See further information in Comisión especial para analizar los sucesos de Bagua (2009), Global Witness (2014), The New York Times (2014).

communities. One of the principal mechanisms is indigenous federations. These institutions are able to reach collective, culturally sensitive objectives for social, environmental, and economic good in the Peruvian Amazon through self-governing their territories (de Sousa Santos, 2010).

1.4 The emergence of indigenous federations

After more than a century of continuous exploitation of indigenous peoples and lands, Amazonian peoples have changed their strategy to defend their rights. In the 1960s, they began to organize in a different fashion (Chirif & García, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009), associating around their ethnicity within their geographical locales, and forming community-based indigenous federations to defend their rights and partake in decision-making processes to determine their own futures (Yashar, 2005). The new federations were not necessarily traditional structures. They used legal instruments provided by the state to defend their ways of living (Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Yashar, 1998, 2005). The proliferation of such federations stopped in the 1980s; indeed, they were weakened and some even destroyed during Peru's 1980-2000¹³ armed conflict between Marxism–Leninism–Maoism movements and the state (Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005). Following larger worldwide trends of growing indigenous movements in the past decade, several indigenous federations in the Peruvian Amazon have emerged to improve and strengthen indigenous organization and movements in order to generate greater collective influence to face the challenges experienced by indigenous peoples (Chirif & García, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009).

Indigenous federations are “permanent structures,” created to defend the rights of their member communities (Chirif & García, 2011, p. 106). They are the result of the association of a number of communities. The communities are self-governing units that have their own government structures independent from those of the federations (Chirif & García, 2011; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005). Community members—gathered in general assembly—are the federations' highest authority in this context. Within general assemblies, federations' statutes are written,

¹³ In 1992, the head of the Shining Path, a violent Marxist-Leninist-Maoist insurgent movement in Peru, was captured. However, the violence between the state and these groups in Peru continued until 2000. For further information, see Rénique (2003) and Yashar (2005).

decisions are made, and boards of directors are elected for periods that range between two and four years.

The current system designates representatives to be the spokespersons and executors of what is decided in general assemblies. Usually the federation's board of directors is comprised of a president (who also might take a traditional name like *apu* in the northern Amazon); a vice-president; a treasurer; and secretaries who cover specific issues such as education, territorial defense, health, topics related with women, and communications (Chirif & García, 2011). As illustrated in Figure 1, federations' geographical jurisdictions cover four levels, starting at the local level (which includes a number of communities usually located in a basin and belonging to the same people, for instance, Ashéninka or Yine-Yami people), the regional level (comprised of a number of local federations and their communities within a province or region), the national level (comprised of several regional federations, their local federations, and all of their communities), and the international level (comprised of several national federations from different countries and representing all of their members in each country)¹⁴.

¹⁴ Information is based on conversations with community members and representatives from November 2012 to April 2013.

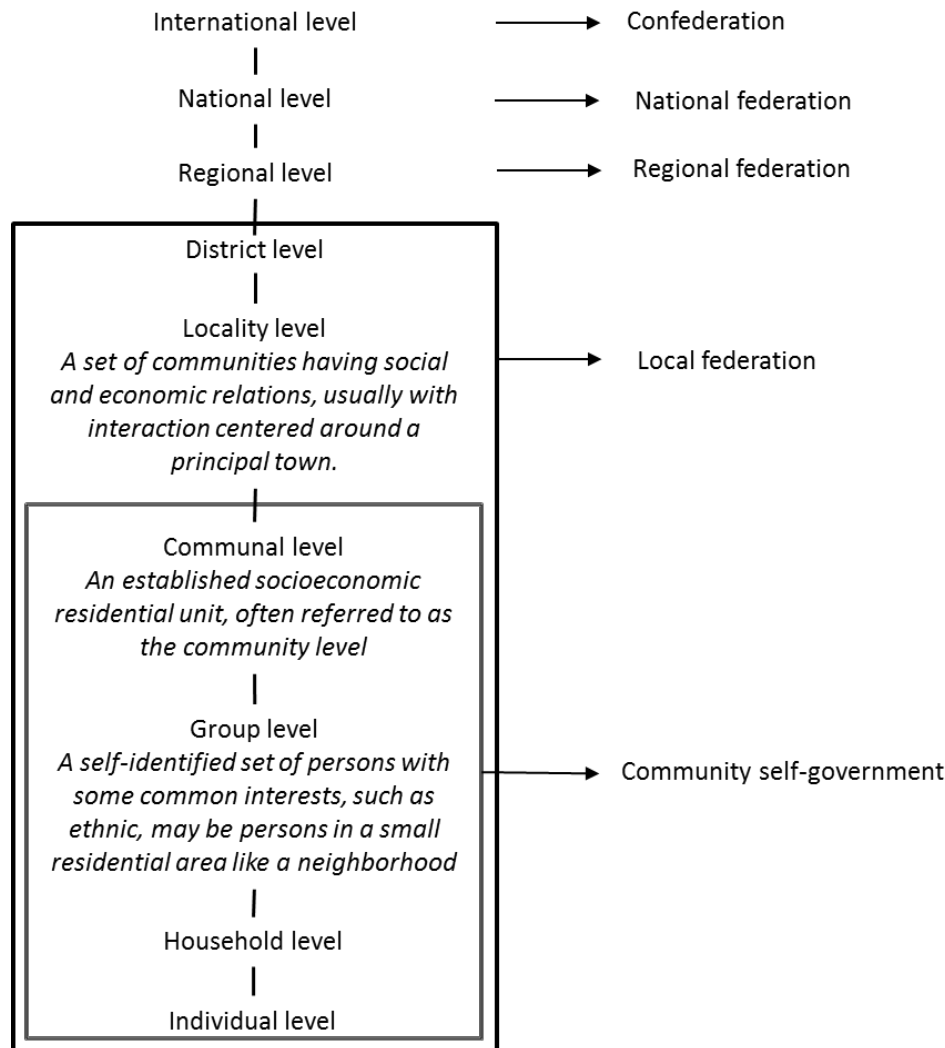


Figure 1: Levels of indigenous self-government (adapted from Uphoff, 1993)

1.5 What are federations doing?

Indigenous federations' claims fundamentally revolve around territorial autonomy (surface, underground, and air) and self-determination (Yashar, 2005). Specially, this refers to claims made by federations representatives, who are seen by the majority of indigenous peoples¹⁵ as their institutions. Importantly, federations also serve to promote social, political, and economic self-determination of indigenous communities as pre-republic societies (Chirif & García, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005).

¹⁵ Information is based on conversations in the visited communities November 2012 to April 2013.

Indigenous federations have been mobilizing and expressing their concern about national policies and legislation. On June 5th 2009, after several months of indigenous mobilization in the Amazon as a result of the promulgation of radical legal measures seen as a threat to indigenous survival, 33 persons were killed and over 200 were injured in what became known as the Bagua Massacre¹⁶ – a violent clash between military forces and indigenous peoples. Though it came at a high cost, federations from all over the Amazon were effectively able to nullify a number of decrees that were part of the package of laws enacted by the Peruvian state to fulfil the free trade agreement with the United States of America (Comisión especial para analizar los sucesos de Bagua, 2009; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009). Indigenous claims were not considered in this legislation, and federations demanded the abolishment of laws related to further relaxation of the rules surrounding extractive activities in indigenous territories. Representatives from the national federation, AIDESEP, also demanded that the Peruvian government fulfil its duty to implement a law of free, prior, and informed consent, since Peru was one of the ratifying bodies of the International Labor Organization Convention 169 (ILO 169) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (Comisión especial para analizar los sucesos de Bagua, 2009; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Schilling-Vacaflor & Flemmer, 2013).

In 2011, Peruvian law 29785 concerning indigenous peoples' rights to prior consultation, granted an important role to federations as the intermediary between the state and indigenous communities. However, the procedure and the actual final product (the law, its regulation, and its methodological guidelines) are still highly contested by indigenous federations and international organizations because it was not properly consulted and did not include key observations made by indigenous federations (AIDESEP, 2012; Hiperactiva Comunicaciones, 2014; Schilling-Vacaflor & Flemmer, 2013).

As political units, indigenous federations are looking not just for legal, but also for practical recognition of a pluri-national state (de Sousa Santos, 2010; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005). Each nation holds specific ways of doing things and thinking, which bring forth different modes

¹⁶ To learn more about the Bagua Massacre and other indigenous historical and contemporary moments, the reader is directed to Espinosa de Rivero (2009), "Savages opposed to progress? Historical anthropological mobilizations in the Peruvian Amazonia."

of organization and association. Based on de Tocqueville's work, Huntington (1965) pointed out that, while worldwide rates of social mobilization are high, rates of organization and institutionalization are low. Multicultural indigenous institutions and their constellation of different ways of doing things are enriching and diversifying the "art of associating together" (Huntington, 1965, p. 385), while contributing to their own organizational resilience and strength.

1.6 The current literature on federations

Scholarly research suggests that the primary role of these emerging institutions of federations in Latin America is to be the new interlocutors between indigenous nations and the state, and that federations are currently recognized as influential at multiple levels of government (Chirif & García, 2011; I Puig Martí, 2009; Van Cott, 2004, 2005). Moreover, they have gained national and international recognition, while delivering benefits to their base communities (Yashar, 2005). Some of the benefits of these associations are that they are seen as legitimate institutions by indigenous communities, that they influence policy which benefit their members, that they are shifting programs toward bilingual education and recognition of territorial rights, and that they provide a means to hold governmental and non-governmental agencies accountable (Assies, 2009; Bebbington, 1996; Yashar, 2005).

Despite historical, political, geographic, and demographic similarities, Yashar (2005) and Van Cott (2005) state that the responses of indigenous institutions to neoliberal political regimes that threaten local autonomy are weak in Peru compared to its neighbouring countries, Bolivia and Ecuador. However, this argument was updated by Schilling-Vacaflor and Flemmer (2013) who state that indigenous movements in Peru have been successful in many respects and are influential political actors.

In addition to recognizing the importance of these indigenous federations as self-governing units in multicultural states, Yashar (2005) and Van Cott (2005) recognize five recurrent factors that have led indigenous federations to be successful in Latin America:

1. The availability of competent leaders, which is evident in the set of capacities required to perform the role of being a representative of a number of communities;

2. The insertion of indigenous institution into the political associational structure, which has influenced and shaped policies and legislation, led to effective participation in constitutional reform, and catalyzed action in non-governmental agencies;
3. The maturity and consolidation of federations, maturity being measured in years of existence and consolidation referring to organizational unity and sustainability over time;
4. Having complex multidirectional levels of coordination in place. Yashar (2005) and Van Cott (2005) stress the importance of federations as part of a dense network, and forging alliances with a broad spectrum of institutions and sympathetic allies to achieve success. For instance, coordination at the state level with local, regional, and national governments and political parties; at the non-governmental level with NGOs, non-profit organizations, and private organizations; and with other indigenous federations and communities to bridge different historical experiences and build solid movements to transcend geographic dispersion, language challenges, and cultural unfamiliarity (Yashar, 2005); and
5. The establishment of effective mechanisms of accountability to their communities.

In this research, we build on Yashar's (2005) and Van Cott's (2005) work and use these five factors as a reference to explore indigenous federations' performance in the specific context of the Peruvian Amazon. Chirif and García (2011) made the further distinction that the greatest challenge faced by indigenous federations in the Peruvian Amazon is the strengthening of relations between federations' representatives and their communities. Since these federations are influential and vital government entities used by indigenous peoples, the question that frames this study is: how could representation by indigenous federations be improved, from the indigenous peoples' epistemological, ontological, axiological, and methodological points of view to better address indigenous peoples' desires for the future, as well as their current and future challenges? To answer this question, we worked in alliance with one regional and three local indigenous federations, and six of their member communities in the province of Atalaya, in the Ucayali region of Peru.

1.7 Objectives

Although Yashar's (2005) and Van Cott's (2005) assertions that Peru's indigenous movement is weak and with insufficient influence to shape policy in the country are a bit outdated, federations recognize that the dynamics between the "representative" and the "represented" in various communities is an ongoing challenge. In order to address this issue, we deconstructed the premise and identified two objectives which were achieved based on the communities' perspectives: (1) to identify factors that lead federations' representatives to more successfully represent the communities; and (2) to articulate indigenous communities' and federations' recommendations for improving indigenous self-government in the Peruvian Amazon.

1.8 Organization of the thesis

The thesis is divided into five chapters. This chapter provides the general background and a literature review pertaining to indigenous federations in the Peruvian Amazon.

In Chapter 2, some of the relevant characteristics of the two different indigenous groups, Ashéninka and Yine-Yami, and some information about their federations are presented to situate the research. Following this, the methodological strategy and methods developed with the research team are detailed; these were latter improved upon with input from the communities. Also, the seven principles which guided all of our interactions with communities, representatives, and between the research team are presented in this chapter.

Chapters 3 and 4 present and discuss the results of the two respective research objectives. Chapter 3 examines, from the perspective of community members, the relevant factors that might lead to success for indigenous federations. Chapter 4 delves into the specific recommendations that emerged from representatives and community members about how to improve such a self-government system in the Peruvian Amazon. The evaluation in Chapter 4 is made at the institutional level of the federation, whereas the results in Chapter 3 are framed at the representative level.

Finally, Chapter 5 provides a summary of the findings in Chapters 3 and 4, addresses limitations of the study, and presents how this study has contributed to the development of understanding of indigenous institutions in Peru.

Chapter 2: Methodology, methods, and collaborators

*“... peoples have the right to expect to be written clearly and affirmatively
into research by appropriate methodologies.”
(Rigney, 1999)*

2.1 Introduction

This was a multi-purpose study conducted in alliance with one regional and three local indigenous federations and six of their communities, and a Peruvian non-governmental organization (hereafter NGO). In this chapter, I will describe the methods and approaches that the research team (two Ashéninka one Yine-Yami community members and myself) developed. This process was guided by indigenous federations’ and University of British Columbia’s ethics review. The research was designed to have three deliverables: (a) to construct information for the communities and their federations; (b) to provide empirical information for the NGO; and (c) to accomplish my program’s requirements – this thesis. Each party identified its own deliverables.

In this study, we developed and used culturally sensitive qualitative research methods to address the research objectives through the use of a multiple-case study design. In this thesis, we address two objectives from the perspectives of the communities and their federation representatives: (1) to identify the factors that contribute to federation representatives more successfully representing their communities; and (2) to articulate specific recommendations based on input from indigenous communities and federation representatives for improving self-government systems of representation in the Peruvian Amazon. The information generated was analyzed qualitatively using the software Nvivo10™, a tool designed to organize information and find patterns. The design, conduct, and analysis of information was grounded in indigenous theories, and ways of being (Rigney, 1999; Chilisa, 2012).

2.2 The collaborators: federations' and communities' background

The communities and their federations—the collaborators— belong to Ashéninka and Yine-Yami indigenous societies located in the province of Atalaya in the Ucayali region in Peru (Figure 2). Four Ashéninka and two Yine-Yami communities and three local federations were formally involved in the study.



Figure 2. Communities' location

2.2.1 Ashéninka people

The Ashéninka language belongs to the Arawak linguistic family. Although there has been a tendency to consider the Ashéninka and Asháninka people as one ethnic group due to their language similarities and geographic proximity, the Ashéninka self-identify as different from the Asháninka people.

The Ashéninka people traditionally inhabited large territories, in clusters of 2-5 families. Their communities have organized into small groups so that Ashéninka families have good access to quality hunting, fishing, and other forest products. Likewise, distances between families were maintained to preserve the health of family members, especially to prevent acquiring diseases from others and for child safety (Anderson & Dávila, 2002; conversation with Ashéninka community members, 2012). According to the national 2007 census, the Ashéninka population makes up around 9 000 persons gathered in different communities located throughout the Junín, Pasco, and Ucayali regions (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2008). However, according to Summer Institute of Linguistics the Ashéninka population reaches 20 000 people (Anderson & Dávila, 2002).

There is limited information available about the Ashéninka before the time of Spanish colonization. According to Anderson (2002), the Franciscans made first contact during the 1600s. In light of the threats to their autonomy and the entry of new diseases that decimated their population, the Ashéninka people with help of the indigenous leader Santos Atahualpa, expelled the missionaries, which contributed to having almost 200 years of peace. At the end of the 1990s, foreigners again entered into their territories to extract rubber. Some indigenous people escaped to other regions, whereas others were enslaved and worked to death (Havlkof & Veber, 2005). More recently, in the 1980s, the Ashéninka people found themselves embedded in a violent conflict between the Peruvian government and Marxism–Leninism–Maoism groups. This time the Ashéninka people formed an indigenous army to defend themselves from the waves of violence created by this clash (Espinosa de Rivero, 2009).

There has been a dramatic increase in the contact with outsiders “who brought disease and economic competition” (Anderson & Dávila, 2002, p. 23). Today, Ashéninka’s struggle is again

related to extractive activities (Global Witness, 2014; The New York Times, 2014), which facilitated by technology and new neoliberal legislation are able to penetrate to the remotest corners of the Amazon. The Ashéninka people entered into the mainstream economy in the 1970s. Before this, interaction with Spanish speakers was very limited (Anderson & Dávila, 2002). In fact, Anderson & Dávila (2002) mentioned that the “Ashéninka world has many features that have survived” throughout the years. He continues saying that the Ashéninka “values and practices are the same since three hundred years ago when the first Franciscan missionaries described the Ashéninka for the very first time” (Anderson & Dávila, 2002, p. 22). After visiting some Ashéninka communities, my experiences suggest that the more remote a community is the more self-sustained the community members are. In other words, they were less dependent on dominant markets and have a stronger sense of autonomy and determination.

To challenge global expansion and determine their future, the Ashéninka people in the Tahuanía district have formed the Indigenous Organization of the Tahuanía district—OIDIT. The Ashéninka groups in the Raimondi district have formed the Federation of Ashéninka Communities of the Atalaya Province—FECONAPA.

2.2.1.1 Indigenous Organization of the Tahuanía District—OIDIT

The Tahuanía district, province of Atalaya, Ucayali region, is dominated by two indigenous groups, the Shipibo-Conibo (also self-identified as Shipibo) and the Ashéninka (Espinosa de Rivero, 1993). ORDECONADIT (Organization of Indigenous Communities from the Tahuanía District) was the only representative federation in the district, representing 34 Ashéninka communities and 8 Shipibo communities. However, despite an overwhelming majority of Ashéninka communities, the association representatives were mainly Shipibo, leaving the Ashéninka peoples feeling unrepresented. So, as a way to get better organized and to be represented, the Ashéninka communities created OIDIT in 2003. It was subsequently recognized by a notarial deed in 2008 (conversations, OIDIT representatives, November 2012).

OIDIT was created to address the difficulties and desires of their members in a way that is more consistent with Ashéninka culture (as their representatives are of the same indigenous ethnicity and therefore speak the same language and reflect familiar ideologies and customs). This

federation has 23 affiliated communities (conversation with OIDIT representative, November 2012). Nuevo Paraíso and Diobamba with its annexed community of Chanchamayo were the communities selected to collaborate in this study. They were selected by the federations in coordination with the communities.

2.2.1.2 Federation of Ashéninka Communities of the Atalaya Province—FECONAPA

FECONAPA was created in 2003 in response to the need for a federation that can represent in a close and appropriate way some Ashéninka communities in the Raimondi district of Atalaya province. According to the president of this federation there was a previous federation called OIRA that could not cope with representing over a hundred communities. A FECONAPA representative further explained that as the number of communities that are represented by a federation grows, new federations must be created. Therefore, OIRA should have become a *regional* federation instead of a *local* federation (conversation, FECONAPA representative, December 2012).

Currently FECONAPA has eleven member communities (conversations, FECONAPA representative, December 2012; FECONAPA representative, November 2012) and has developed partnerships with other federations at different levels. To make some actions viable FECONAPA partnered with national and international non-governmental organizations (DAR, WWF, TRAFFIC, and GIZ), local small indigenous businesses (Gas station “Mishael”), and public and private organizations (Ucayali Regional Government, and Consorcio Forestal Amazónico S.A.C.). One of FECONAPA’s objectives is to institutionalize the federation internally, amongst their communities, and externally, with any other organization or individual outside member communities. The communities formally selected from FECONAPA’s jurisdiction to collaborate in the study were Mencoriari and Puerto Esperanza.

2.2.2 Yine-Yami people

The Yine language is also part of the Arawak linguistic family. The Yine population varies from 3,000 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2008), to 7,000 inhabitants (Opas, 2014), depending on the source consulted. They are distributed in communities throughout Cusco, Loreto, Madre de Dios, and Ucayali regions. Historians have documented that the Yine people

have been excellent merchants and navigators since pre-Inca times, which exposed them more to relationships with other indigenous and non-indigenous groups (Bisso, 2009; The United Nations Children's Fund, 2012). Yine people participated in one of the most iconic indigenous movements to fight the Spanish and missionary encroachment during the 1700s (Álvarez, Torralba, & Barriaes, 2010).

Bisso (2009) suggests that to understand the Yine, it is important to consider the women (*yinero*), as Yine societies are matrilineal. This means that a newly united couple will live in the woman's family home or community. The influence of cultural practices, values, and identity is largely determined by the maternal side. Likewise, women hold senior leadership positions, sometimes with greater frequency than in other indigenous groups. Another interesting feature, perhaps linked to its cosmopolitan nature, is that in their communities Yine people co-exist with families from other ethnicities, for example Asháninka, Matsigenka or even Quechua from the Andes.

There are also differences among the Yine people. The communities that were visited identified themselves as Yine-Yami. Community members explained they are the Yine people from the river (*Yine yami*). Bisso (2009) pictures four levels of language vitality and strength between indigenous communities. From communities that express the highest levels of language and culture vitality and strength (first level) to communities where the language and culture was eroded due to the proximity to main towns such as Atalaya or Sepahua (fourth level). The latter, being directly influenced, for instance, by Spanish-speaking people and the power dynamics evidenced in interactions. According to Bisso one of the communities that collaborated in the study—Buefo Pozo—is located in the second level (2009).

In the lower Urubamba that crosses the Ucayali and Cusco regions, Yine communities have become organized and have formed some federations, one being the Federation of Yine-Yami Communities—FECONAYY.

2.2.2.1 Federation of Yine-Yami Native Communities—FECONAYY

This federation was created in 1984 in the Sepahua district, which is where the Yine-Yami people mainly live (conversation with FECONAYY's ex-representative, December 2012). In 2011, due to FECONAYY's deficient representation arising from internal problems, some indigenous people from the area saw the need to form another federation, called FECONADIS (Federation of Native Communities of the District of Sepahua) (conversation with FECONADIS representative and communal authority in Bufe Pozo, December 2012).

Sepahua district includes various indigenous and non-indigenous groups, besides Yine-Yami communities. FECONADIS supporters and representatives mentioned that this federation was intended to represent all the people that live in the Sepahua district. Conversely, FECONAYY only represents the Yine-Yami peoples (conversation with community members and authorities in Bufe Pozo and Nueva Unión, December 2012).

Usually the representatives of these federations are not paid for this role. However, FECONAYY's representatives mentioned that for the next *dirigencial* period onwards they will use funding derived from compensation payments made by an oil company, Pluspetrol. These funds can be used to pay representatives when they are working in the headquarters in Sepahua (conversations, FECONAYY representative, December 2012). Although this seems a positive outcome, there are concerns about the possible dependence on the company and that the representatives may not be truly independent, thereby failing to adequately represent community members. In an internal coordination, FECONAYY selected Nueva Unión and Bufe Pozo to be the collaborators in this study.

Official information about indigenous societies, cultures, customs, and locations are limited because of the remoteness of the Peruvian Amazon, and historical indifference shown by the Peruvian government in understanding these distant and *different* societies. Various sources have been used to compile some general information in Table 1 about the communities formally involved in the study. Federations' and communities' selection processes are described in section 2.5.1.

Table 1: Information from indigenous communities. This information was compiled from conversations with the community authorities, from the Ministry of Culture's recent indigenous communities database, Directory of Native Communities in Peru (Instituto del Bien Común, 2012), and the 2007 National Census of indigenous communities (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2008).

Community	Principal indigenous group	Linguistic family and language	District	Number of families	Community's year of resolution of recognition	Extension of territory (hectares)	Federation
Mencoriari	Ashéninka	Arawak/Ashéninka	Tahuaná/Raimondi*	34	1990	585,039,500	FECONAPA
Puerto Esperanza	Ashéninka	Arawak/Ashéninka	Raimondi	18	1977	191,165,400	FECONAPA
Diobamaba-Chanchamayo	Ashéninka	Arawak/Ashéninka	Tahuaná	38	1989	135,910,000	OIDIT
Nuevo Paraíso	Ashéninka	Arawak/Ashéninka	Tahuaná	30	1974	229,379,200	OIDIT
Nueva Unión	Yine-Yami	Arawak/Yine	Sepahua	26	1988	58,335,500	FECONAYY/ FECONADIS
Bufo Pozo	Yine-Yami	Arawak/Yine	Sepahua	96	1975	385,216,105	FECONAYY/ FECONADIS

* This community is identified in official document as it is part of Tahuaná, but practically seems to have a relationship with both Tahuaná and Raimondi

In all the communities I visited, community members indicated having difficulties with extractive industries such as; hydrocarbon extraction, industrial plantations (e.g. papaya), and industrial fisheries. However, *comuneros*¹⁷ particularly mentioned the impact of logging companies, stating that they (a) do not fulfill their promises, for instance, to construct communal venues or reforesting the logged areas; (b) commit infractions (e.g. extracting wood from outside of the annual operating plan) for which communities as holders of the territories are fined thousands of dollars by the Agency for Assessment and Environmental Control (OEFA); and (c) create social disruption, especially disturbing communal harmony by causing alcohol consumption, fights, rapes and creating disunity among *comuneros* (evidence based on conversations with several community members and the Group Session with women in Nuevo Paraíso, November, 2012; conversations with several women and Group Session with women in Puerto Esperanza, November, 2012; conversation with community members in Bufo Pozo and

¹⁷ I am using the term *comunero*, used in these contexts to refer to a community member. Throughout this document I will use interchangeably terms *comunero* and community member.

Nueva Unión, and Group Sessions in Bufe Pozo and Nueva Unión). This information provides context for the overall description of some of the difficulties and challenges faced by the federation representatives in addressing their communities' objectives.

2.3 Positioning myself in the study

I am a woman from the Quechua indigenous group in Peru. My father's first language is Quechua and he was born in Ayacucho. My mother was born in Huancavelica. Both places are located in the central Andes of Peru in an area known as the land of the Chankas, a pre-Incan culture. My parents never taught me the language because my people were taught, during hundreds of years of colonization, that any expression of indigeneity is a source of shame, and is synonymous with ignorance.

Discrimination towards the people of the Andes was further deepened with the emergence in the 1970s of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist groups: MRTA (Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement), and Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). They tried to address the longstanding imbalance of power through class equality and through the violent extermination of the traditional elite (Rénique, 2003). Shining Path and MRTA did not work on the terms of indigenous peoples. Indeed, the Amazonian and Andean peoples "lost several lives in defence of their territories, freedom and independence" (Central Asháninka del Río Ene, 2012; Chirif & García, 2011, p. 111). The actions of MRTA and Shining Path had negative consequences for indigenous people and the emerging indigenous movements in Peru during that time (Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005).

These class-based groups emerged from the historically most marginalized places: in the Peruvian Andes. In the cities, the response of many of the people was further marginalization of those who came from the Andes. The whole country turned their eyes to Ayacucho as the cradle of violence, without understanding the roots of the conflict. So, in addition to the *Ayacuchanos* being called (in a derogatory manner) "*serranos*," or "*cholos*," they were also called "*terrucos*" (that comes from the word for terrorist).

Although my parents lived and worked in Ayacucho, my father did his best to make sure that all his children were born in Lima. In doing so, he was looking for the best for our future according to his perspective. He wanted to counteract his experiences of marginalization because of his origin. In Peru, one is “from” the place where one was born, regardless where one grew up or where one’s parents lived. Thus, being born in Ayacucho would carry with it the legacy or stigma of being a *terrucó*, whereas being born in Lima, a person would be free of this negative connotation. I lived my early years in Ayacucho, with electrical black-outs (because of the bombs placed on the electrical towers that cut the electricity out in the town), among *mamachas* (old women who sell artisanal products on the street or the market), eating *kachipas* (a typical hand-shaped cheese from the region), *machka* (a traditional mixture of several ground cereals) and spending weekends in the Muyurina River. I will miss the smell, colour, taste and sensations of being there for the rest of my life. In 1987, my family moved to Lima permanently. The situation had become uncontrollable in Ayacucho, and many of my parents' friends had been killed.

Indigenous peoples living in the most remote places that did not have the privilege of mobility were the hardest hit. It was common for the youth to be recruited by the MRTA and Shining Path, against their will. If the community did not provide manpower, food, places to stay or payments, community leaders were executed and their bodies displayed on the streets as warnings. Similar terror activities were generated by the government and military forces. The people found themselves in the middle of a war (Central Asháninka del Río Ene, 2012).

From cities and remote parts of the Andes, those who were able migrated to the capital to escape the terror, often at the expense of leaving everything behind, including their land and lives as they knew them. Many joined the ranks of the poor in Lima after being displaced from their lands. While in Lima, my parents experienced discrimination and racism because they came from the Andes.

I identify myself as a Quechua descendant and a privileged agent. I position myself in this study as an outsider visiting the Ashéninka and Yine-Yami people with whom I share *cariño*¹⁸ toward indigenous peoples, who, since arrival of the colonizers, have continued to experience colonization, now with a *corporate* appearance. This colonization carries with it pernicious laws that legitimize abuses by the new colonizers; yet with the same nuances of oppression, marginalization, extermination, hate, theft of our lands and obliteration of our languages, cultures and unique characteristics. They use different (politically acceptable) terms to disguise their actions.

In this study I invited Ashéninka and Yine-Yami people to collaborate in the co-creation of knowledge that would address their agendas of development in their own terms. *Cariño* and care are my motivators to work with indigenous peoples.

2.4 Using emancipatory approaches: the indigenist and indigenous theories (general description)

In the context of all the past and present violence and injustice towards indigenous peoples, I saw the need for this project to embrace a historically consistent and contextualized perspective to work for and with indigenous groups on their terms. In order to achieve that, it was essential to work with cultural advisors. I have used the term “cultural advisor” as they provided all their cultural knowledge in shaping the study. In other words, the three cultural advisors put the study in context, and we together formed the research team (the selection process and description of these persons is explained in section 2.5.1). Each of the cultural advisors were individuals who, within their communities, had shown care and interest in working for their people.

Extensive work conducted by a number of academics, suggests that euro-western science tends to follow a pattern of “extracting” knowledge and resources from the historically marginalized (Chilisa, 2012; Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003; Rigney, 1999; Smith, 1999). For this reason, and given the history of these groups, we chose a decolonizing and indigenizing scientific process and used Indigenous theoretical paradigms. The purpose is not to victimize or romanticize

¹⁸ *Cariño* could be literally translated as *love* or in this context could mean taking care for one’s people.

indigenous peoples but rather to recognize that their present situation and actions are an expression of their lived experiences combined with their ontologies (assumptions about the nature of reality), epistemologies (ways of knowing that reality) and axiologies (morals and values expressed by people in this reality). In order to achieve the research aims, the most appropriate theories and paradigms are indigenous ones.

These paradigms come from what are called “liberation or emancipatory epistemologies” and their praxis are based on feminist theory and critical theory foundations (Rigney, 1999). Indeed, feminist theory is not strictly concerned with women’s issues and struggles but provides its experiences to the indigenous movement under the guise of seeking “enlightenment and emancipation from oppressing conditions” (Rigney, 1999, p. 115).

It is argued by Rigney (1999), Martin and Mirraboopa (2003), and Chilisa (2012) that these paradigms represent more ethical and congruent approaches for working with indigenous peoples because:

1. They recognize and honour indigenous science.
2. They prioritize indigenous voices: research focuses on the experiences, stories, ideas, traditions, dreams, interests, aspirations and struggles experienced by indigenous peoples.
3. The process is not controlled by the “expert” researcher. Indigenous peoples, the experts of their own realities, are able to define, control and own the ontologies and epistemologies that value and legitimize interactions.
4. Indigenous peoples are research allies or collaborators rather than objects of study.
5. They work with indigenous agendas and terms. There is a responsibility to indigenous peoples and their struggles.

2.5 Methods

Developing the methods and activities was an organic process. They were conceived and/or tailored mainly with the principal cultural advisor, Mrs. María Shuñaqui, a young Ashéninka mother who is committed to working for indigenous peoples in general, and two other cultural advisors (Mrs. Miriam Pérez and Mr. Raúl Sebastián). Each cultural advisor was delegated by their federation and was therefore responsible for collaborating in the study in matters related to

the communities selected by each federation. Before starting the creation of knowledge, we had extensive conversations to put together activities that were culturally appropriate for community members and representatives. While in the communities and after our interactions, the community's feedback concerning the methods and the research itself were incorporated to improve our interactions and research outcomes, as recommended by Ball and Janyst (2008).

Flexibility and reflexivity notions were considered in this process, enabling an evolution of the methods on a daily basis. Flexibility in research "reflects the extent to which the researcher is prepared to show respect in understanding that research is not the priority in times of crisis, grieving, celebration, ritual or maintenance of relations" (Martin & Mirraoopa, 2003, p. 212). A successful collaborative study requires a multi-layer reflexivity: self, interpersonal and collective (Nicholls, 2009).

Self-reflexivity was a continual process. Based on indigenous theories, it was a challenge to leave behind assumptions inherent to a colonized mind that has been greatly influenced by western education and a colonizing language such as Spanish. Despite conscious awareness, there were constant revelations about assumptions that I had made. I had to be very careful about my assumptions and my position of power as a researcher so that I did not turn into a potential source of discrimination, oppression, and marginalization, as Martin & Mirraoopa (2003) have cautioned.

Interpersonal reflexivity occurred at several times. The research team evaluated our values and motivations for doing this study. We put together seven principles that guided our work and our interactions within the research team, and between the research team and the allies:

1. *Cariño* or love toward indigenous peoples;
2. Respect for the recognized indigenous structures and protocols;
3. Recognition of indigenous science, wisdom, and intellect;
4. Adaptation to indigenous spaces, available time, languages, and daily activities;
5. Listening, and waiting for the collaborators to provide answers in their own terms and time;
6. Asking, without suggesting, so that collaborators can truly reflect their views; and

7. Recognizing, with words and actions, that community members and representatives are experts in their own realities.

These principles are an expression of the indigenist approach described above and were pursued throughout the research. Scholarly assertions suggest that a critical aspect of ethical research practices is the identification of values, assumptions, and concepts that motivate researchers and which underlie research questions and methods (Ball & Janyst, 2008; Martin & Mirraabooa, 2003). Interpersonal reflexivity with each cultural advisor took place at the end of each day, reflecting on aspects and occurrences that happened while conducting the research and other activities. Finally, collaborative reflexivity occurred with community-based knowledge holders and representatives, after group sessions and personal interviews, which, according to Nicholls (2009) provide an important means to construct validity.

The methods we used throughout the study were open-ended semi-structured interviews, which we adapted into a conversation rather than a question-answer format. Additionally, we used different variations of group sessions to collectively create knowledge. Within some of the collective sessions, we had talking circles and action research circles, each encompassing different activities, as recommended by Chilisa (2012). Also based on Chilisa's (2012), we tried to implement decolonizing methods and activities that promoted a practice-based approach that encouraged the perspectives of experts, and reduced interventions by the research team. Both conversational interviews and group sessions were used to construct information about history, current difficulties, desires for the future, and achievements of the community. It has been criticized that participatory approaches are often problem-focused, giving a sensation of hopelessness among the community (Chilisa, (2012)). We therefore decided to focus on positive aspects as well, including achievements, dreams, desires, strengths, indigenous wisdom, and empowerment.

The selection of collaborators was through purposive sampling (Chilisa, 2012). The participant recruitment strategy was more like an *invitation for collaborators*. Collaboration was on a voluntary basis, and open to everyone in the communities. At the beginning of each interview or group session, we addressed nine important points to introduce ourselves and the study, and to address ethical concerns. We explained (1) the study (showing them the document written and

signed by their federation), (2) the components of our alliances with the federations (for instance our commitment to deliver the information identified by them in a format significant to them), (3) what our principles and assumptions were, and (4) where we came from. Later we consulted with them whether (5) they wanted to share their stories for this study, (6) we could record their voices and, (7) we could take pictures of them. We made also very clear that (8) if they had any suggestion or observations about any aspect of the study (the research team, the methods, methodology, the deliverables, etc.) to feel free to express it, and (9) that they were free to ask us any questions. When asked by representatives or community members from other than our “formal” allies to be interviewed or participate in any group session, the request was granted.

2.5.1 Phase I – preliminary visit to Atalaya and selection of cases

This phase was performed between September and October 2012 and was important in getting to know the NGO and the federations’ representatives. During this time, I visited Atalaya, the principal town of the province of Atalaya in the Ucayali region, which later became the center of our operations. Once there, I contacted the principal cultural advisor and co-designer of methods, Mrs. María Shuñaqui. She was working at that time as an indigenous consultant for the NGO. Mrs. Shuñaqui accompanied me throughout the study, while the other cultural advisors worked with me only for certain periods, as required by specific situations. As confirmed by cultural advisors, they all received a daily payment that was in line with the amount paid for similar work by other NGOs in the area.

A cultural advisor refers to a person that lives in an indigenous community, so she/he is familiar with community activities and everyday living. Cultural advisors speak their indigenous language, have *cariño* toward their people and care about indigenous peoples in general. As the experts of their realities, their role was to support the team with their expertise, values, and desires for the good of their communities. Additionally, cultural advisors helped me improve my cultural literacy in those realities and translated the Ashéninka and Yine-Yami languages to Spanish, when necessary. Indigenous federations and communities had determined protocols to enter into their territories and, as a defense strategy toward historical threats to indigenous peoples, require that visitors be accompanied by a cultural advisor (Bellier & Hocquenghem, 1991).

Each cultural advisor was designated by her/his federation. Among the criteria used to select them were: to know both Spanish and their indigenous language, to be approachable and available to travel. The cultural advisors and I built a reciprocal relationship of respect, trust, and mutual empowerment and accountability as recommended by Chilisa (2012). Cultivating those relational values within the research team and following the seven principles of interaction were key for the process, coexistence, and teamwork. When a cultural advisor could not fulfill her/his designated role, this person suggested someone else. Each cultural advisor signed a confidentiality agreement.

In addition to contacting Mrs. Shuñaqui, the initial visit to Atalaya was also intended to be the first contact with the representatives of the federations from the area. We started contacting them and engaging in a dialogue to learn which federation would be interested in exploring a common research study. The purposeful selection criteria for each federation were described by three different levels of success in representing their member communities (low, medium, and high) as perceived by external agencies (e.g. non-governmental organizations). This was to encompass a diverse level of success of federations to maximize the possibilities of creating information to reach the study aims (Coyne, 1997). I made presentations to four local federations. FECONAPA (Federation of Ashéninka Communities of the Atalaya Province) was the first group, then OIQUIT (Indigenous Organization of the Tahuania District) and finally FECONAYY (Federation of Yine-Yami Native Communities) and FABU (Federations of the Lower Ucayali).

The first conversations were characterized by distrust toward euro-western science. FECONAPA, the organization identified by the NGO as having greater success in developing its work, was the most critical and sceptical because of previous negative experiences. After I explained that I was a Peruvian student who was doing a Master's degree in Canada at the University of British Columbia, and who wanted to do some research with them, the federation's president quickly answered:

We don't want to deal with research or researchers! Some time ago some people came from another country to ask us strange questions. They wanted to know about our medicinal plants. Shortly after making their research they left

and we never saw them after that. We never saw the document they wrote, what they wrote about us, nor do we know how or for which purpose the information taken from here was used.

The extractive tendency of euro-western science reported by Chilisa (2012) and Rigney (1999) became evident to me then; one of the groups historically negatively impacted are the indigenous communities in the global south. Although I knew well what the federation's president was telling me, I was shocked for a second by the direct testimony, and then appreciative because that was exactly the point that we wanted to tackle with the paradigms and methodologies that we hoped to embrace in this research. I continued to be direct and transparent in my intentions, principles, and values in working in this research even if it meant the refusal of an alliance with us. I was as outraged as they were with what they had experienced, and I agreed that "research" had become a dirty word. Following the meeting, we reiterated our desire to generate information together that they thought could be beneficial for their communities' and federation's objectives. Mrs. Shuñaqui and I were in a room full of testimonies of broken promises, lies, and individualistic, selfish, and colonizing behaviours of those who came from the western culture.

I did not have much hope that they would want to work with us. However, after weeks of internal conversation, they decided to give us an opportunity. They decided to have another meeting with me. For this occasion, in addition to the president and two other representatives from FECONAPA, the URPIA's president, and the indigenous advisor for these two federations were present. We had a long conversation and in FECONAPA's book of records they wrote down the information they would like to have as an outcome¹⁹ of this joint study. It was during this process that I learned that they used the word alliance to describe our work together.

The conversations with FECONAYY, OIDIT, and FABU were informal while workshops organized by the Regional Government of Ucayali were taking place. During conversations with OIDIT (the second federation), the representatives asked: If they agreed to ally with us, which would be the collaborator communities out of the 23 member communities? I suggested that it

¹⁹ It was agreed then that the information will be delivered in a document, and while visiting communities *comuneros* identified that such information should be in their languages.

could be the communities that were already working in the NGO project (Amazon Alive Project), but some community members, representatives and chiefs, who were present at the conversation, brought forward their concerns and comments. For example: Why were only those communities able to participate? Would it be good to incorporate other communities that are not currently involved in other projects? As some communities are already busy working with other projects, would this give extra load to the communities and interfere with the activities of other partners?

After our conversation, and intentionally addressing their concerns and suggestions, it was agreed that the federation representatives in consultation with their communities would decide which communities would participate. This involved issues such as self-determination, self-government, and respect for the federation representatives' own criteria consistent with their experiences, values, and realities.

OIDIT and FECONAYY expressed interest in participating in the study. However, FABU's representatives expressed less interest and indicated that they were busy with the overwhelming situation in Atalaya (meetings, travels, community and political issues), a place that has become a rapidly growing centre for the extraction of natural resources.

After several conversations for establishing alliances we formally consolidated the process by signing a document and called this study "Indigenous federations: Improving the relationship with our communities." The document described the study's purpose, and the commitments of both allies were detailed. The document was drafted mindfully, taking into account the federations' suggestions. It was subsequently signed by each of the four federations: three local (FECONAPA, FECONAYY and OIDIT), and one regional (URPIA) (see Figure 3) and the NGO's executive director.

After internal consultation with the communities ended, the federations confirmed which communities had agreed to collaborate in the study. Before entering the communities, the federations gave us a letter of introduction in which the reason for our visit was explained and which also provided the name of the delegated cultural advisor who would be responsible for

introducing us to the community, and who would help us in meetings and translations. This document acted as a visa, granting us temporary permission to enter the communities listed in the letter. This permission, however, was provisional and subject, first, to the approval of the communal authority, and then the communal assembly.

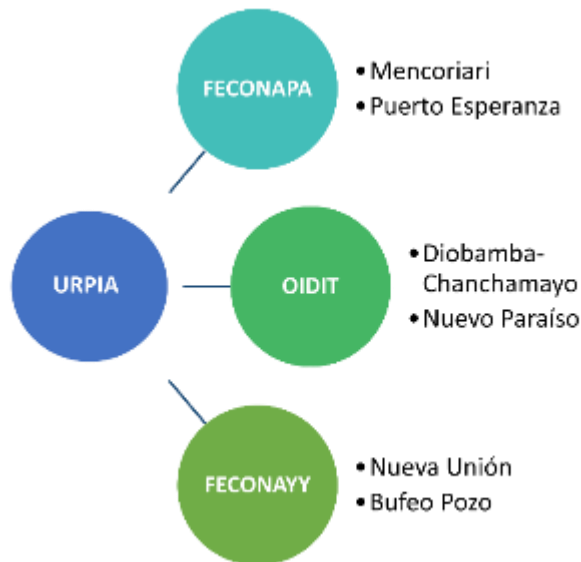


Figure 3: Federation and community allies in the study

2.5.2 Phase II – co-creation of knowledge with federation representatives

Once the agreement between the parties was signed, we started interviewing the federation representatives. Our conversations took place in Atalaya and were undertaken in parallel with community member interviews in the communities.

Mrs. Shuñaqui (cultural advisor delegated by OIDIT), Mrs. Miriam Pérez (cultural advisor delegated by FECONAPA), Mr. Raúl Sebastián (cultural advisor delegated by FECONAYY), or I approached the federation representatives. There were no specific criteria to select representatives to interview; they just had to be part of the selected federations. The purpose of these interviews was to learn more about the institutional objectives, difficulties, achievements, and any other contextual information that they wanted to share, as well to elicit recommendations and reflections to improve this self-government system. Moreover, we learned more about the history and present context within which the federations are embedded.

One of our assumptions was that indigenous peoples, community members and representatives living in these realities are the experts at finding ways to address their difficulties and to achieve their desires for the future. Similarly, the federations identified their “benefits” from this research that would serve as an open channel of interaction between community members and their representatives. See the Interview Schedule in Appendix A.

2.5.3 Phase III – co-creation of knowledge in the communities

This phase was guided by several procedures that respected and recognized indigenous protocols. First we contacted the community authorities. Then we participated in the communal assembly to consult whether or not the communities agreed to collaborate in the study. Despite federation representatives having consulted previously with communal authorities, we needed to directly ask for the communal assembly’s consent. Our forms of interacting with community members had been previously designed by the research team (based on the 7 principles identified in section 2.5), and were improved in an iterative process throughout our interactions.

2.5.3.1 Contacting community authorities

The vast majority of communities in the region can only be reached by river. Transportation is on long narrow boats fitted with a roof to protect products (such as fruit, cereal, animals, etc.) and people from the elements. The river journey from Atalaya to the communities—and between the communities—took anywhere between six hours and several days. The range of people traveling on these boats is varied: *comuneros* who have the means to pay for the ticket, teachers traveling to communities to work or going back home, and workers and traders of different types. At the same time, one could see around the boat the motored canoes, as well as people paddling dugout canoes with *comuneros* going to fish, to visit family or on their way to the larger towns to process documents or sell their products.

Once the team reached the community, the cultural advisor contacted the community's authority. Together we explained the nine important points that formed part of a culturally sensitive protocol mentioned in section 2.5, including the study’s purpose. By then, the representatives had already coordinated with the community’s authorities, who in turn had consulted with community members in a communal assembly. This did not mean that *comuneros* would accept

the study after talking to us at the community assembly and having a better perspective of what it was about. Both the research team and the community members were curious and uncertain as to whether this study would be conducted and in what way.

In our conversation with the authorities, they expressed their thoughts about the study, and if they had questions or suggestions, they were addressed. Usually the cultural advisor got into a deeper conversation with the communal authority in their own language. At the end of that first interaction, the cultural advisor and authority determined the best time for the communal assembly to take place in order to present the study.

2.5.3.2 Participating in the communal assembly

In the community the highest authority is the communal assembly, where *comuneros* congregate periodically (in the communal venue) to discuss issues related to the community. The community's assembly is the primary mechanism through which power is shared among community members. The community is in charge of formulating, executing, controlling, and assessing the decisions for their community. It provides an opportunity to legitimize decisions and maintain social cohesion. The outcomes of each assembly are written down in the community's act and should be adopted by community members.

Once in the assembly, and in front of the community members, we introduced ourselves and explained at length the nine points mentioned in section 2.5. All our communications were in both Spanish and the native language. We also consulted about some aspects of our interactions, for instance, the use of a voice recorder, visits to their homes, and the best days and times for us to get together for group sessions. Embedded in our principles, we acted just as facilitators of their processes, emphasizing that their science has the same validity and level as euro-western science. Some comments about previous experiences with outsiders emerged from the conversations:

They [the outsiders] call us “oh, poor things!” while taking photos of us... we do not know where they took our faces away to, and if they will make money from them, but we never see them again.

So, it was verbally agreed with community members that we would bring back photos taken of them. We also proposed that their voices would be cited collectively, for example “community A said X,” unless they specifically want their voices to be identified individually. People knew beforehand that they would have several options to transmit their voices if they wanted: orally in a personal interview, collectively in Single-gender Group Sessions and through the creation of images (drawings, paintings, and collages) in the general group sessions.



Figure 4: Cultural advisor consulting to the communal assembly

On the recommendation of the principal cultural advisor, we decided that the communal consent letter would not be read but would be described verbally and explained in the assembly, based on the 2nd principle: that of respect for the idiosyncrasies of these realities. She argued that *reading* this document in the assembly potentially could generate greater stress and discomfort, and could reinforce a power dynamic between those who can read and those who cannot. Additionally, there were previous experiences of distrust associated with the signing of documents because signatures have been misused against them.

At the suggestion of cultural advisors, we agreed that food (for our daily consumption and for the collective gatherings after Group Sessions) would be prepared in every community, by *comuneros* and with the community's products. In the assembly it was determined who would coordinate food preparation, which includes carrying firewood, harvesting bananas, cassava or

any other vegetable, fishing, hunting any mammal or bird, where the food would be prepared, and all related procedures. All meals comprised the everyday food of those communities, and our homes during our visits were communal venues, schools, or houses designed for visitors.

2.5.3.3 Conducting individual interviews

During the assemblies, community members were asked if they felt comfortable being interviewed, and we explained what these conversations would be about. We started interviewing *comuneros* who approached us at the end of these meetings and volunteered to be interviewed. Also, we established specific times with other *comuneros* to visit them in their homes. To build a general idea of the voices within each community, we planned to go to the farthest parts of the community to reach people where they lived and most likely would not be able to attend the Group Sessions. We were also told about people that would like to share their thoughts and where we would find them.

The interviews in the communities were shared between the researcher and the principal cultural advisor. Our conversations lasted between thirty minutes and five hours. The interview schedule can be found in Appendix A. The interviews were designed to co-create knowledge based on an individual or at times collective conversation. For instance, at times the individual being interviewed would call their partner, oldest children, or a relative to help them to recall a particular event or detail that would enable them to construct knowledge. Indeed, the indigenous scholars Chilisa (2012) and Ntseane (2009) argue that indigenous theories offer interview methods “which privilege relational ways of knowing that valorize respect for relations people have with one another and with the environment” (Chilisa, 2012, p. 206).

These conversations enabled detailed information to emerge and later formed the basis for addressing the study objectives. Based on recommendation by Chilisa (2012), we tried to address asymmetrical relationships in our conversations by making sure that collaborators knew they could also ask us any type of questions so that we could learn from each other, which they very often did. With each formal and informal conversation, our faces became more familiar and *comuneros* knew who would be in their territories and visiting their homes. These procedures

gave value to this type of co-construction of information based on “love and respect for connections and relationships participants had with one another” (Chilisa, 2012, p. 207).

2.5.3.4 Conducting group sessions

In each community, we had two Single Gender Sessions and one General Session in which we worked with both men and women.

In our interactions, we used participatory elements, including horizontal (non-hierarchical) spatial distribution, forming circles for the discussions and activities, using metaphors to transmit ideas, and storytelling to share concepts and elements of the environment (see Figure 5). Chilisa (2012) affirms that talking circles came out of the ideal of collaborators respecting each other’s perspectives and encourages sharing ideas in an environment of togetherness, compassion and *cariño* for each other. Furthermore, Nicolls (2009) says that collective discussion in a community develops the validity of the information, and collective reflection may bring forward whether the process or the topics discussed were “transformative, affirming, cathartic or empowering” (p. 123).



Figure 5: Community members elaborating an illustration in the General Group Session in Bufeo Pozo

The purpose of the Group Sessions was to formulate opinions, ideas, perspectives, intentions, and desires collectively, and to remember the stories and accomplishments achieved in the

community so far. They also sought to identify barriers or concerns that *comuneros* might perceive in their realities that could prevent them from achieving their desires for the future. So, through collective memories, conversation, and storytelling, the groups began to build on the expressions and experiences of each person to develop shared, parallel, conflicting and/or complementary ideas. There were opportunities for abstention, and there was no pressure to permanently share with the group. The result of these sessions served to complement and corroborate the information built in the personal interviews.

The concept for each activity came from different *experiential* sources and was co-designed with the cultural advisors and through interaction with the community members. Following the cultural advisors' inputs, we outlined the protocols of the activities, making the interactions as dynamic and interactive as possible. Also, social activities with the men and women after the activities were important means to share a different environment, to relax, and to chat about different topics. These social activities included food preparation, eating together, walking around their fields and forests, communal celebrations, soccer matches, corn shelling, construction of houses, or just informal conversations. We had two types of Group Sessions: Single Gender Sessions and General Sessions.

2.5.3.4.1 Single gender sessions

At the suggestion of the principal cultural advisor, some group sessions were segregated by gender and were scheduled in different days. This was to create a gendered space of trust to facilitate participation of both men and women and to ensure all values and views could be represented at the session.

This strategy was confirmed through conversations with *comuneros*. These gender-based sessions were done according to the historical context of the specific community. For instance, some Asháninka groups (different from *Ashéninka*, the group that we were working with) do not feel safe with gender separation as such separations were a tactic used during the armed conflict to sexually abuse women and children (based on conversation with the head of the NGO's indigenous program, Lima, February 2013).

The purpose of the Single Gender Group Sessions was to identify the communities' desires for the future, their current difficulties, the communities' accomplishments so far, and the characteristics that a good representative of their federations should have in order to address those desires and difficulties. We designed three activities to reach these objectives:

1. *My palm, my community*. This first exercise was to identify their desires for the future. For *this* activity we used different palm leaves available in each community. This is a very important element in this context (and beginning to become scarce because of the industrial extraction of resources). Palm leaves are usually used to build roofs, fans, and mats, and the trunks are used to build structures and floors. We started by bringing out one palm leaf, and all of us pulled out the leaflets from the palm's rachis. Each person took at least three leaflets and sat forming a circle with the palm's rachis in the center. The cultural advisor then indicated segments of the rachis that represented the past, present and future. The cultural advisors identified the equivalences of these words in their own languages. For instance, in the Ashéninka language *pairani* = past; *iroñaaca* = present; *otsipa otzarentz* = next year (which also refers to the near future) (Figure 6)



Figure 6: Activity with women facilitated by one of the cultural advisors in Nuevo Paraíso

To model the activity or to set an example, we (members of the research team) started telling stories of our past related to that community. There was some time available for the

remembering process and for *comuneros* to converse among themselves. Then, each one stood up and shared events and stories that they remembered. For each story/event told, they placed one leaflet within the segment that referred to the past. Later, *comuneros* reflected about their present and then, by taking into account their past and present situations, they formulated opinions and gradually built a desirable near future for their communities. We realized from experience that if we wanted to refer to long-term desires (important since many of the threats resulted from long-term projects such as gas, oil, minerals or wood extraction), we could do so by using metaphors. For each story, reflection and desire, one leaflet was placed next to the rachis forming what, by the end of the activity, was a complete palm leaf.

2. *What are our difficulties in our community?* To depict what could be a difficulty, we told a contextualized story. By using congruent metaphors, we identified difficulties that *comuneros* in the story might have that could impede them from achieving their desires (and we recalled the desires identified in the previous exercise). Using that story as an example, which changed according to the daily difficulties in the different communities, we asked *comuneros* to identify the difficulties or barriers that they had to overcome in order to achieve their desires for the future. Later, and after a process of remembering and talking, they started to narrate what they might identify (Figure 7).



Figure 7: A woman narrating in front of the rest of the group in the activity in Mencoriari

3. *The characteristics of a good representative.* In this exercise we situated *comuneros* in a hypothetical situation (by telling another story), in which we built an imaginary federation. *Comuneros* were asked to identify desirable and undesirable characteristics that a “good” representative should have in order to achieve the objectives of the communities they represent (recalling the desires identified in the first exercise and the difficulties they want to overcome, identified in the second exercise). In turn, they each stood up and pasted two coloured pieces of sticky paper, one colour identifying desirable and another for undesirable characteristics, as shown in Figure 8.



Figure 8: Activity with men in Puerto Esperanza

When designing this story, we reflected with the cultural advisors about how the indigenous traditional social organization is in family clusters that spatially move according to food availability, and the crops rotate according to the season and health of the land “*for the land not to get tired*”—as they mentioned—so that the land’s nutrients were not depleted. When *comuneros* told us their history, they often mentioned current difficulties related to living in a community setting. This was because forming communities (see more information in Chapter 4, in the section related to self-determination) is a relatively new way of organization that has originated as a response to external phenomena. In many indigenous societies, it was an imposed strategy (explained in more detail in Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005). Thus, for practical reasons, we assumed in the story that they were already in a community.

Then, it was important for them to give different names to the community and the federation so that *comuneros* could give characteristics to representatives without relating them directly to their own communities or federations. In this way we tried to reduce the possibility that the attributes would be taken personally by the representatives and communal authorities.

2.5.3.4.2 General sessions

In this last activity, which closed Phase III in each community, men and women were divided into smaller, gender-mixed groups of 2-4 people. They were asked to express, through illustrations, how they would like to see their community in the future. Following our 4th principle, adaptation, materials collected by *comuneros* from the surrounding area, were used in the activities. Among them were palm leaves, stones, sticks, plants, clay, seeds of different types and colours, charcoal, annatto paste (*Bixa orellana* seeds prepared with *suri* fat—from the larva of the beetle *Rynchophorus palmarum*), tubers, bark and fruits that contained natural dyes (see Figure 9). We brought cardboard, some sticky paper, scissors, glue, and pencils when required as shown in Figure 10.



Figure 9: Elements used in the group sessions



Figure 10: Community member elaborating her illustration in Nueva Unión

Afterwards, participants shared their reflections with the rest of the group and explained the meaning of the elements in their drawings (see Figure 11). At the end of the group sessions, there were some expressions by the community, including reflections, traditional songs, closing words given by communal authorities, community members, and cultural advisors. Later, cultural advisors and I thanked the members and the authorities for the hospitality' and we took a picture all together. Then we cooked a meal and ate together, allowing time to share in more informal interactions.



Figure 11: Women sharing with the group their illustration in Diobamba-Chanchamayo

2.5.4 Phase IV – final session with the representatives and community authorities in Atalaya

In the earlier meetings, representatives commented on the importance of bridging the communities' voices to their federations. Consequently, there was an interest among the federations' representatives to strengthen the relationships between them and their member communities.

The representatives identified a number of logistical, financial and time barriers to this approach. As mentioned in Chapter 1, difficulties in indigenous communities originated from and/or were exacerbated by the Peruvian government's opening up of land for natural resources extraction (Che Piu & Menton, 2014; Dauvergne & Lister, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Galeano, 1987; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005). Che Piu & Menton (2014) stated that Peru is experiencing economic growth, through the implementation of neoliberal policies, and that this growth is expected to increase even more at the expense of the Peruvian Amazon. This has created a context that is overwhelming for these community-based federations as most of them cannot keep up with the innumerable events that are co-occurring (Che Piu & Menton, 2014). Among the social repercussions is the widening gap between indigenous representatives and communities.

In the communities, members expressed their thoughts about the importance of bringing their perspectives forward. After visiting the six communities, word spread about the type of work and the methodologies we were using. For instance, a community member from Mencoriari mentioned that it was the first time that they had been asked about what they want for their future and also that an open environment had been created for them to express their wishes. This new way of working in collaboration with communities created expectations among the various communities and the local and regional federations.

Authorities and representatives approached us to ask when we could meet with the representatives to hear the communities' voices that had emerged from the sessions. This motivated us to reflect on the expectations that we had created, to consider our responsibilities and our motivation by (a) our *cariño* towards indigenous peoples, (b) the community members'

responses to our work, (c) our values, and (d) being able to create a research process that leads to social change and transformation. We decided that I should return to Lima to raise funds in order to finance meetings with the representatives and community authorities that would last twice as long and with five times as many people as originally intended. Additionally, we enlarged and improved the deliverable (a magazine-format document) for the communities and their federations. The extra effort was successful. We managed to receive support without compromising our commitment and principles²⁰.

Authorities from sixteen communities and representatives of seven indigenous federations attended this two-day meeting: over forty people gathered to hear *comuneros*' voices describing their accomplishments, their desires and difficulties in their communities, and the characteristics that a good representative should have in order to address those desires and difficulties. The purpose of this meeting was to enable representatives and communal authorities to reflect on these voices while developing viable solutions and recommendations on how to improve their own federations, prioritizing subsequent actions that would be taken, including programs and projects in their communities.

The information that was presented at the meeting was processed (retrieved from the audios and from the cultural advisors' field notes) by the research team. In planning the Final Session, the research team discussed the design and methods used in this meeting. Because of time constraints, it was not possible to deliver all of the information generated by *comuneros*. For this session, we assumed that most of the representatives and community authorities had a mix of both indigenous education and western education. The cultural advisors were responsible at all times for translating the instructions and supporting more traditional indigenous persons²¹

²⁰ Through the NGO's network I was able to make oral presentations to different international NGOs located in Peru and to the national indigenous federation—AIDSEP—about the study and explain up-front its collaborative features.

²¹ The term *traditional indigenous persons* was used in this thesis to refer to persons that according to cultural advisors are people who are primarily immersed in their traditional culture compared with others that were more exposed to western culture. For traditional persons indigenous influences are greater than western cultural influences. For example, they are less influenced by classical education or by the use of the Spanish language.

because for some exercises, they were required to write and read short sentences (see further reflection about this decision in Chapter 5).

The activities designed for this session were held in an environment of trust and respect. We did that by clarifying the premise that (1) they are the experts of their own realities, (2) their science is recognized and needed in the process of finding congruent strategies to improve their government system, and (3) there is no wrong opinion, that the purpose is a collective co-creation of knowledge from their perspectives and taking into account their histories. The two-day activities were held in February 2013 in Atalaya. This meeting was organized around three types of sessions: private, parallel, and general.

2.5.4.1 Welcoming collaborators

The meeting began with welcoming remarks by representatives of two regional federations CORPIAA Atalaya (Regional Coordinator of Indigenous Peoples Aidesep from Atalaya) and URPIA (Regional Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon from Atalaya Province), followed by a few words from the three cultural advisors.

We made a presentation to remind the collaborators about the purpose of the study and what had been done so far. Each explanation during the event was done in three languages: Ashéninka, Yine and Spanish. We described each activity and suggested the schedule for the two days. We encouraged participants to make suggestions and comments at any time.

Then, collectively, we developed a behavioural agreement that would enable the group to have two successful days working together. Collaborators responded to questions about what they expected our behaviour to be like during the two days. In the process they also proposed having penalties for latecomers: they would have to sing, dance or tell a joke. As people mentioned ideas, the proposals were written on a piece of cardboard stuck in a visible part in the main room. Once all agreed on these guidelines, we split up the group by federation. One group (each group was formed by one federation representatives and communal authorities from member communities) participated in the Private Sessions and while the others participated in the Parallel Sessions. At the end, each group went through one Private Session and two Parallel Sessions.

2.5.4.2 Private sessions

This session was created for the authorities of the communities and representatives, grouped by federation: (1) to reflect on the voices that emerged from their communities and (2) to formulate viable solutions for the communities.

The rationale for this session was: respect for the self-determination of communities and their federations, and promoting a feeling of self-confidence within the group such that they would feel comfortable and free to discuss these issues, first in private with members of the same federation. To enable a healthy dynamic, we formed talking circles (Chilisa, 2012) and views were expressed both orally and in written form.

In the preparatory activities for the event, each cultural advisor was responsible for presenting the difficulties faced and desires for the future that *comuneros* had identified in their jurisdiction. These were presented in the Private Sessions. The following sections describe parts of the Private Session.

2.5.4.2.1 Presentation of *comuneros*' emerged voices

We read through the objectives that were identified by communities in Phase II. While listening, the representatives and community authorities made periodic interventions with reflections and opinions of their interpretations on the emerging voices²² from the communities they serve. Then I left the room so that they could privately discuss their thoughts, feelings and frustrations. The cultural advisors remained in the room as members of their federations.

2.5.4.2.2 Reflection and selection of recommendations

When I re-entered the room, I found dialogue in progress. When needed, we facilitated the reflection and the cultural advisor made a clarification or explanation since she/he better understood the conversations in the interviews and group sessions. The members of the

²² These voices were reproduced orally by the research team respecting their expressions.

federation had some time to reflect and talk, as shown in Figure 12. From their reflections they began to come up with ways to address the issues raised by the community members. When that started to happen, we decided to make a smooth transition to the next activity, selecting feasible options.



Figure 12: Representatives and communal authorities from FECONAPA discussing

For the next activity, we used an example of how to select feasible ideas collectively. This was called Three Filters²³ because, from a constellation of options, the ideas are gradually filtered toward more suitable ones to develop in a specific context, taking into account human capabilities and financial restrictions (Figure 13). In other words, representatives and communal authorities selected recommendations to achieve communities' objectives following three hierarchical filters: (1) desirability; (3) feasibility; and (3), financial possibility (IDEO, 2011).

In this activity we worked with 1 or 2 difficulties that had been previously suggested by the cultural advisors. The selection criteria used by the cultural advisors were the relevance and frequency that a particular difficulty was mentioned in the communities (based on our field notes

²³ This methodology was inspired from Kara Pecknold's Design for Social Change course at ECUAD (summer 2012).

and the process of interviews and group sessions). As *comuneros* themselves, who speak the indigenous language, and as part of the process that had been carried out in the communities, the cultural advisors had a fuller picture of this particular context than did the representatives. After discussing with each cultural advisor individually, I understood the reasons each one considered for selecting particular community member's opinions and together we finished selecting the opinions to be presented in the Three Filters activity. The results of this activity were viable recommendations developed by the group that were desirable, physically feasible, and financially viable. For a detailed description, see Appendix B.



Figure 13: Yine-Yami collaborators in the activity Three Filters

2.5.4.3 Parallel sessions

In this exercise, collaborators needed to narrate, write or draw “how my community was created”, “how good decisions were traditionally made in the past”, “describe a leader from the past”, and “what my community and/or federation has achieved so far” (one topic per session, or as many as they want) (Figure 14). This exercise turned out to be one of the most valuable for them, because they revealed that their histories are not being told or taught. This activity also created context by enabling them to remember their histories, by encouraging more thorough and deeper reflection, and by creating self-empowerment about their identity. They recognized that they are the experts and knowledge-holders in their realities, and that they are the ones who will shape their own future. After the three Parallel Sessions, they shared within the general group their stories and drawings (Figure 15).



Figure 14: Collaborator drawing about the way they defend themselves



Figure 15: Authorities from Bufo Pozo telling the history of the creation of their community and their traditions

2.5.4.4 General session

This session had two parts. The first was to develop ideas, from the perspective of representatives and community authorities, about how a good representative should behave. Then, in the second part, this construct (of developed ideas) was contrasted with the voices emerging from their communities, and then the participants reflected on those outcomes. Based

on input from the principal cultural advisor, and to make the construction of information more dynamic and emotionally accessible to the collaborators, we used the metaphor of how to have a productive banana tree. Through this activity, we sought to inspire reflections on the similarities between a healthy banana tree and a healthy federation. We decided to use this vital and iconic plant, since it is one of the most important sources of nutrients in the Amazon. The purpose of the General Session was to identify the characteristics that a good representative should have, from their own perspectives. Participants were grouped by federation (or federations in the case of the Yine-Yami). In cases where *comuneros* recognized having two federations, the representatives had to work in coordination with one another. Each group was given a banana tree image without leaves or fruits (pieces of papers with leaves and fruit shapes were provided separately for them to paste on the tree as they built knowledge). The narrative was based on using the banana tree as a metaphor to refer to indigenous federalism, a unique system of self-government. The roots represent the member communities, the trunk the federation, the fruit the federation's objectives. Desirable and undesirable characteristics for federation representatives were identified and written on the leaves (Figure 17 and Figure 16). Graphically the banana tree showed that federations could not exist without their communities, in much the same way as the roots of banana trees nourished the plant and prevent it from falling with the wind. We asked them to complete the banana tree and after finishing the activity, each federation picked a delegate to present their banana tree, identifying each of the key elements.

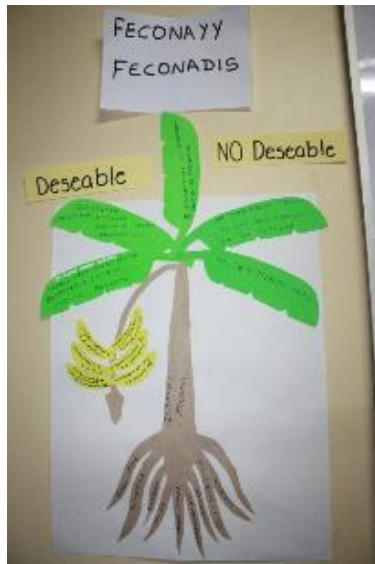


Figure 17: Banana tree's roots



Figure 16: Collaborator identifying the federation's goals

We continued with the second part, in which they assessed whether the characteristics they had identified corresponded with characteristics identified within their communities. We said, “You just identified the characteristics that a good representative should have... let’s listen to what your communities said.” In this moment we provided the leaf-shaped pieces of paper in which were written characteristics identified by *comuneros*. During this exercise, the participants stood up, one by one, to pick up a banana leaf on which we had written *comuneros*’ perspectives, to read to the rest of the group (as shown in Figure 18). Each federation’s representative and the communal authorities read the characteristics identified by their member community. Later they glued the leaves on the banana tree (as shown in Figure 19) and the next person stood up, picked up another banana leaf and read another *comunero*’s perspective. In this way, they constructed a common banana tree/federation with the communities’ voices. They were able to discuss similarities and differences between what *comuneros* had said and what representatives and authorities said in the meeting.



Figure 18: Representative reading the characteristics identified by *comuneros*



Figure 19: The banana tree with representatives' perspectives in the right, and *comuneros*' perspectives in the left are visible behind the collaborator

2.5.4.5 Closure meeting

We invited participants to prepare final thoughts, reflections, analyses or messages after the two full days of work. As seen in Figure 20, we opened space for comments and suggestions about the methods and methodologies used. This provided invaluable feedback to me as an individual with a colonial viewpoint. Also, it was important for the representatives and communal authorities to reflect and add more recommendations on how to improve their system of self-government from their perspectives. This process was also important to validate the co-created knowledge from the two-day meeting. We ended the meeting with a round of applause in

celebration of the intense process we had gone through, and we took a group photo to remember the bonds that had been formed.



Figure 20: FECONAPA's president providing final remarks

2.5.4.6 Post-meeting reflective data

The research team had meetings for internal analysis and assessment of the process in the Final Session with the representatives and the communal authorities. Comments and suggestions on the sessions with the representatives and communal authorities had, in many cases, been made informally, and many comments had been made directly to the cultural advisors (because of their greater familiarity and knowledge of the language). These post-meeting talks enabled us to remember and reflect on the comments made by the group to different members of the research team. Likewise, we each provided our own views on how to improve the indigenous multicultural processes of co-creating knowledge with indigenous emancipatory methodologies. A collaborator provided feedback related to the process:

This work is truly a reflective tool for ourselves as a self-analysis, management, and defence, all at the same time. This instrument has been very valuable because it came from the core of each of us [representatives and authorities] and communities that have been visited (Final Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

2.5.5 Phase V – closure of the study

This phase was longer and even more complex than the construction of knowledge itself. It had been agreed with the federations and communities that we would develop material that they determined would be useful as a self-government tool. We had then committed to deliver a document in a magazine format, designed and intended for the Ashéninka and Yine-Yami indigenous communities.

To validate the information in the magazine, the research team made a concluding visit to each of the communities. This part of the study was completed by submitting the information required by the federations and their community members, and the NGO.

2.5.5.1 Preparation of deliverables

Our first delivery to the communities was a package of photographs taken in each community. I delivered these to the local authorities or sent them by river to the cultural advisors so that they could take care of distributing them in the communities.

The information socially created in the communities (and later written down) was selected, transcribed, and translated by the research team (including translators that were hired for this purpose). An experienced graphic designer, specialising in delivering information to indigenous communities in the Amazon, was hired to work with the information (images, photos, and text). He first developed a prototype format for the magazine that could be evaluated by our allies in the communities. It showed its final size, colour and content (description of the study, the methodologies, the required information, and images taken on the visits). The first prototype was ready in mid-April 2013. The production of the final document was completed in July 2013, and the delivery to the last collaborator community was in late November 2013. To see the document in its entirety, refer to the following web link:

http://www.dar.org.pe/archivos/publicacion/103_Revista_OOII.pdf.

2.5.5.2 Validation of information

Within the framework of the developed methodologies and theories used in the study, a more coherent closure of the study was to return to the communities to validate the co-created

information, to deliver the promised document, and to close the study in a community assembly. Although it was not part of our commitment (as agreed in the alliance) to go back to the communities, we noted that it was very important as a way to respect the relationships developed during the process. The distribution channel was through direct coordination with Mrs. Shuñaqui (principal cultural advisor), who in turn coordinated with the other cultural advisors.

Mrs. Shuñaqui established communication via two-way radio and face-to-face with the other cultural advisors, community authorities, and representatives to coordinate the appropriate day and time to visit their communities. The community authorities called a community meeting to collectively identify a coherent distribution strategy for the magazine in their communities. In the closing meeting in each of the six communities, we:

1. Explained the overall study process – the initial contact with representatives, the interviews and group sessions in communities, and the interviews and Final Session with representatives of indigenous organizations and local authorities conducted in Atalaya. We especially focused on the Final Session's process with their federation representatives and community authorities because it was the most recent part of the process.
2. Ratified the principles and foundations that guided the study,
3. Explained the document and the methodology.
4. Read or explained the final message on the last page of the magazine.

During the last week of April 2013, the principal cultural advisor, the Yine-Yami cultural advisor, and I participated in a joint assembly, involving both Yine-Yami communities: Nueva Unión and Bufe Pozo. This gathering was held in Bufe Pozo. As mentioned earlier, at this stage we had a prototype magazine that they had reviewed and had made comments and suggestions on the content, form of delivery, and images. We also left the draft document with each community for further review. Validation of the content by the Ashéninka people was determined by Mrs. Shuñaqui following the same procedure.

Once the research process was completed, my role was to ensure that commitments that had been made (written and verbal) were accomplished, and to monitor the frameworks under which the operations were conducted (Chilisa, 2012).

2.5.5.3 Analyzing the information

The material presented in this thesis is based primarily on first-hand information and perspectives from indigenous community members and federation representatives from the Peruvian Amazon. The study involved 102 conversational interviews, 18 group sessions and 2 full-day workshops with representatives and communal authorities. In addition, I also draw on various sources such as indigenous conferences, federation documents, and reviews from articles, newspapers, and governmental and non-governmental reports, to qualitatively analyze indigenous peoples' voices.

The information was gathered as digital records and in notebooks. The material in the recordings was transcribed *verbatim* by four undergraduate students of anthropology, law, and political sciences in Peru. Each hired transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement and I reviewed all transcriptions at least twice to verify the content. I transcribed the remaining audios using the voice recognition software Dragon Naturally Speaking™. I used the qualitative software NVivo™ 10 to group the transcribed data into themes or codes. I identified themes that were organized into twenty-two principal nodes and ninety-seven sub-nodes. Table 2 lists some examples of the themes and sub-themes that were coded.

I used *hypothesis*, *structural*, *subcoding*, and *simultaneous* coding (Saldaña, 2009) as the reference for grouping the data. Each theme contained segments of the recorded conversations that the research team had with the research collaborators. Each federation, with their respective communities, was a “case,” which we called collaborators.

In total there were 147 audio segments from the interviews and group sessions, or 150 hours of recordings. All the information was coded into themes. When addressing a topic, I turned to one (or more) of these themes and reviewed the evidence. Also, specific topics emerged from the data to shape and shed light on the research objectives. Emergent themes were identified according to their relevance, as expressed by collaborators, or because they provided a different angle or provided an explanation for what is mentioned in the literature.

Table 2: Listing and description of some of the codes used for data analysis in this study

Code	Description
Achievements	List of achievements in communities until the day of the conversation
Difficulties	Information divided by subthemes: water, food, community, cohabitation in a community, misuse of signatures, denunciations of abuses, extractive industries, FSC certification, among others
Desires	Information related indigenous peoples' desires indigenous peoples for their future Here information included desired characteristics of a representative Also included were community members' desires related to education and health issues
Recommendations	Information divided between recommendations elaborated by community members, and elaborated by representatives & communal authorities in the final session
Reflections	Information divided between reflections formulated by community members, and by representatives & communal authorities in the final session
History	All information related to their histories and reflections about their past, much of which is not recorded in any book
FECONAPA	Information about creation, objectives, achievements, statutes, policies, accountability mechanisms, challenges, federations' role and structure, and the federation's relationship with others
OIDIT	
FECONAYY-FECONADIS	
Definitions	All definitions from indigenous perspectives regarding: general assembly, communal assembly, federation congress, neighbourhoods, difference between association & federation, traditional way of living, indigenous organizations, representatives and their motivations, derogative names for the Ashéninka and Yine-Yami peoples used by outsiders, stories about <i>pishtaco</i> and <i>minga</i> , neighborhood president, <i>ayahuasca</i> medicine, communal enterprise, <i>mestizo</i> , historical power imbalances, difference between an indigenous person from a community and from a city, <i>centro poblado</i> , among others.
Important topics	Self-government, protocols to enter into indigenous communities, cultural advisors reflections, consultation, and spiritual beliefs
For me	Under this code were all the messages that were directed to the principal researcher to take into account and keep in mind while doing the analysis and beyond that

The recordings were first processed to derive the information to meet the commitments toward the collaborators (the NGO and indigenous communities and their federations). I then focused on the objectives of my deliverable, my thesis, for the Faculty of Forestry at UBC. The analysis was an ongoing process that occurred after the discussions with the community partners, cultural advisors, and other indigenous and non-indigenous individuals, but I always tried to evoke indigenous paradigms.

To address the first objective (factors that contribute to representatives' success) and objective 2 (recommendations provided by representatives and community members) the *framework matrix* was used, a tool provided in NVivo™. This tool was useful in retrieving desired information from the large volumes of material created through interviews and group sessions. Afterward, this information was qualitatively analyzed using indigenous theories. The matrix illustrated in Table 3 was a combination of the themes (characteristics) shown in the rows, and aspects (gender=feminine, masculine, or mix groups) that interact with the theme as shown in the columns.

Table 3. Characteristics identified by interviews and group sessions

	A : Gender = m	B : Gender = f	
1 : Characteristic	100	63	Interviews
	A : Gender = m	B : Gender = f	C : Gender = mf
1 : Characteristic	145	158	4
			Group Sessions

I accessed the sections of information associated with the combination of what was requested in the rows and columns: characteristics depending on the method (interviews or group sessions), and gender (male, female, and mixed groups). Later, I grouped the excerpts of information according to specific characteristics that emerged from the information itself in individual Excel tables, one per method. Once all quotes related to a certain desirable characteristics were placed in the Excel table, I counted the number of times each characteristic was mentioned. Each individual mentioning a characteristic at least once was counted as one (mention). I made no gender-based analysis.

For the analysis I used the Servant-Leadership theory framework (Greenleaf, 1977). I grouped characteristics by category or factor related to Close Interpersonal Relationships, Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours, and Organizational Capacity. The factors were inspired by the Servant-Leadership literature. Servant-leadership theory emerged as a result of the need for a different way of leading organizations after a series of bad practices in current representation models including abuse of power, unethical behaviour, toxic emotions and bullying leadership (Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008). Robert Greenleaf coined the servant-leadership term and described a leader who is “servant first” rather than “leader first” (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 19). “The

difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 22).

The Servant-Leadership theory describes desirable attributes that could lead to successful organizations. The analysis process came with a caveat: in Servant-Leadership theory, the served are described as "followers" or "subordinates" (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Sendjaya et al., 2008). Conversely, in Ashéninka and Yine-Yami descriptions about the relationships between their institutions' representatives and member communities, the "leaders" are the followers of decisions made by the general assembly made up of *comuneros* from the member communities. With that caveat in mind, this framework was useful to categorize emergent characteristics in indigenous communities and to provide some background and descriptions of characteristics.

The process used to address the second objective was similar. The information retrieved using NVivo™ consisted of the recommendations and reflections made by the collaborators, by category (r = federation representative, c = community member, and a = communal authority). The knowledge created by collaborators was first coded by recommendations and reflections (separately), and later summarised in two tables: one for recommendations and another for reflections.

Subsequently, the recommendations and reflections retrieved from the tables were manually coded into groups that emerged from the information itself. Each group consisted of recommendations elaborated by collaborators to improve their federations: (1) defining the jurisdiction of the federations; (2) formalizing the federations; (3) improving the processes of interaction; (4) strengthening the self-determined indigenous economy; and (5) increasing political participation.

In summary, to co-create knowledge with our allies in the Peruvian Amazon we worked in a multicultural research team. Through conversational interviews and different group sessions, the knowledge co-created is presented and discussed in the following chapters. Chapter 3 concentrates on our first objective, and Chapter 4 in objective 2.

Chapter 3: Factors for success and indigenous representatives

“The community regulations are established in a way that if anybody wants to live here has to be an Ashéninka. Now, if a mestizo wants to live within the community, he/she has to identify himself/herself as indigenous and accept being indigenous, later the communal assembly has to evaluate this”

(Indigenous representative, Mencoriari, 2012)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses, from the perspectives of Ashéninka and Yine-Yami people, the relevant factors that lead to successful representation of communities by federations’ representatives. These analyses are made at the personal level—the federation representatives. People from six Ashéninka and Yine-Yami communities identified specific characteristics that, according to their perspectives, are deeply linked to the ability of their representatives to achieve community members’ objectives of achieving their desires for the future and overcoming their current difficulties.

Section 3.2 defines some federation-related basic terms from Ashéninka and Yine-Yami perspectives. Section 3.3 discusses the most desirable characteristics for federation representatives according to community members, and section 3.4 discusses the most desirable characteristics of federation representatives according to the representatives themselves. The characteristics identified by the community members and by the representatives are clustered into three main factors in order to understand and compare the type of characteristics that are most valued by each group. Section 3.5 discusses the differences and similarities between community members’ and federation representatives’ perspectives. Finally, section 3.6 concludes the chapter by summarizing Ashéninka and Yine-Yami perspectives to inform actors in this self-governing indigenous system with bottom-up evidence about the factors that could contribute to improve representatives’ role for achieving communities’ objectives.

3.2 Basic definitions from Ashéninka and Yine-Yami perspectives

In this section, we familiarize ourselves with what a federation is and how the terms *federation*, *representative*, and *success* are defined in Ashéninka and Yine-Yami contexts.

Federations are “complexes of norms and behaviours” that collectively work towards the attainment of specific goals through human talent management (Uphoff, 1993, p. 614). It is then the human talent that provides the agency for the federation to be able to achieve its goals. A federation can be materialized physically (for example, in the venue of an office). Conversations with community members revealed that a federation is: (a) each of the persons (by name) who work in the infrastructure (of the federation's venue) or are acting on behalf of the federation to achieve its member communities' objectives; or (b) simply the name of the venue that hosts *comuneros* when they do any paperwork in the main towns of Atalaya, Bolognesi, or Sepahua. For community members, the representatives' attributes and characteristics are not just crucial, but are the means by which member communities' objectives can be achieved. Although indigenous federations were originally established based on euro-western models (Weber, Butler, & Larson, 2000), they are being shaped by conditions and peoples' requirements encountered in this region (this information is based on conversations with community members and federation representatives between November 2012 and April 2013).

Some federations became institutionalized²⁴ at national and international levels and are the main links between the state and indigenous communities²⁵ (Chirif & García, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Yashar, 2005). Likewise, federations quickly became institutionalized at the community level for the purpose of having an indigenous collective/association with similar perspectives and system values at the communities' service. Based on Uphoff (1993), institutionalization is a process by which a federation could enjoy special status and legitimacy for having satisfied people's objectives and meeting their normative expectations over time. In this study, discussions about the federation/institution as an abstract concept, with rules and

²⁴ I will use the terms *federation* and *institution* interchangeably because indigenous federations in this study had already become institutionalized at the local level at the time of this study.

²⁵ This argument does not take into account various indigenous nomadic groups located in the Peruvian Amazon in voluntary isolation, in sporadic contact, or not yet in initial contact.

norms designed to address communities' objectives, were not productive without linking it to a specific person—the representative.

Community members used terms such as representative, leader, or *dirigente* (this term's closest translation is leader) interchangeably. However, for Ashéninka and Yine-Yami people, the meanings of *representative* and *leader* differ from western definitions. Based on community members' own realities and dynamics, these terms were redefined to serve their own purposes, perspectives, and practices. It is expected that a representative acts like a spokesperson rather than a person in command who makes decisions without consulting with them. Communities' approach to a representative's role is more a communal democracy (direct democracy) rather than a representative democracy (indirect democracy) (Kaiser, 1997). Throughout this thesis, I use the term representative or federation representative, bearing in mind communities' perspectives about this term.

When representatives effectively address member communities' objectives, the federation is recognized as “successful.” Based on Ramos (2014), success is defined as the achievement of objectives previously identified between parties (in this study, the representatives and the represented). When referring to the success of a federation we acknowledge a process in which member communities' objectives are achieved. This process takes effect when *comuneros* and the representatives have previously identified the federations' functions and objectives. In order for federations to achieve success, it is important to strengthen the relationship between representatives and community members. This was identified by representatives and *comuneros*, and confirmed by Chirif and García (2011).

We asked community members and federation representatives about the characteristics and attributes²⁶ that allow representatives to attain member communities' objectives. Their answers were classified into categories to identify the kinds of characteristics that are most important to them. Inspired by Servant Leadership theory approaches (Greenleaf, 1977), I organized/formulated three main categories or factors to understand the types of characteristics

²⁶ I used the terms *characteristic* and *attribute* interchangeably to refer to the desirable attributes, behaviours, traits, features, qualities, and specific characteristic for federations and representatives.

that arose during conversations and group sessions with indigenous peoples. These include: Close Interpersonal Relationships (CIR); Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours (SEMB); and Organizational Capacity (OC).

To organize and analyze the emerged knowledge I used several methods. First, I used the software NVivo™ to codify and retrieved relevant information. Then, using Excel I grouped the excerpts of information retrieved according to specific characteristics raised by community members, and in other table the knowledge raised by representatives and communal authorities. Once all excerpts were placed in the Excel table, I counted the number of times each characteristic was mentioned (one count means that one person mentioned the characteristic at least one time). Finally, I qualitatively analyzed the information.

Below, I discuss which factors community members and representatives prioritize separately. Prioritization in this document is based on the quantity of times a characteristic was mentioned, and the emphasis placed on a specific characteristic. The characteristics identified within each factor are described in the following sections.

3.3 Community members' perspectives

In this section, I focus on the specific characteristics that were identified by community members. Through interviews in six Ashéninka and Yine-Yami communities, community members identified twenty-two attributes (see Table 4) that, according to them, could contribute to improving their representatives' effectiveness in achieving member communities' objectives (see more detail on these methods in section 2.4.3.3). Every characteristic was categorized under one of the three factors, Close Interpersonal Relationships, Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours, or Organizational Capacity, and discussed in turn.

It is important to note that these characteristics formulated by community members are by no means a reflection of behaviours or actions of all representatives, but rather an exercise to create an inspirational and ideal set of characteristics to strength the leadership style in this context.

3.3.1 Close Interpersonal Relationships

The characteristics related to establishing Close Interpersonal Relationships between the represented and the representative were characteristics most emphasized by *comuneros*. Individual characteristics of Close Interpersonal Relationships were grouped, resulting in five principal characteristics listed in Table 4. Community members placed a high value on face-to-face interactions with their representatives, both informally and formally (for example, in a communal assembly).

In the process of establishing a relationship between a representative and a community member, the means of communication play a vital role according to community members. Some of the most commonly mentioned means of communication were: (a) face-to-face community visits by representatives; (b) through ham radio; (c) through written documents, usually transported by river; (d) through communal authorities relaying messages between the representatives and community members; (e) messages sent through AM radio broadcasts and, when available; (f) through satellite telephone²⁷.

3.3.1.1 Community visits

Visiting the community was the most common characteristic of Close Interpersonal Relationships mentioned by community members. During conversational interviews, 34 community members suggested that federation representatives should visit the communities that they serve. *Comuneros* stressed that the physical presence of representatives might enable representatives to learn communities' objectives. This would allow them to have updated and accurate information

²⁷ This last means of communication is restricted to the availability of phone cards sold in the stores (occasionally supplied by merchants when they travel to the main towns), and restricted by *comuneros*' financial means to purchase the expensive cards. Sometimes these are available in the community, but this is not common.

Table 4: Desired characteristics for federation representatives mentioned in individual interviews with community members, by number of people raising them. One count is equivalent to a mention, meaning that one person mentioned the characteristic at least one time.

Close Interpersonal Relationship	That representatives...	Total
come to visit us		34
openly communicate/coordinate in communal assemblies		26
give us advice & build capacity		10
are sociable		7
have lived in the community		4
Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours	That representatives...	Total
are honest		17
have integrity		14
are impartial		12
are accountable		11
are cautious with alcohol consumption		8
are responsible & punctual		7
respect the assets and funds that belong to the federation		5
are faithful to spouse & family		5
support & collaborate		5
are not selfish		4
love (or have <i>cariño</i> for) their people		4
are impartial		3
are conciliatory/peace makers		1
Organizational Capacity	That representatives...	Total
are <i>gestionarores</i>		12
are trained/have capacity		7
are hard worker		5
respect the communal assembly as the highest authority		3

when negotiating/managing/advocating (called *gestionar*²⁸ in these contexts) with public, private and non-governmental organizations about projects and actions that address communities' concerns and desires for the future. A community member explained why representatives' visits to the member communities are relevant:

²⁸ Various grammatical forms of this term are used throughout this document. For instance *gestionar* is the verb, *gestionador* is the root verb with the agentive morpheme (is also often used as an adjective) and its plural is *gestionadores*. *Gestión* is the noun and its plural is *gestiones*. I decided to use this term and not its literal translation in English "to manage", because in this context this term means to actively negotiate, manage, and advocate to the benefit of their member communities, a meaning not fully captured by the single-word English translation.

...it seems important for me because they will hear the needs and problems of the community by conversing with people (conversation with community member, Puerto Esperanza, December 2012).

Community visits are also valuable for *comuneros* to get to know their representatives and to assess the representatives' spiritual, ethical, and moral behaviours. In Nuevo Paraíso, a community member said that their representatives do not know how they live there (meaning that representatives might not be aware of current details of their difficulties and how they envision their futures), and continued:

It must be a requirement for them to come. Look, I do not know who they are, who makes up the federation, or who the treasurer is (conversation with community member, Nuevo Paraíso, November 2012).

In Puerto Esperanza, another community member stated:

“If we choose representatives, it is for them to be out in the field and see the difficulties of the community... I want to see their faces” (conversation with community member, Puerto Esperanza, December 2012).

This community member further said that representatives will avoid being criticized by visiting communities since people do notice their presence within their communities. Furthermore, *comuneros* argued the importance of personal interaction beyond the physical presence of representatives in member communities (conversation with community members, Mencoriari, Diobamba-Chanchamayo, and Nuevo Paraíso, November 2012; Puerto Esperanza and Bufo Pozo, December 2012). When asked to compare the importance of two commonly mentioned aspects of Close Interpersonal Relationships, *gestionar* (negotiating/managing/advocating) further actions with other agencies for the benefit of the community and visiting the community, *comuneros* usually prioritized the latter. For instance, in Bufo Pozo, a *comunero* said:

Sure... it is okay that [the representative] is coordinating, but [the representative] should not coordinate too much, instead [the representative should] always see the community (conversation with community member, Bufo Pozo, December 2012).

In fact, *comuneros* often responded that it is useless to negotiate/manage/advocate (*gestionar*) benefits for the communities if representatives do not visit member communities to have updated information about the communities' objectives. A community member from Nuevo Paraíso added:

For example there are meetings happening in Pucallpa... So, the president of the organization should already be there saying what the difficulties of his people are. Before he leaves for those meetings, he must come here to see what people need. We can give our opinions (conversation with community member, Nuevo Paraíso, November 2012).

3.3.1.2 Coordination and communication

Community members mentioned that they want to coordinate and communicate openly with their representatives during communal assemblies. This attribute was mentioned by 26 persons in the interviews and was categorized within the Close Interpersonal Relationship factor which contains all characteristics and attributes that requires a representative to be physically present in the community and interacting with *comuneros*.

This characteristic is related to the desire to have a greater degree of information exchange—in democracy—between *comuneros* and their representatives. With the term *in democracy*, community members imply that this information exchange is based on the elaboration of ideas and reaching decisions in a communal assembly, through listening and building on what all community members say. A community member in Puerto Esperanza expressed the desire to see their representatives bring all of the community together to coordinate any actions that would affect them. In Nueva Unión it was mentioned that:

[The representatives] should work with the authorities coordinating, and then call a communal assembly and, from there, we generate ideas through dialogue about what else the community needs (conversation with communal authority, Nueva Unión, December 2012).

Community members also mentioned that coordination in some situations may occur through ham radio or satellite phone (if available in the community). A *comunero* from Nuevo Paraíso,

who is in charge of the communal radio, discussed the drawbacks of coordinating and transmitting information by ham radio. Specially, he mentioned misunderstandings when coordinating through this means of communication. Hence, he recognized that it is preferable to coordinate in person (conversation with a community member, Nuevo Paraíso, November 2012). This conclusion was consistent throughout the communities. A Bufe Pozo resident commented:

I want [the representatives] to come to call a meeting because people say that there is a federation but they don't come to convene meetings (...). That's not how it should be... what I mean is that there is no coordination with representatives (conversation with a community member, Bufe Pozo, December 2012).

3.3.1.3 Other characteristics

Four other characteristics of Close Interpersonal Relationships were mentioned in communities with less frequency.

Provide advice and build capacity. Community members stated that while the federation representatives are in the community, they could share some of their knowledge regarding new legislation, events taking place in the principal towns, and national news. Communities are usually in remote areas with limited access to other means of communication (besides those mentioned above). On one hand, this has encouraged them to develop their own processes of thought and self-determination²⁹. As Van Cott states, “the geographic isolation of Amazon Indians was a boon to political organizing” (2005, p. 106). On the other hand, it has left the sensation of being isolated from news and activities occurring outside of the community. Therefore, some community members expressed interest in having representatives share some of the information that they have learned about outside community boundaries.

Sociable. Community members also appear to prefer representatives that are sociable with them. A sociable representative was described as a person that develops friendship with *comuneros*,

²⁹ There is limited exposure to information to influence their attitudes. Furthermore, some households in Nuevo Paraíso that have televisions had reflected on the negative balance of the impacts of television on their everyday lives; negative values that influence their families and/or that watching it takes away from their available time.

enabling greater accessibility for community members to enter into conversations to express their ideas.

Have lived in a community. Some community members made a distinction that there are indigenous peoples from the cities and indigenous peoples from the indigenous communities, and both have different experiences and even perspectives. *Comuneros* argued that representatives could improve their performance of representing member communities if they have similar experiences as *comuneros* do. There are specific activities that *comuneros* mentioned that are characteristic of an indigenous person that lives in the community, for instance, getting their own food through making *chacras*, fishing, and hunting. Empathy was discussed as playing an important role when serving member communities.

3.3.1.4 Discussion

The Close Interpersonal Relationship factor included characteristics that allow for the establishment of and continuous relationship between community members and federation representatives. This idea is conceptualized as social capital by Putnam et al. (1993). In this relationship, face-to-face interactions between community members and representatives are pertinent. This is important if only because community members are asking for coordination and consultation before *gestiones* or actions are made by representatives. This interaction could either be formal (communal assembly) or informal. These interactions are also important for community members to understand representatives' spiritual, ethical, and moral characteristics. In fact, Uphoff (1993) indicates that individuals who have face-to-face relationships are more likely to develop "multi-stranded connections" that provide a strong foundation to create "collective action" (p.609). Likewise, "leaders rely on one-on-one communication to understand the abilities, needs, desires, goals, and potential of those individuals" (Liden et al., 2008, p. 162). Finally, generalized trust levels are higher when close interpersonal relationships of interaction are prevalent (Gordon, 2006). Gordon (2006) compared two cases in Mexico between modern and more traditional municipalities. The latter, whose members relied more on face-to-face interactions, were able to develop higher trust levels compared to the former municipality, where community members relied more on other means of communication.

3.3.2 Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours

The second most frequently mentioned characteristic mentioned by community members was related to representatives' spiritual, ethical and moral behaviours. Individual aspects related to this characteristic were grouped, resulting in 13 desirable traits listed in Table 4.

3.3.2.1 Honesty

Honesty was mentioned by 17 people and was the most mentioned desirable characteristic among the Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours. Community members have formulated federation representative's desirable characteristics based on previous negative experiences with researchers and individuals from public, private, and non-governmental organizations who did not keep their word. For instance a community member in a group session gave an example of public institutions representatives who did not meet the commitments with the community:

The institutions, municipality, and Civil Defense have deceived us. They told us they will support us when there is flood—the plants die and animals drown— (Gender Session with men, Puerto Esperanza, November 2012).

In these distant areas, it can be more common to break promises because the communities are far away from cities and towns (where these organizations are located and where individuals who made the promises are). I have witnessed that this problem is compounded by the communications tools used in western societies being incompatible with the ones used in the indigenous contexts.

Past experiences have led community members to become sceptical and cautious of outsiders. *Comuneros* stated that they do not want their representatives and communal authorities to fall into this pattern. They ask that their representatives fulfill their promises and that they do not lose credibility (Group Session with women, Bufo Pozo, December 2012). In the personal interviews and group sessions that took place in Bufo Pozo, community members referred to the upcoming municipal elections³⁰, saying that they need to be careful about candidates' promises

³⁰ “Regional and nationwide municipal elections were called by the President, Ollanta Humala Tasso, for Sunday October 5, 2014 according to Supreme Decree no. 009-2014-PCM” for the 2015-2018 period (Eleccionesperu.com, para 1).

and, instead, should be aware of the candidates' primary intentions of gaining power (conversation with community member, Group Session with men Bufe Pozo, December 2012). Indeed, honesty is deeply linked to trust and credibility (Russell & Stone, 2002), an attribute crucial for establishing relationships, including friendships, partnerships, or in the provision of any type of service.

3.3.2.2 Integrity

Fourteen community members mentioned that federation representatives should have integrity, including being respectful and not being swayed by others. Russell and Stone (2002) argue that integrity is closely related to ethics and “reflects adherence to an overall moral code” (p. 148).

A representative that is independent and is not going to be persuaded by interests other than her/his responsibility to serve member communities is integral to the success of a federation. For instance, a Nueva Unión communal authority gave his testimony about bad influences while performing in a representative or communal authority role:

We must always guard against the negative influences. There are persons that could encourage us to do bad things. So we always have to respect others and be careful of those influences (conversation with communal authority, Nueva Unión, December 2012).

In Bufe Pozo, a community member recognized the importance of this characteristic in dealing with transnational companies that are economically and politically powerful:

Sometimes representatives and authorities could be manipulated by others... There has to be a good chief with a very strong character because sometimes (the companies) take them to Lima and convince them there. Later they do not want to be accountable to us anymore (conversation with community member, Bufe Pozo, December 2012).

This characteristic is also related to individual autonomy, which is described as an individual's capacity to make an independent decision, free of coercion and in accordance with her/his values, desires and convictions (Kühler & Jelinek, 2012).

3.3.2.3 Other characteristics

There were ten less frequently mentioned characteristics of Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours identified by community members.

Accountability. Community members want their representatives to be accountable to them. According to representatives and community members, formal mechanisms of accountability currently take effect during the federations' annual congresses. Community members mentioned that they hold representatives accountable primarily for three actions: spending; activities performed; and travel. A community member suggested the incorporation of a formal procedure in the federation that allows community members to dismiss a representative if representatives fail to be accountable to the member communities (conversation with a community member, Buefo Pozo, December 2012).

Accountability is related to ethics and includes notions of: transparency, which allows parties to engage together in fair deals; responsiveness, related to the representatives' willingness and ability to respond; and compliance, which entails agreements between parties about who is accountable to whom, and for what are they accountable (Bennis, Goleman, & O'Toole, 2008; Visser, Matten, & Pohl, 2008).

Cariño or love of one's people. *Cariño* can be translated as *love* or *care for one's people*. This characteristic was mentioned by just a few people. However, it became important as a desirable attribute for representatives because of the emphasis placed on it by community members. Moreover, *cariño* came up in different conversations—not necessarily when talking about desirable characteristics of representatives—but rather as an encompassing/holistic aspect important to the success of processes and actions:

Before, there were not very many material things, but there was love. Before, there was a bit of love for the community (Group Session with men, Buefo Pozo, December 2012).

Community members argued that by loving and taking care of their people, representatives demonstrate their willingness to serve their member communities (conversation with community

members in Nueva Unión, December 2012; Nuevo Paraíso, November 2012; Group Session with men in Nueva Unión, Bufe Pozo, December 2012). Furthermore, *cariño* was described as a sentiment that motivates and drives people toward action in benefit of the communities. *Cariño*³¹ is a starting point, catalyzing the desire to conduct actions which benefit the communities that representatives are working in. A *comunero* from Diobamba-Chanchamayo remarked on the *cariño* that a good representative shows to one's people:

...the president, who is a good fighter, loves his beloved community, who in turn is thankful to its federation to fight for their mother land (conversation with community member, Diobamba-Chanchamayo, November 2012).

Collaborators also demonstrated that *cariño* is relevant at all levels. During interviews and group sessions, community members reflected on the importance of taking it into account when electing the next mayor of their province. Voting for a mayor can start with considering the candidate's feelings and sentiments toward the communities.

Impartiality. Community members mentioned that a desirable characteristic for representatives is impartiality. "Impartiality is the moral imperative requiring that conflicting claims be evaluated without prejudice" (Karni, 1998, p. 1405). A good representative would treat people with no prejudice. When talking about this characteristic, a community member from Nuevo Paraíso reflected on his district mayor, saying that when people access positions of power they tend to discriminate others, especially those that did not vote for that person. It was also regularly mentioned that there is a tendency to discriminate against indigenous peoples for various reasons, for example, because they are indigenous or monolingual. Community members mentioned that this should not happen with federation representatives.

Other less frequently mentioned behaviours related to impartiality were also identified by community members. These traits are related with behaviours that are traverse all societies, as human beings strive to achieve a "richer and more fulfilling existence" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 10; Sendjaya et al., 2008).

³¹ This was also reflected in the research team principle work guidelines, "Principle 1 - our love/*cariño* for indigenous peoples." More information can be seen in Chapter 2.

Caution with alcohol consumption. According to community members, issues surrounding the consumption of alcohol were especially relevant for male representatives³². Community members noted unwanted behaviours when alcohol was consumed other than for ceremonial and medicinal reasons.

Responsible and punctual. It was suggested by community members that representatives should be responsible and punctual.

Respect the assets and funds that come from the federation. Respect is a positive self-conscious emotion that is culturally-based and may be given and/or required collectively or individually (Ting-Toomey, 1994). Within specific cultures, the conception of respect might also change. For instance, respect could be right-, position-, duty-, or moral-based. In this case community members are referring to a moral-based respect. This indicates that a characteristic they desire to see in representatives is respect of collective ownership of assets and funds that were acquired or granted to the federation with the purpose of serving member communities.

Faithful to spouse & family. This was a characteristic especially stressed by women in the communities. Representatives' constant travels and absence from their community and family members may cause conflict and family breakdown for unfaithful behaviours.

Support and collaborate. Community members mentioned that representatives should be supportive and collaborative with them. These characteristics are related to being attentive, and helpful to community members. These characteristics can be seen, for instance, when a person volunteers to do actions that are not necessarily a part of their duty.

³²Alcohol consumption in some indigenous societies traditionally was restricted to specific activities and its preparation was based on natural products like cassava, corn, or sweet potato, containing only a low alcohol concentration (Panamerican Health Organization of & World Health Organization, 2006). Although in several communities in the Amazon this traditional preparation is still part of their activities, foreign practices were brought into their realities. After the European conquest of the continent, colonizers introduced new rules and alcoholic beverages. Alcohol also started to be consumed for recreational and religious purposes, with the new beverages based on distillation processes that had higher alcoholic percentages (Panamerican Health Organization of & World Health Organization, 2006).

Selflessness. Selfishness³³ was identified as an undesirable characteristic because it is incompatible with the servant nature of the representative.

Conciliatory/peace maker. This characteristic of peace-making was mentioned by one community member in the interviews, but it was more often mentioned during the Single Gender Sessions. *Comuneros* indicated that a good characteristic in representatives is having a conciliatory attitude. For instance they would not like to see representatives fighting with each other or creating conflicts, but rather promoting unity.

3.3.2.4 Discussion

The Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours factor included characteristics related to the sentiments, ethics, and morals. These aspects are included in modern leadership models and civil politics in the formation of new representative and government schemes (Bebbington, 1996; Geertz, 1963; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sendjaya et al., 2008). Spiritual, ethical, and moral behaviours are included among the most important characteristics for improving the development of institutions and society (Liden et al., 2008; Page & Wong, 2000; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sendjaya et al., 2008).

Although *cariño* was mentioned just by a handful of persons, it was stressed by community members who mentioned that it is the foundational reason that motivates indigenous peoples to act in ways that benefit their peoples. Indeed, community members found this to be the main driving force for service and action. Within the servant-leadership and related literature, similar terms are used, including “appreciation of others” (Russell & Stone, 2002), “altruistic love” (Sendjaya et al., 2008), “heart to serve others” (Page & Wong, 2000), and “fellow feelings” (Geertz, 1963). Differing from romantic love, the terms mentioned above better define the *cariño* and the love that indigenous peoples identified as a critical motivator allowing federation

³³ Although this is a modern term, “as long as men and women have existed, they must have been tempted to give their own interest too large a proportion of their attention—to ‘pass by on the other side’” (Littell’s Living Age, 1982, p. 622).

representatives to conduct actions that better serve member communities when navigating through western realities.

Although these characteristics are well-discussed in the servant-leadership literature, it is not addressed accordingly in the reviewed literature about indigenous institutions in the Amazon despite its prevalence in Ashéninka and Yine-Yami indigenous communities.

3.3.3 Organizational Capacity

The characteristics of the last factor, Organizational Capacity, relate mainly to western-based knowledge and technical skills. The characteristics that community members mentioned were classified into four principal characteristics (Table 4).

3.3.3.1 Gestionar

Community members identified want their representatives to be *gestionadores*. This means that they are constantly looking for collaborators to work side by side towards achieving member communities' objectives, as well as negotiating and advocating in benefit of *comuneros*. This characteristic was mentioned by twelve community members in the conversational interviews.

A *comunero* from Bufe Pozo said that he wants representatives “to keep knocking on doors,” referring specifically to approaching the funding opportunities by non-governmental organizations. He continued by saying that “if he does not walk, he gets nothing” (conversation with community member, Bufe Pozo, December 2012). *Comuneros* stated that in these contexts representatives need to travel and actively seek opportunities to advance member communities agendas to achieve their objectives.

Usually, the *gestiones* are conducted in collaboration with federation for them to be consistent with indigenous realities. A community member from Nuevo Paraíso mentioned that she wants the federation representatives to find projects for her community when they travel to Pucallpa (Ucayali's main city). Usually, these projects are associated with raising animals, agriculture, commercialization of their products, and the communal management of their forests (conversations and Group Sessions with women, Nuevo Paraíso, November, 2012; Group

Session with men, Nueva Unión, December 2012; Group Session with men, Bufe Pozo, December 2012).

The representatives must be *gestionadores*. Find the way to find projects that are favourable [for the community], and then be accountable to the population that is our community. We had trust in the representatives, so they [should] work and give time in our favour (conversation with communal authority, Nuevo Paraíso, November 2012).

3.3.3.2 Capacity and training

Capacity and training are aspects that according to community members could enhance representatives' performance and effectiveness to achieve member communities' objectives. This characteristic was identified by seven people who referred to it as knowledge-based skills, gained mainly through euro-western education. For instance, *comuneros* said that the representatives should be able to read and write (conversations with community members, Bufe Pozo, December 2012, and Puerto Esperanza, November 2012). A community member in Nueva Unión said that capacity and training was desirable so that the representative would not be manipulated by others. In contrast, another community member mentioned that it was more important for the representative to have previous experience governing than to have technical skills, since the latter could be gained along the way.

3.3.3.3 Other characteristics

Included in the Organizational Capacity factor there were two additional characteristics that were less frequently mentioned and emphasized.

Hard workers. This characteristic could be confused with being *gestionador*. The difference is that being a hard worker relates to any person that puts with effort into achieving a goal.

Gestionador is one facet of being a hard worker and is applicable mainly to representatives and communal authorities, while being a hard worker could be applicable to anybody.

Respect the general assembly as the highest authority. Community members stated that the highest authority is the general assembly, which is a gathering of member communities to make decisions. A community member said that, because the representative was elected by the people,

they should coordinate with the communities on ideas that came out of the general assembly (conversation with community member, Nueva Unión, December 2012). Other community members went further and suggested that representatives should base their work on decisions made in communal assemblies (conversation with community members, Nueva Unión and Bufeo Pozo, December 2012).

3.3.3.4 Discussion

Although, Yashar (2005) and Van Cott (2005) suggest that organizational capacity is one of the factors for success of indigenous movements characteristics related to Organizational Capacity were the least mentioned and prioritized factor by community members. Characteristics identified within this factor were more related to western-based knowledge and technical skills. Bebbington (1996) identified technical skills as an indicator of success for these types of federations. However, according to Yashar (2005), organizational capacity in Amazonian contexts is mainly formed by trans-community networks. In fact, trans-community gatherings had provided a platform for engaged community members and indigenous leaders to share, learn from each other, and create knowledge about how to face common challenges and attain common objectives.

3.3.4 General discussion on community member's perspectives

The factors prioritized to address current challenges and achieve desires for the future as identified by themselves are first Close Interpersonal Relationships; then desirable Spiritual, Ethical and Moral Behaviours; and finally Organizational Capacity (see Figure 21) Results of this section were based on conversational interviews with community members. However, evidence from group sessions (including Single Gender Sessions and General Group Sessions) about the desired characteristics for a representative echoed and confirmed the evidence that emerged from interviews.

According to community members, it is especially important to build Close Interpersonal Relationships with the federation representatives. Community members can then evaluate the representative's Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours. Organizational Capacity skills are important, as well, but they can be acquired along the way. Although Yashar (2005)

and Van Cott (2005) recognize the organizational capacity as key in building indigenous movements, indigenous peoples rely more on relational ways of knowing and conceiving reality (Chilisa, 2012; Martin & Mirra-Boopa, 2003). Therefore, according to the evidence provided by community members, limited success will be achieved by federations representatives if characteristics in Close Interpersonal Relationships and Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours are not cultivated first.

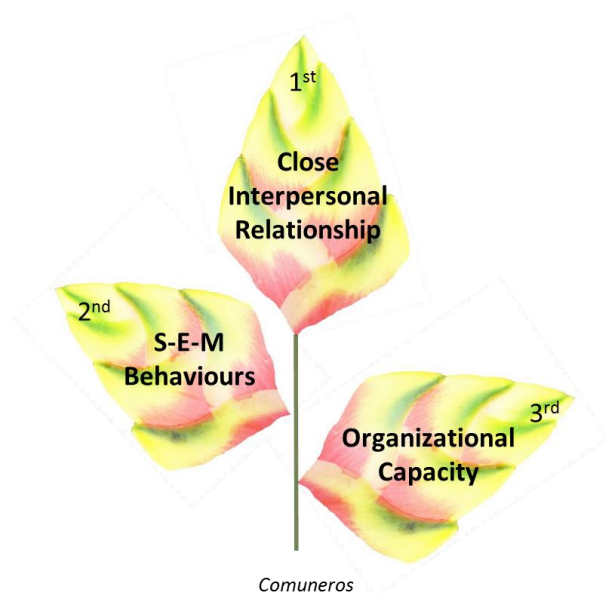


Figure 21: The three main desirable factors for achieve member communities' objectives, as prioritized by comuneros

3.4 Representatives' and communal authorities' perspectives

The information presented in this section was co-created during the General Session from Phase IV (see more details in section 2.4.4.4) with 40 collaborators (communal authorities from 17 communities and representatives from seven local and regional federations). In this two-day meeting, collaborators formed three groups, depending on their jurisdiction (OIDIT, FECONAPA, and FECONAYY/FECONAYY), to identify the desirable characteristics for federation representatives. The results (compiled in Table 5) show 18 characteristics grouped into three factors.

The factor with the most recognized characteristics was the Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours, followed Organizational Capacity, and, finally, Close Interpersonal Relationships.

Representatives and communal authorities identified desirable characteristics that they should have, before learning what community members had identified as desirable characteristics. They later reflected on the similarities and differences.

I manually codified the transcribed information using different colors to identify different characteristics mentioned for later organization and analysis. Then, using excel I grouped characteristics within the three factors. Once characteristics were placed in the excel table, I counted the number of times each characteristic was mentioned. One count means that one person mentioned the characteristic at least one time. Finally, I qualitatively analyzed the information.

It is important to highlight that this activity was a collective construction of characteristics, whereas information obtained for the previous section (Community members' perspectives) was a result of the interviews. The quantity of collaborators (40) for this activity was less than the number of collaborators in the communities (102), so there were more opinions that further expose *comuneros'* perspectives. Similar terms were clustered under a single characteristic, but were counted independently.

Table 5: Desired characteristics for federation representatives mentioned by representatives. One count is equivalent to one mention, meaning that one person mentioned the characteristic at least one time.

Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours	That representatives...	Total
are honest		7
are responsible		3
are not selfish		3
are conciliators/peace-makers		2
are accountable		2
are cautious with alcohol consumption		1
have cultural identity		1
do not keep the assets of the federation		1
Organizational Capacity	That representatives...	Total
are <i>gestionarores</i>		6
are hard workers		2
are democratic		3
are creative		1
do not have several positions		1
have good health		1
have experience governing		1
Close Interpersonal Relationship	That representatives...	Total
openly communicate/coordinate in communal assembly		5
are sociable		3
are patient		1

3.4.1 Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours

Desirable Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours were clustered into eight principal characteristics, shown in

Table 5.

3.4.1.1 Honesty

Honesty was mentioned by seven collaborators. According to representatives and communal authorities, it is very important to be honest so that community members can trust them (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013). Although this was a common characteristic mentioned in conversations with community members and representatives, one of the representatives argued that it is very difficult to practice *true* honesty. He saw it as an ideal that could resolve many

problems if all humans really would put it into practice (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

3.4.1.2 Other characteristics

Collaborators identified seven other characteristics, mentioned less frequently, that federation representatives should have.

Responsibility. Collaborators specifically referred to being responsible for the federations' assets and being responsible for accomplishing the duties of the position (Group Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Selfishness. Collaborators mentioned the importance of sharing. For instance, one representative encouraged other representatives to remember some of the traditional practices of indigenous peoples, like sharing fish with their brothers and sisters in the community (Group Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Conciliatory attitude. Collaborators encouraged each other to be peace makers. "Like we govern our house, our community, the same as the federation. Being in conflict, nobody wins." For example, a FECONAPA representative said, "when there is conflict between communities the representative has to go to pacify both sides to live harmoniously. In the community, the authority also has to establish harmony" (Group Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Accountability. Representatives "should inform the community what work has been done, which objectives have been achieved, and what coordination is being done with the [local] governments. They must work together without obscuring information" (Group Session, Atalaya, February 2013). An OIDIT representative added that there should also be transparency within the institution and between the other representatives. For instance, information should be shared by the president. Representatives from all federations identified community members as observers, and as overseers: "the gentlemen below [referring to the images in which the roots are the communities] have to be the supervisors and caretakers/overseers" (Group Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Caution with alcohol consumption. It was recognized that representatives should be wary of alcohol consumption and that it should not interfere with their activities. Also, the contextualized use of traditional beverages like *masato*³⁴ that might contain alcohol for community and ceremonial use was respectfully acknowledged (Group Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Cultural identity. A desirable characteristic among representatives is that they proudly carry their cultural identity despite travelling to other places. Cultural identity is understood to mean the cultural traits, customs, values, and beliefs that belong to a particular ethnic group (Oxford Reference, 2011). In this context, it also could mean using their languages and traditional clothes, at least when they are among their own ethnic group members.

Respect the assets of the federation. One representative indicated that, if there are assets acquired by the federation, they should remain in the federation, and not be lent out. Some aspects of this desirable characteristic become slightly contradictory with traditional practices of sharing, mentioned above (Group Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

3.4.2 **Organizational Capacity**

Characteristics mentioned by collaborators were grouped into seven principal characteristics, shown in Table 5.

3.4.2.1 **Gestionar**

All representatives agreed that *gestionar*, the ability to actively look for collaborations that benefit communities, to negotiate, and to advocate for them, is one of the most important desirable characteristics of representatives. This allows them to translate specific plans into actions to advance communities' goals.

³⁴ Beverage made of fermented cassava. It could be alcoholic or non-alcoholic (depending of the level of fermentation).

A Yine-Yami representative stated that, lately, representatives had been distant from provincial and regional governments and had been diminishing their capacity of *gestión* with them. He attributed this change to partisan politics between a representative (or federation) and the current party in power in a particular provincial or regional government (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

As part of this characteristic, representatives also explained the need for a representative to be dynamic. A representative from FECONAPA indicated, “if the representative is quiet and introverted, then how will we realize programs and projects? We require a person that can make contacts with the regional government, local government, etc.” (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

This representative linked the ability to manage/negotiate/advocate (*gestionar*) to the ability of representatives to foster networks. Whereas community members stressed trans-community networks, representatives also highlighted the importance of inter-institutional networks, for example with public institutions like local governments.

3.4.2.2 Other characteristics

There were five other characteristics that were less frequently mentioned by representatives.

Hard workers. This characteristic was mentioned by the OIDIT group and referred to, in general terms, a person who works energetically toward attaining a goal. A person who is a hard worker would more effectively serve member communities (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Democratic. This was a term assigned to a person who makes decisions through democratic processes. For all collaborators, a democratic person is someone who does not authoritatively impose her or his thoughts and ways of doing things on others. A representative described how he envisions a democratic process:

The way I see it is as a free and participatory process to resolve issues. The representative must listen to our brothers and sisters, and, based on that, resolve the issue. This democratic nature is also expressed when there is a

project, and we call all communities here and say, “brothers we want to do this project or program. Is it possible to do that?” If they say “yes!” then you can develop the program or project. Because often the imposition, brothers, has been very big. [For example], the national institution is already in love with a project, then is already approved and later they come to tell us that the program is ready. That is, they surprise the brothers before they even know about it. You must know how to respect [community members’] own decisions (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Indigenous peoples from this area conceive of democracy as *communal democracy*. This resembles a democratic system in which there is direct involvement/input of community members in decision-making processes that will affect their futures. For representatives, these aspects are directly connected with asking communities whether or not they agree with a certain program or project, prior to accepting it (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Representatives reflected on past projects that had been imposed by the government, private, and non-government organizations, and even by regional and national federations. This had created various conflicts and, ultimately, the projects failed. This is different to what the prevalent representative democracy can offer community members: a political actor in an intermediary role that makes decisions on their behalf (Kaiser, 1997).

Creative. Representatives motivate each other to propose solutions to member communities in solving issues and supporting them to attain their desires for the future (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Having several positions. It was identified by representatives that it becomes problematic when there are other demanding responsibilities when one is a federation representative. It was mentioned by one representative that having other demanding responsibilities such as being a teacher or community authority, might prevent the person from doing fruitful work. For example, “teachers have a responsibility to give classes and have to be with the students month after month, which has brought difficulties within the educational institution.” He continued, saying that most teachers are representatives as well, which is fine when one is not teaching at that time. “But there is another problem then, if a community member is chosen to be a federation representative, from where will that person get resources to move, [and] to travel?” (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013). Furthermore, how will the family be supported?

Good health. The federation representative's role can be demanding on personal time and energy, and if a representative is seriously ill, she/he would not be able to perform that role. (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Experience governing. In order to direct the federation, representatives must have previous experience in governing. It was further stressed by members of Ashéninka federations (FECONAPA and OIDIT) that technical skills are less important than other behaviours or attributes, with one representative stating that “it is not necessary for that person to be professional, but one must have experience governing” (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013). Another representative added, “We cannot have a representative who has not even been chief of a community to go straight to lead a federation.” The representative suggested that when a person requires training this does not refer to professional training (e.g. doctor, anthropologist), but to concrete experiences governing indigenous communities (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

3.4.3 Close Interpersonal Relationships

Aspects related to the establishment of Close Interpersonal Relationships were least frequently mentioned by representatives. There were three principal desirable characteristics, as summarized in the Table 5.

3.4.3.1 Coordination and communication

Mentioned five times, coordination and communication is included among the Close Interpersonal Relationships because there is a direct interpersonal exchange of information. It was stated that there should always be coordination and communication with communal authorities and community members across all actions taken by representatives.

3.4.3.2 Other characteristics

There were two other less commonly mentioned characteristics.

Sociability. Collaborators indicated that being affable and comfortably socializing with others is a desirable characteristic of a representative. They identified that representatives are expected to be sociable with other representatives, community members, as well as with public and non-governmental organizations' officials (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Patience. A representative from the OIDIT group expressed, on behalf of his federation, that a representative should be patient with community members. It is understood that the job can be very frustrating, demanding, and overwhelming, so this collaborator reminded the others that they are beholden to their member communities (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

3.4.4 Reflections on challenges experienced in the role of representative

Representatives first identified desirable characteristics they should have, then they listened what *comuneros* from member communities identified as desirable characteristics for representatives, and later there was a reflection session.

Representatives prioritized desirable characteristics differently than did community members. Their top priority was Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours, followed by Organizational Capacity, and, finally, Close Interpersonal Relationships (Figure 22). The characteristics recounted were numerous and diverse in the Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours and Organizational Capacity categories, and dramatically decreased in Close Interpersonal Relationships. It is not clear if this was an acknowledgment that challenging circumstances are limiting the establishment of Close Interpersonal Relationships.

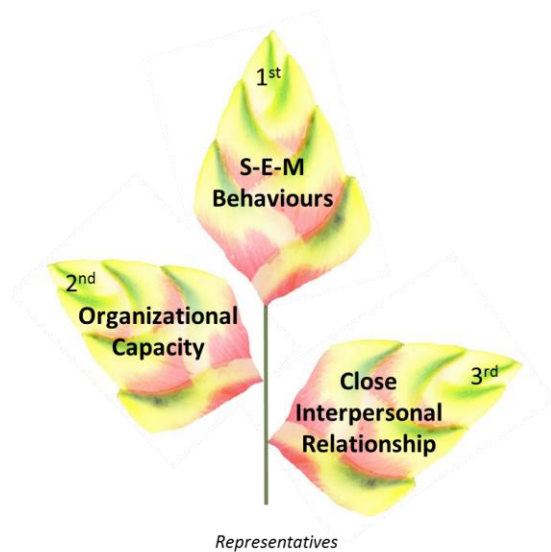


Figure 22: The three main desirable factors for achieve member communities' objectives, as prioritized by representatives

To appreciate the nuances that may exist in priorities, we compared community members' perspectives and representatives/communal authorities' perspectives. Next, representatives/communal authorities themselves provided suggestions to improve their relationships with member communities. While reflecting on the community members' perspectives, the representatives found that their perspectives with respect to the community members converged at times, but also diverged. After talking amongst themselves, they expressed their reflections. An OIDIT representative suggested:

Brothers, the desirable and undesirable characteristics identified by our communities will serve us as mirrors, and to see if we are accomplishing [our jobs] or not. If we are not accomplishing it, we should strive to do so (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Also, representatives and communal authorities regularly discussed inherent challenges of the job, for example, constant traveling, being away from the family, not receiving monetary or in-kind compensation for the work done, and balancing their work with attending to their crops to sustain their families. Regarding this point, a FECONAPA representative expressed the difficulties of the work and the importance of household support in the endeavour:

I think the desire for all of us is to become a good representative, but we know that everyone has problems at home. If the partner of a representative does not help you and encourage you to continue working, the representative feels practically demoralized and destroyed (General Session, Atalaya, February, 2013).

In fact, the difficulties created at the household level were prominent and repeated among representatives. An OIDIT representative commented that there must be “mutual respect in the responsibility of the spouse” when she or he is selected to be a representative (Final Session, February 2013). A FECONAPA representative suggested a strategy to address these issues, and at the same time, respond to the communities’ suggestions:

...communities gave us advice on how to conduct the federations. So that there are no weaknesses and no family link is broken while performing the role of being representatives, we should sit down and talk with our families to see if we might be able to lead the federation for two years (Final Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Regarding financial constraints to performing a full time job that is challenging and unpaid, a FECONADIS representative suggested that “communities should be self-sufficient,” meaning that communities should be able to “have their own resources to support the federations” with the commercialization of their products (Final Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

In addition to financial constraints, there are logistical, cultural, and language constraints that are aggravated by the current circumstances faced in Atalaya, for example, the recently established terms of citizenship in Peru that make possession of an identity card a requirement for anyone to seek treatment in public walk-in clinics or to access public education. One of the responsibilities of the representatives is to ensure that the community members have this identity card.

Moreover, the recent economic growth in the Atalaya province is a result of the extraction of wood (Presidencia de la República del Perú, 2014). Indeed, further openings for transnational extractive industries is generating additional problems in the communities’ territories, so there is

more demand for meetings with representatives. These meetings are time- and resource-consuming, and representatives are finding themselves overloaded with challenging work³⁵.

3.5 Gaps between community members and federation representatives perspectives

Recognizing that there are different perspectives between community members and their representatives, the next question is how can we accommodate and reconcile these two perspectives?

The representative-community member dynamics are complex. Depending on the situation, at times, the representatives are perceived as the “followed”, and at other times as the “followers.” Depending on the circumstances, representatives are called leaders, heads, parents, or guides because they support communities in navigating the outside westernized reality. Reflecting on this during the Final Session with other representatives, a FECONAPA representative mentioned:

I think every culture, each *pueblo*³⁶, has its own idiosyncrasies/identity and acts according to their feelings in the face of that self-criticism that our communities are making. That is important because they are like the father of us and we of them because they have chosen us. From here, we have to initiate further conversation (General Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Comuneros and representatives often mentioned that the federations exist for member communities, highlighting their servant-nature. Indeed, according to the perspectives of community members and representatives alike, the general assembly (made up of community members) is the maximum authority, and each of the representatives have the role of spokespersons and implementers of the decisions made by the general assembly. The

³⁵ See recent example in northern Amazon: “Hundreds of Indigenous peoples take lot 1AB of Pluspetrol in Loreto” (Reuters, 2015). “AIDSEP requires the government and Pluspetrol allocate s /. 100 million to repair damage to indigenous peoples” (Gestión, 2015).

³⁶ Referring to each ethnicity group.

representative in this context can influence the decision-making process, but the will of the general assembly outweighs any other decision taken by representatives.

We privilege the community members' voices when defining the factors that are crucial for achieving the communities' objectives based on (1) the opinions of community members and representatives, (2) the nature of these institutions, and (3) the theories that guide this study. Although community members' perspectives are privileged, representatives' experiences and reflections about how to better perform in their roles should also be considered.

Since community members' perspectives would be privileged in determining the factors of success for indigenous federations in the Amazon, it is important to understand where their priorities and those of representatives converged and diverged. Both groups converged in identifying that the Spiritual, Ethical and Moral Behaviours are the most desirable set of characteristics in representatives, while the groups diverged in identifying the relevance of establishing Close Interpersonal Relationships between representatives and member communities (see Figure 23). For community members, establishing Close Interpersonal Relationships with their representatives was the most important and highly valued set of characteristics, but it was the least prioritized by the representatives. Characteristics in the Organizational Capacity factor were the least prioritized by community members and the second most important for representatives. Community members, representatives, and communal authorities expressed that these characteristics were more related to western knowledge and technical skills that could be acquired on the job.

These findings shed some light on one of the biggest challenges identified by community members and representatives: how to strengthen and cultivate their relationships. Furthermore, Chirif and García (2011) identify that the "weakening of relationships between representatives of diverse organizational levels and of them with their bases is one of the biggest challenges Peruvian indigenous movements are facing today" (p. 113).

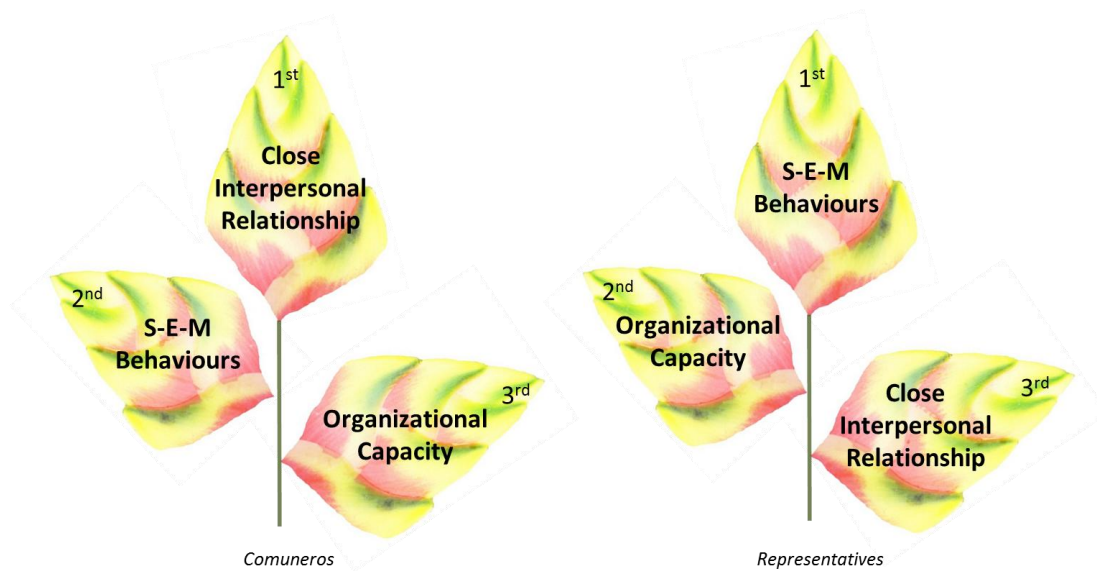


Figure 23: Comparison between *comuneros'* and representatives' perspectives prioritization of factors to improve the federation representative role

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated ways in which the Ashéninka and Yine-Yami ontologies (assumptions of a reality), epistemologies (ways of knowing in that reality), and axiologies (morals and values expressed by the people embedded in that reality) for representatives are envisioned. Collaborators determined recommendations to improve the federations at the personal level – the representative.

Community members identified twenty-two desirable attributes that were organized into three main factors, to contrast and understand what type of characteristics are most important from the perspectives of both the community members and their representatives. Communal authorities (most of them were both communal authorities and federation representatives) were also included in the representative group. The research team privileged *comuneros'* perspectives in order to identify the desirable characteristics of representatives, but also recognized the importance of the recommendations of the representatives as insiders in the role. The categories of characteristics, also known as factors of success for indigenous federations, most relevant to *comuneros* are prioritized in this order: Close Interpersonal Relationships, Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours, and Organizational Capacity. Although this co-created knowledge was intended for federation representatives, community members and communal authorities stated

that the characteristics could serve as a guide for how an exemplary person should be (Closure of the Study, Bufe Pozo and Nueva Unión, April 2013)

Close Interpersonal Relationships is the most important factor for community members as means of providing accurate and updated information about the communities' objectives to their representatives so they are adequately represented, and establishing interpersonal relationships with the persons that are representing their interests at other levels. Community members next underlined the importance of Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours, as they value knowing what the representatives' motivations and sentiments to conduct this role are, and if their spiritual, ethical, and moral behaviours are compatible with what was identified as desirable. Finally, Organizational Capacity characteristics was the least prioritized factor as it relates more to technical skills. In fact, according to both groups, Organizational Capacity can be acquired as the person develops her or his role.

The specific characteristics that were most mentioned and/or most highly prioritized from all factors were: *cariño* or love for one's people, community visits, communication and coordination with community members, honesty, integrity, and being *gestionadores*. In the literature reviewed related to indigenous federations, little relevance was dedicated to these analysed about necessary characteristics to achieve success. Van Cott (2005) briefly touches on honesty as an attribute that is expected in representatives, while Yashar (2005) acknowledges its importance when building trust between the representatives and the represented. Yashar (2005), Van Cott (2005), and Bebbington (1996) all mention the importance of the availability of competent representatives and accountability in order to achieve success, but mostly address organizational capacities.

Relationship building, sentiments, and morals are aspects that are well discussed in contemporary organizational leadership literature. The results developed in this thesis suggest that more importance should be given to what the represented have to say, especially in this government system where representatives are leaders who serve their communities. We also hope that these results will be considered by federation representatives and community members to strengthen their relationships by implementing recommendations that representatives and

community members themselves elaborated. A shared vision of the definition of the representatives' role is a critical piece to achieving success.

Chapter 4: Improving indigenous self-government systems in the Amazon

The development policies in the Amazon are given by outsiders without the participation of the Amazonian indigenous peoples. So this economic policy implemented in the Amazon (based on extraction of natural resources without replacement and no maintenance) has generated a crisis in the socio-cultural field, the extinction of several original nations, the loss of cultural identity of the people, and the destruction of nature. All of that has to do with politics, with the development model implemented in the Amazon. Obliteration comes very strongly through the free trade agreement signed with the countries of international power. The FTA with the US, EU, China, Japan and others are given without consulting indigenous peoples. So international markets, which have to do with the free market policy that is applied by the governments for the last 20 years from the 1990s to now in 2012, really is not benefiting indigenous peoples. Rather quite the opposite, it has been implemented by big oil, timber and mining companies, for about 40 years. There are over 80 oil lots only in the Amazon, being offered to highest bidders of large international companies.

(Indigenous representative, Atalaya, 2012)

4.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, I address the second objective of this study: to articulate, from indigenous peoples' perspectives, recommendations for the improvement of indigenous federations as part of a system of self-government in the Peruvian Amazon. Narratives of community members' difficulties and desires for the future emerged through interviews and group discussions in the six Ashéninka and Yine-Yami communities that we visited. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the communities' concerns are mostly related to: (1) water quality; (2) food security; (3) access to indigenous and western education; and (4) access to indigenous and western medicine. These concerns relate to claims of political and jurisdictional autonomy and the desire of the communities to determine their own development strategies. These concerns are of particular importance given that there is at least one outsider—or foreign-run extractive company—affecting each of the visited communities ranging from logging to oil and gas extraction. Several authors suggest that neocolonial regimes of natural resources extraction generate or exacerbate

many of communities concerns by facilitating current hegemonic economic models that emphasize profit-logic perspectives (Chirif & García, 2011; Dauvergne & Lister, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; I Puig Martí, 2009; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005).

One way for Indigenous peoples to exercise their right to determine their own future is through indigenous federations. Indigenous federations exist to serve their communities and their strength is based on communities' ideas of self-determination and defence of their rights (Bebbington, 1996). Federations' activities are developed around addressing communities' concerns and achieving desires for the future (their objectives). Communities' objectives include, but are not restricted to: land titling; bicultural education and health; and the enhancement of production projects. Underlying these objectives are foundational principles of territorial autonomy and self-determination (Yashar, 2005; conversation with community members and representatives, 2012). Consequently, federations' functions and policies about how to achieve these objectives should reflect member communities' perspectives. To that end, specific recommendations were created during individual and group sessions with community members and their representatives that can contribute to addressing member communities' objectives effectively.

During the Final Session with representatives and communal authorities, the research team presented the communities' narratives, which offered a baseline for reflection, and later to elaborate, recommendations for improving their federations (see more details of the methodology in section 2.5.4.4). The recommendations from this session were later coalesced with the community members' recommendations. The key recommendations elaborated by community members, representatives, and communal authorities were (in no particular order): to define the jurisdiction of the federations; to formalize the federations; to improve processes of interaction; to strengthen a self-determined indigenous economy; and to increase political participation. Each is discussed in turn.

4.2 Define the jurisdiction of the federations

One recommendation that emerged from community members, as well as from their federation representatives, was to clearly define the jurisdictional limits of each federation, along watershed limits or cultural lines, to preclude any confusion generated by overlaps. There is currently a

dispute in the Lower Urubamba area in the province of Sepahua, where FECONAYY and FECONADIS both claim to represent some of the same communities. FECONAYY used to be the only federation representing the Yine-Yami in Sepahua, but because of flawed management practices and inactivity, some communal leaders decided to create another federation called FECONADIS (conversation with FECONADIS representatives and community members in Nueva Unión and Bufe Pozo, December 2012). When FECONAYY was re-activated in 2012, it created confusion and overlapping jurisdictions.

There are two lines of thought regarding this overlapping jurisdictional authority within Yine-Yami communities. A few community members and representatives said that it was not a problem having two federations in the same jurisdiction, as long as they coordinated between each other. However, the majority disagreed and were concerned that the authorities have recognized the issue (of being a member of more than one local federation) without correcting it. Community members think that if there are two federations, they will compete and possibly forget their roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, having two federations has resulted in a division of opinions and confusion. Two members of the communities stated the following:

Now we do not know who we belong to: FECONADIS or FECONAYY. [Also] there are two persons saying that they are presidents within the same federation. We do not know what to believe. There is division in the community (conversation with a community member, Nueva Union, December 2012).

A conflict has been created in the community: first because of the FECONAYY crisis and then by the appearance of an additional federation [FECONADIS]. Then FECONAYY was re-activated again. We are confused (Group Session with men, Bufe Pozo, December 2012).

This overlap was often identified as an obstacle to the communities' pursuit of their objectives. In fact, some community members expressed that although the legitimate and recognized channel to achieve their collective objectives is through their federations, they are concerned that competition between federations could distract their representatives from their work (conversation with community member, Bufe Pozo, December 2012).

In the Three Filters activity (see section 2.5.4.2 for more detail) representatives from both Yine-Yami federations and communal authorities recommended: (1) that there should be only one local federation per basin, geographic area, or ethnic group (for example, a federation in the basin of the Lower Urubamba River, or a federation of the Yine-Yami people); and (2) that community members in a communal assembly should determine the federation to which they want to be members. Also, participants stated that the federations' jurisdiction should be clarified first with community members in a communal assembly, and then updated in the Public Records Office.

In the Ashéninka context, during the Private Session with OIDIT, a representative talked about the power that they have as indigenous peoples in determining how to organize their federation. She also supported a previously-made suggestion regarding determining federation jurisdictions following the limits of river basins. She further clarified that the discussion and the decision about how to organize the federation need to take place in a congress and between the federation's officials and member communities (Private Session with OIDIT, Atalaya, February 2013). Moreover, in the Closing Session, a FECONAPA representative reflected:

First, we must define our bases where we belong. Second, we must have, as they said [referring to the voices that emerged from the member communities], better coordination with our base communities. Gradually, the population is growing. Consequently, also the communities grow and, in my opinion, we must organize by *pueblo* (for instance, Ashéninka, Shipibo, Yine-Yami people, etc.) in the institutional sense (Closing Session, Atalaya, February 2013).

Peoples that live in large basins/areas where several communities exist, such as the Ashéninka, could possibly belong to more than one federation. For example, FECONAPA's jurisdiction is the upper Ucayali River, in the province of Raimondi, while in the lower Ucayali River in the Tahuania district, OIDIT provides service to different Ashéninka communities.

In summary, both Ashéninka and Yine-Yami representatives and communal authorities drew on community members' voices and their own experiences as representatives to elaborate recommendations which address issues caused by overlapping of jurisdictions. First, federations should be organized by ethnicity, as well as following watershed boundaries. These decisions

should be made in a congress with all member communities. Second, decisions about affiliation or disaffiliation of a community from a federation should be made in a communal assembly and the result of the decision should be updated in the Public Records Office to avoid overlap. The reason for this is that community members want to know which federation they can rely on, champion, and be loyal to. Indeed, Bebbington (1996) argues that local federations are institutions that have the closest relationship with community members, compared with public, private, and non-government organizations, and the importance of having only one federation to perform such a unique role was stressed.

4.3 Formalize the federations

Another recommendation that emerged from the communities and their representatives was to pursue the formalization of the federations. Several *comuneros* of both OIDIT and FECODANIS raised the concern that their federations had not been registered with the Peruvian national Public Records Office. The basis for this concern is that, if the federations are not registered with the state, then representatives may not be able to manage/negotiate/advocate (*gestionar*) with public and non-governmental institutions to apply for programs and projects, for example, academic scholarships for their children. When a community member from Diobamba-Chanchamayo was asked what he knows about his federation, he answered that, he loves his federation, and is worried that they are not yet registered. When asked the same question in Nuevo Paraíso, a community member answered:

So, I have always wondered if this federation [OIDIT] is already registered in the Public Records Office. Is it? Because we know that this organization is not yet registered with the Public Notary (...). So, this federation [for example] cannot make *gestiones* yet (conversation with a community member, Nuevo Paraíso, November 2012).

According to some community members, registration of their federation would more likely indicate to national or international agencies that the communities recognize it as a legitimate federation.

Communal authorities from two of OIDIT's member communities also shared their concerns about this issue. A communal authority from Nuevo Paraíso reflected:

How can we ask OIDIT to support us if the organization is still not legally formalized, and even the community of Nuevo Paraíso is not legally affiliated? (...) Ashéninka communities always have this tendency to support others, but legally [our community] is not affiliated. (...) I have seen that, as an organization, [OIDIT] is in the process of formalization. Because [they are not yet formalized], governing it has been difficult. It is not easy to formalize because there is much paperwork. So, we will be trying to support the new president in formalizing our membership to OIDIT (Private Session with OIDIT, Atalaya, February 2013).

OIDIT representatives reflected about their difficulties to register their federation during the Private Session. Language, logistical, and financial constraints exist, and are aggravated by the centralization of the state's institutions in the main towns of the region (far from the communities themselves). OIDIT faces a number of administrative challenges that are common for a newly established federation navigating unclear, unfamiliar, and, at times, unfriendly bureaucratic procedures. However, OIDIT is in a process of administrative consolidation, which has led to certain reservations about the federation's capability to effectively respond to its members' objectives.

In the Final Session with representatives, a different perspective on this issue was presented by an OIDIT representative. She encouraged her peers not to get caught up in bureaucratic procedures. She reminded them to keep in mind that they can determine for themselves how to govern their territories:

We are independent to organize ourselves. Even if we were not registered, we can organize ourselves and say "we are going to do this" (...) and we can achieve it! The federation's last board of directors are recognized (in the Public Notary), but this new board is not. There are some difficulties, and we, as representatives, are going to fix them together with our member communities (Private Session with OIDIT, Atalaya, February 2013).

Among OIDIT's member communities, *comuneros* have expressed a great enthusiasm and desire to carry their federation forward despite current difficulties. The satisfaction of identifying themselves with their institution, to see their own Ashéninka culture and language reflected in the federation, motivates and encourages representatives to navigate these foreign bureaucratic

procedures. For instance, a *comunero* expressed this sentiment, placing hope in the representatives:

The communities that are part of OIDIT should make a congress and formalize so they can represent us as indigenous peoples. Now, as we are experiencing, some Spanish-speaking people are discriminating against us. We hope Ashéninka people can represent us to be stronger, because no one can work while being discriminated against (conversation with community member, Diobamba-Chanchamayo, November 2012).

At the end of the Private Session with OIDIT, the representatives and communal authorities clarified doubts and identified the documents that were missing, preventing them from formalizing their federation.

Yes, we want to finish once and for all with that issue that we are not recognized, and start working. With that recognition, we will have the credentials as a board of directors and start making *gestiones* (Private Session with OIDIT, Atalaya, February 2013).

Community members and representatives in Ashéninka and Yine-Yami contexts identified the importance of registering federations with the Peruvian national Public Records Office. They mentioned that the process of formalization is for non-indigenous organizations to recognize the federations as “legitimate” and, thus, possible to work with. And although representatives recognized the importance of formalization with the state, one representative reminded the rest that, as autonomous institutions, federations are able to perform their roles, officially registered or not.

While registration and formalization were seen by some as the only way to get recognized as a legitimate institution by outsiders, it could be argued that other forms of recognition of legitimacy are needed in this context. Inward looking responses of indigenous federations to promote their own procedures and processes of legitimization are already in place. For instance, OIDIT has been working for several years in the lower Ucayali River as the institution to serve Ashéninka communities from the area. However, it was only recently registered in the Public

Notary and, at the time of our conversations was not yet registered in the Public Registration Office.

Besides unfamiliar and unfriendly national bureaucratic procedures, official processes of formalization of federations consume a great deal of the representatives' time, resources, and energy. Furthermore, federations might already be formal and legitimate institutions under member communities without being registered in the Public Records Office. Thus, recognition of local processes of legitimation and registration need to be put in place as a response to local constraints (language, logistical, financial, and geographical distance). Bebbington (1996) suggests that these institutions are more grounded in local social process and share more connections and affinity than with any other non-indigenous institution. Uphoff (1993) also argues that, even if "informal", these institutions may still be critical for meeting people's objectives.

4.4 Improve processes of interaction

Unanimously, community members and their representatives recommended the development of more appropriate processes of interaction between: the communities and the federations; communities and external bodies; and the federations and external bodies. In a multicultural and multi-epistemological context, the ways of interaction become a constant challenge where the worldviews of the less powerful (albeit the majority of the population) end up being ignored (de Sousa Santos, 2010; Van Cott, 2004).

The parties themselves (the federation representatives and members community) identified four main ways of interacting that are important in their pursuit of improvements to government systems: institutionalize federations; develop protocols for consultation; identify shared objectives; and generate more mechanisms of accountability. These four interactions take effect in a socially created space. The arrows shown in Figure 24 indicate the directions of interactions between federations, community, and public, private, and non-governmental organizations. These interactions are discussed further in the following sub-sections.

4.4.1 Institutionalize the federations

The communities and their representatives recommended that the federations' relationships both internally (with the communities that they serve) and externally (with private, government, and non-governmental organizations) be institutionalized. Recalling the definition provided in Chapter 3, "institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability" (Huntington, 1965, p. 378). The term refers to a process in which, over time, a federation enjoys special status and legitimacy for having satisfied people's objectives and meeting their normative expectations (Uphoff, 1993).

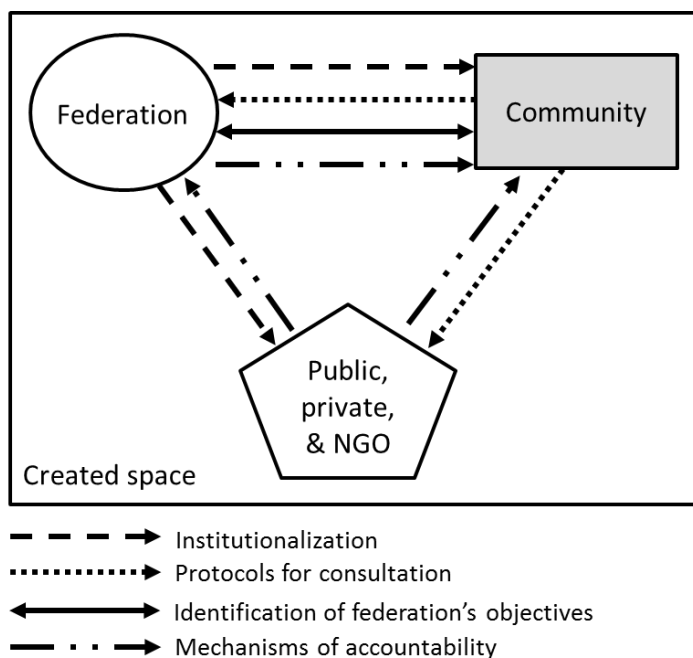


Figure 24: Interactions between a community, a federation, and public, private, and non-governmental organizations.

Internally, the federations want the members of the communities that they serve to know that they can approach them whenever they need. For example, the quote below illustrates how the federation is institutionalized internally, and is relied upon for support and advice:

We have a lot of problems with the loggers, sometimes they do not pay, or do not pay just prices for the corn. So, we have the federations and we go to them for help (conversation with a community member, Diobamba-Chanchamayo, November 2012).

Indigenous federations might be perceived as institutions in the eyes of their member communities, but perhaps not by external organizations. Externally, the federations seek to ensure that individuals, as well as public, private, and non-governmental organizations, respect the formal channels that have been established before entering into the communities. These protocols stipulate that access to communities is granted first through the local federation. A community member in a Group Session affirmed the importance of this protocol:

...without previous coordination, nothing can be done. Just as you came to Diobamba, if you had not previously contacted the federation, and then come unexpectedly, you would not have found anything (conversation with community member, Diobamba-Chanchamayo, November 2012)

Creating protocols for entering indigenous communities is a strategy for protection because, since colonial times and continuing into the current era of the Peruvian republic, indigenous people from various regions, including Ucayali, refer to outsiders as the extractors of both natural resources and human organs (Bellier & Hocquenghem, 1991). Regarding the latter, these outsiders are named *pishtaco* (literally “face-peeler”). The *pishtaco* is the representation of the perpetrator of crimes against indigenous people; the white or *mestizo* exploiter (Bellier & Hocquenghem, 1991; Stafford, 2012). Throughout the Ucayali region, precautions regarding outsiders are prevalent and, when the established protocols of interaction are disregarded, unfortunate events have occurred³⁷.

Community members stressed the importance of having previous coordination with federations on their procedures and to avoid misunderstandings because of different languages, cultures, and entering into autonomous territories. As a result, any non-indigenous visitor needs to follow the existing procedures to gain permission to enter these territories. In the Single Gender Group Session, the cultural advisor was talking with women about the visit of a delegation from the

³⁷ A Polish couple was murdered while on a tourist excursion through the Ucayali River. This couple ignored indigenous autonomous territories with a harsh long and ongoing history of extermination, resulting from the international demand for human organs and fat, and landed in the Tahorapa indigenous community without a letter of recommendation for entry. For further information, see “Pucallpa: admitted in the prison confessed murderer of Polish tourists” (Radio Programas del Perú, August 16th 2011); “‘*Pishtacos*’ sell human fat to European cosmetic markets” (Radio Programas del Perú, November 19th 2009); “Octavio Salazar about ‘*pishtacos*’: ‘I only reception information’” (Perú21, December 2nd 2011); “Peru: From *pishtacos* and loggers” (Servindi.org, September 30th 2011).

Peruvian state to enrol families in a nationwide social program and made the following observation:

There was no coordination with the federation. They [members of the government's delegation] said that they came and you received them with arrows and turned them away... so now they are coordinating with FECONAPA for enumerating all member communities (Group Session with women, Mencoriari, November 2012)

This account was also mentioned by the communal authority of the self-defence committee³⁸. The lack of a recommendation letter from FECONAPA (which was explained as being like a visa allowing access into indigenous communities) and lack of an accompanying federation representative meant that the government delegation was not permitted entrance into their community:

I do not know who came last time, they were strangers (...). So, I asked for the document that they are supposed to have from FECONAPA, but they did not have it. And some of them said: "Geez, I didn't receive it." I said, "So, go back then! What do you want here!" That is why I did not let him enter (conversation with community member, Mencoriari, November 2012).

Over millennia, indigenous peoples in the Amazon have generated several mechanisms to defend their families and lives. Now that they are more exposed to western societies, their mechanisms have been challenged. The majority of dominant prevalent westernized societies disregard indigenous culture and history (Espinosa de Rivero, 2009). External institutionalization of these mechanisms can help to avoid misunderstandings between two different cultures, while the internal institutionalization can strengthen communities' safeguards in light of current and past abuses.

In some cases, an expedited institutionalization process happens when the creation of a federation responds to the necessity expressed by community members, for instance, to have some influence about their future in platforms outside their communities. One example is OIDIT,

³⁸ The self-defense committee is one aspect of communal organization designed for the protection of community members (this information is based on visit to communities between 2012 and 2013).

a federation that is recognized by community members and representatives as relatively new, but already enjoying a certain degree of institutionalization.

4.4.2 Develop protocols for consultation

Throughout the communities, members repeated the recommendation that, prior to the establishment of any action be it legal or administrative liable to impact them, both consultation with and consent of the communities is necessary. Community members want their federation to advocate for public, private, and non-governmental organizations to consult with communities if they agree or disagree with any proposed action that is going to affect their communities. Additionally, representatives also recognized that, before accepting a project (social, politic, or economic) and helping to facilitate the execution of such projects in a member community, they also need to consult with the communal assembly.

Community members also mentioned that all of the proponents and implementers associated with projects proposed in their territories need to establish dialogue with community members prior to a consultation process being initiated. For instance, in Nueva Unión a community member said, “without dialogue and consultation we cannot work.” He continued, saying that any actions require prior consultation with the communities to know whether they agree or disagree (conversation with community member, Nueva Unión, December 2012).

In the Private Session with FECONAPA, the cultural advisor for FECONAPA mentioned the lack of consultation even by local and national federations, such as FECONAPA and AIDSESEP:

In previous projects, we have never known what else AIDSESEP is doing. They just came saying, “OK, let’s work on a forest management project” ... But what's that? We didn’t know. That's the problem, and it’s now shocking to the community of Puerto Esperanza as well. They were selected for this project [to obtain certification by the Forest Stewardship Council - FSC]. This is a project that also the representatives have been working hard to achieve, and as facilitators, encouraging community members to accept the project because not all communities have that benefit. And now, it’s somewhat shocking because despite stumbling now, their forests become certified forests. And why is it shocking to Puerto Esperanza community members? Because it was not consulted from the bottom (Private Session with FECONAPA, Atalaya, December 2012).

In this case, the cultural advisor was reflecting on the discussions that took place in the group session with women in Puerto Esperanza. Women expressed their concerns regarding the unexpected impacts that their families were experiencing because of the requirements of FSC certification. For instance, it was mentioned that they can no longer fish using certain traditional techniques, which is putting their families' food security at risk since their diet is based principally on fish. The cultural advisor continued, reflecting on the responsibility that FECONAPA has to consult with community members:

We should have seen [first] what their needs are. So now it's a strong shift. As they say, "I cannot fish, I cannot cut a tree." Last time a brother said, "no, I cannot cut this because it is forbidden." And why do we have all this problem? Because communities were not previously consulted as we are doing right now. (Private Session with FECONAPA, Atalaya, February 2013).

A recurrent question that community members reflected upon was, *how are public, private, and non-governmental organizations going to execute projects for our benefit if they do not know what our concerns or desires for the future are?* They mentioned that there is disconnect between the goals of their communities and the information possessed by their federations and the Peruvian state. Likewise, the state has demonstrated ignorance and apathy about the challenges of the work of representatives in the Amazonian context (Chirif & García, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; I Puig Martí, 2009):

... As I say, the federation representatives are not informed, like the President of the Republic. He [the President of the Republic] does not know what we need, what we lack (conversation with community member, Nuevo Paraíso, November 2012).

Indeed, in the recently enacted Law of Prior Consultation (Ley No. 29785, 2012), the state assigned to federations the role to "consult" with member communities about legal or administrative measures. However, current challenging contexts in the Amazon were not consider, such as distances and the importance of consolidating relationships between representatives and community members first. Moreover, this law does not stipulate that project proponents must have the consent of indigenous peoples, but only indicates a simple process of

informing them about what will be done, with limited opportunity to influence actions (AIDSEP, 2012; Schilling-Vacaflor & Flemmer, 2013).

That the decision-makers are uninformed about community members' difficulties and desires for their future is also well documented in scholarly research (Assies, 2009; Bebbington, 1996; de Sousa Santos, 2010; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Galeano, 1987; Schilling-Vacaflor & Flemmer, 2013; Uphoff, 1993; Van Cott, 2004). Even laws that attempt to respond to a nation-wide demand of indigenous peoples to be consulted are drafted without understanding the perspectives of the diverse indigenous groups in Peru (AIDSEP, 2012).

Community members and representatives identified the necessity for communities to elaborate on their own general guidelines or protocols for consultation and seeking consent. Because indigenous communities enjoy certain degrees of autonomy (Van Cott, 2005; Waters, 2005) this sort of endeavour could be a possible option. The protocols would describe the procedures that public, private, non-governmental organizations, and even federations should follow in order to comply with the ethical, cultural, moral, spiritual, and technical requirements determined by the communities. The protocols could be developed at the community government level, and formalized through notarization in the communal assembly book. The federations' role, in this case, would be to facilitate the development and implementation of such protocols.

4.4.3 Identify shared objectives

The community members identified the need for federations to share the visions and objectives of all of their member communities. Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 3, success is achieved when all objectives—previously identified by the represented, and shared by the representatives—are met (Ramos, 2014). Community members indicated that the identification of objectives needs to occur in direct dialogue between them and representatives while representatives are visiting the communities. Meanwhile, representatives agreed with community member's perspectives, they expressed that geographic, logistical, and financial barriers challenge the performance of their work by limiting direct contact with the member communities. In the past, this has led to mismatched objectives between communities and federations.

According to community members, federations must develop ways of ensuring matching objectives within indigenous realities, on their own terms, and taking into account the unique geographies and contexts that occur in the Amazon. When the community members' perspectives were brought up in the meeting with representatives, the mismatch between the objectives of the communities and federations was evident. In the Private Session with OIDIT, a representative mentioned that the only mechanism currently available to identify objectives is by organizing the annual congresses, which bring all communities together to discuss these important issues. Later, he continued, saying that "the consensus is reached in the meetings, as we are right now, to get a solution" (Private Session with OIDIT, Atalaya, February 2013). He was referring to first having a rich discussion about different points of view, and afterward, making a decision by consensus. Although the congress that federations annually organize gathers delegates from all member communities and other relevant interest groups (representatives from public, private, and non-governmental organizations), some community members argued that these meetings generally lack sufficient representation of the community members' interests.

These congresses are organized each year in the principal towns of Atalaya, Bolognesi, and Sepahua. However, after FECONAPA's representatives learned about *comuneros'* thoughts during the Final Session, they started to discuss decentralizing these annual congresses. Indeed, they were planning to organize their next meeting in Mencoriari, one of the most geographically remote of their member communities. This initiative might bring representatives' and community members' perspectives about their shared objectives closer, yet more mechanisms to identify such objectives are also needed according to community members. For instance, it was mentioned that there should be more congresses per year. To support federation representatives in the process of organizing the congress, community members mentioned they could help by providing accommodation and food for all the attendees. In addition, "informal" channels, such as interpersonal information exchange in communities and principal towns, could also be relevant means by which representatives learn more about member communities' objectives.

4.4.4 Generate more mechanisms of accountability

Community members stated that, in order to ensure that their representatives are hearing (and responding to) their concerns, as well as fulfilling promises made, more mechanisms of accountability must be implemented. The communal authority from Nuevo Paraíso recommended:

First, representatives have to be *gestionador*. They have to find favourable projects, and then be accountable to the population that is our community. We trust representatives for them to work and give some of their time in our favour (conversation with community member, Nuevo Paraíso, November 2012).

Currently, there are some formal and informal mechanisms of accountability in place. The most well-known and institutionalized mechanism is through the general assembly, held at the federations' annual congresses. Representatives can also be held accountable in other ways, such as, when representatives visit the communities to attend communal assembly. Also, community members can hold representatives accountable in sporadic personal encounters, for example, when representatives visit the communities or when community members are in the main towns to do paperwork. In some circumstances, when the representatives live in the community, they are constantly held accountable for their actions or inaction, just by virtue of having a more constant presence in the community. Yet, throughout the communities visited, members requested that more mechanisms of accountability be implemented:

The community chief and the federation president must be accountable, according to what's stipulated in the statutes, perhaps every year of governing, or each time an activity is undertaken they could be held accountable, but this is not done (conversation with community member, Nueva Unión, December 2012).

A desire to increase the number of congresses per year (from once a year to at least twice) was frequently cited as a means to improve accountability. Members indicated their willingness to support federations with funds and in-kind aid, as well as to help them in developing other methods of providing accountability. For instance, a community member from Nuevo Paraíso, where a multi-community religious event was being held, mentioned:

Look what we are doing here. We are just a few persons but we are taking care of *comuneros* from 4-5 communities who are sleeping here. So, organizing [the congress] with time is possible both in terms of food and accommodation in order for [representatives] to come to visit us (conversation, Nuevo Paraíso, November 2012).

In addition, community members, representatives, and communal authorities stated that these congresses should also be spaces to hold public, private, and non-governmental organizations accountable to communities and federations. In stressing the need for this, OIDIT's representative cited one example where, despite the approval of communal projects (for instance implementation of walk-in clinics) through participatory budgeting processes in the provincial municipality of Tahuaná, communities such as Diobamba-Chanchamayo have not seen those projects carried out (Private Session with OIDIT, February 2013). Additionally, community members and representatives mentioned that logging companies are not held accountable to *comuneros*. After an agreement between a company representative and a community is made, the commitments are written down in the community's minute book, and the company's representative typically takes a copy of the agreement to a nearby public notary to legalize it. With this process, the agreement becomes a contract. According to what was said in the Private Session between the representatives and communal authorities, only selected information (from the negotiated terms) was transferred to the agreement which is problematic. An OIDIT representative mentioned that, "if the person from the company didn't copy in the contract what was [previously] agreed in the community, then it is as if they have not done anything because they had not committed to re-forest" (Private Session with OIDIT, Atalaya, February 2013). Diobamba's communal authority added:

Yes, the contract (...) has to have the same content as what was agreed with the community. Because the community in the minute book makes the contract, the company also has to be there [to say] what [it] is going to offer to the people. From there, the minute book is notarized to make the contract (Private Session with OIDIT, Atalaya, February 2013).

One accountability measure that was recommended by representatives was to verify that the content of the legalized agreement (the contract) was the same as what was agreed upon between community members and the company's representative in the community assembly.

4.4.5 Create space for information exchange

The creation of space “occurs through both social practices and material conditions” (Giesecking, Mangold, Katz, Low, & Saegert, 2014, p. 285). Space, in abstract, embodies relationships that are developed in an environment of understanding, respect, trust, and truthfulness. This socially-created space also has concrete forms because it takes place in a physical venue and may use commodities such as chairs, a table, and flip charts (Giesecking et al., 2014).

Creating space for information exchange in the member communities is important to community members for improving several modes of interactions. For instance, it provides an opportunity for meaningful consultations, defining objectives, and for holding federation representatives accountable. Moreover, the space in which these interactions take effect needs to be institutionalized in and of itself. Besides the advancement of interactions between actors, the enhancement of space enables consolidation of relationships between federation’s representatives and member communities.

As a FECONAPA representative identified, meetings such as the annual congresses among communities are very important, yet *comuneros* constantly identified the need to increase and promote opportunities for more *personal* encounters in the communities. These encounters could take place in both informal and formal settings (communal assembly). More than any other characteristic, community members want their representatives to make *community visits* (as shown in Chapter 3). In other words, member communities are strongly recommending that federations pursue an institutional policy to improve coordination on site between community members and the federation.

To summarize, four means of interaction between communities, federations, and public, private, and non-governmental organizations were identified by collaborators. All four types of interactions take effect in a space generated between communities and the federation. These interactions have directionality and the arrows shown in Figure 2 indicate this interactions related to institutionalization, and refer to how federations want to be perceived internally (by

member communities) and externally (by private, public, and non-governmental organizations). They show who the proponents or the executors of the action are. Next, protocols for consultation are developed by communities for federations and for private, public and, non-governmental organizations to comply with and respect. The objectives that the federation focuses on are identified and negotiated between member communities and federation representatives. Finally, accountability is provided by federations to member communities, and from public, private, and non-governmental organizations to both federations and the communities that they work with. All four interactions are developed in a space that is created by the actors. Although some of these processes are already ongoing, clearly defining and further developing them could improve indigenous self-government systems under their own terms.

4.5 Strengthening a self-determined indigenous economy

Throughout the interviews and group sessions, community members and representatives recommended that their own, self-determined indigenous economy be strengthened through federation mechanisms and external recognition. “Self-determination embodies the right for all peoples to determine their own economic, social and cultural development” (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, n.d., para. 2) and enables people to influence their own future. This is not restricted to just indigenous groups, but is a fundamental piece of international law reflected in several charters and covenants worldwide, including the United Nations Charter and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as a right of ‘all peoples’ (Part I, Article 1) as well as the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action (Part I, Article 2) (United Nations Human Rights, 1976, 1993). In the case of indigenous peoples in the Peruvian Amazon, self-determination does not imply secession from the state (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, n.d.; Van Cott, 2005). This sentiment was also conveyed by community members and representatives throughout the interviews and group sessions.

Because of their unique world views, indigenous communities’ political organization, cultural expressions, and ‘economic development’ are different to that of the west. For instance, differentiating from a euro-western conceptualization of economic development, a representative qualified what it meant to Amazonian indigenous peoples. He stressed indigenous identity as the

foundation of their development, and the need to strive for an economy that is sustained over time:

Now that we have obtained the title to our territories, we must now exercise that economic management (...) based on our identity. We must start by stocking up internally first. For example, our water should be clean and healthy; that is, the water must be suitable for human consumption. Not like today, when it is polluted or is already drying up. The fish are contaminated, and the natural resources are dwindling. Trees are being felled (...), resources are being used irrationally and being plundered. I think [indigenous economic development] is based on an economy that persists over time. An economy that is sustained not only designed for the benefit of those living today, but also thinking of coming generations.

Federations envision an autonomous self-determined economy that can first cover their basic requirements to live and serve to solve their difficulties and to achieve their desires for their future. Community members identified the importance of their own perspectives to be the ones to determine and influence their communities and lives:

I want all leaders and NGOs to come like you and consult [with] us. Just like this. You have come to consult [with] us. That is what we want, through consultation, our own ideas will come out (General Group Session, Bufo Pozo, December 2012).

The ability of indigenous communities' to exercise a self-determined economy is based on having a certain degree of autonomy. Waters (2005), Yashar (2005), and Van Cott (2005) mention that indigenous communities in the Amazon enjoy a certain level of autonomy. This autonomy was also witnessed throughout our interactions and conversations. For instance, if there is a meeting that anybody from outside the community wants to participate in, that person needs to ask the communal authorities for permission.

Exercising their autonomous self-determination transcends the inter-cultural boundary between western and indigenous perspectives. An inter-*comunero* autonomy (at the individual level) is also expressed within individual communities. This expression of autonomy is especially important in a context where a hegemonic economic perspective (euro-western) imposes itself over the other (Ashéninka and Yine-Yami). Waters (2005) argues that, when there is individual

autonomous manifestation of self-determination in a community, communal self-determination becomes stronger. The chief of one of FECONAPA's member communities reflected on the autonomy of community members to maintain traditional ways of living. Residing in family clusters in areas far from the centre of the community is a traditional way of living rather than a grid-pattern distribution as determined by mainstream societies:

Let's respect idiosyncrasies, the customary right of our people. We say [to our community members]: "Brothers, if you do not want to join us here [in the centre of the community] where the school and the medical post are, you can still live around, but as long as you come when there is communal assembly." And they comply! (Private Session with FECONAPA, Atalaya, February 2013).

Community members identified having diverse strategies to fulfil their basic requirements of food, health, and housing that are still interlinked with their cultures and ethnic identity. However, the imposition of an economic model that does not match indigenous peoples' own cultural, political, social, spiritual, or economic perspectives has been, and continues to be, a threat to indigenous people's self-determination (Chirif & García, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Galeano, 1987; Waters, 2005). This was also brought up by a representative with OIDIT while talking about her communities' difficulties:

[Those who generate difficulties] are outsiders. They come to impose their reality against that of our people. They have another culture... another way of thinking (conversation with representative, Atalaya, November 2012).

Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies are the umbrella frame under which other activities, such as economic activities, are performed. O. Gutierrez, who works for indigenous peoples using an emancipatory approach³⁹, states that, from the elders' perspectives and his experience, there are four important aspects that define an indigenous economy: (a) the integrity

³⁹ Oscar Gutierrez is the head of the Department of Solidarity Economy in the Workgroup Racimos de Ungurahui. Mr. Gutierrez has worked for more than 30 years for different indigenous groups throughout the Peruvian Amazon, offering support on issues, including sustainable economies, organizational capacity, and extractive industries' impacts on indigenous communities.

of their territory; (b) respect for all non-living⁴⁰ and living beings; (c) their spirituality; and (d) their vision (personal communication, November 2014). I use these four aspects to position Ashéninka and Yine-Yami expressions on how a self-determined indigenous economy could materialize under their indigenous perspectives.

4.5.1 Integrity of the territory

During the interviews and group sessions with community members and representatives, it became evident that their economies are interwoven with the integrity of their territories (sub-surface, surface, and air), which, at the same time, are linked to their ways of living. Collective tenure of their lands is important to indigenous peoples because it leads to an ability to legally manage their lands—under their own terms—to address their necessities. A community member from Mencoriari mentioned that they want their territory for themselves, and not for a logging company to come and take it (Group Session with women, Mencoriari, November 2012).

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has noted that “around the world, indigenous peoples are fighting for recognition of their right to own, manage and develop their lands, territories and resources” (2007, p. 1). The integrity of indigenous peoples’ territories is important when promoting their perspective of development according to their own aspirations and necessities. Territories are important to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures, traditions, and just to keep themselves alive (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007).

In explaining the importance of forests, many community members said that the forest and their territories are like a “market, our pharmacy, our hardware, it is life itself” (*Apu Chapra Tskimpo Jorge Bisa Tirko* quoted by Radio Oriente (2011). In the two most traditional communities, there is a concern for the continued disappearance of precious palms such as *pona* (*Iriarthea deltoidea*), *shapaja* (*Orbygnia phalerata* Mart.), *irapay*, (*Lepidocaryum tessmanii* or *Lepidocaryum tenue* Mart) and *shebón* (*Attalea butyracea*), used to construct their houses. In addition, their fruits are fundamental sources of nutrients for both communities and the animals

⁴⁰ The term non-living being refer to inanimate beings that possess spirit, for example certain mountains are called *apu* and they are credited of having direct influence on the life cycles in the region.

that live in the forest (based on conversations with community members in all communities, 2012; Paniagua Zambrana et al., 2012).

When extractive industry concessions are put in place, the loss of decision-making power over their territory is imminent. Community members gave examples of this following the creation of a logging concession on their territory. A community member in Diobamba-Chanchamayo decided to take care of the palms that grew in her backyard, in view of the increasingly longer distances that she had to walk to find palms. However, a logging company with a concession in her territory did not take this issue into account when making logging roads. She expressed her concern:

How can I tell the company not to destroy my *shapaja* in my yard? The company knocks over the *shapaja* that is growing in my yard that I use to make my home. The *shapaja* is all the time further and further away (conversation with community member, Diobamba-Chanchamayo, November 2012).

She said that the company's workers answered her complaint with a pejorative term and implied ignorance on her part: “there is a lot of *shapaja* in the forest. You don't know anything, *campa!*” While, in Ashéninka territories, there are still some palms for the construction of houses, *comuneros* from areas more exposed to urban centers, like the Yine-Yami people, do not have more options to choose from. They have to resort to either buying the palm tree leaves from other communities, or buying corrugated metal sheets (*calamina*) to roof their houses:

[Before], we used to get the leaves from anywhere. When I came, there were not many palm trees, but before, I know there was a lot.... Before, all the houses were thatched with palm leaf. Today because there are no more, we are forced to build with *calamina* (Group Session with men, Bufe Pozo, December 2012).

OIDIT representatives, who have twenty-four communities under their responsibility that maintain several traditional practices and are less exposed to mainstream societies, recognize what is coming—more scarcity. Representatives are thinking of strategies to counteract this trend that is destroying their ways of life. An OIDIT representative reflected on the traditional ways of

organization of families in their territories (customs still in practice among some families, although very discouraged) and proposed a potential strategy to address the scarcity issue:

From what I have been being investigating, (...) previously our parents and grandparents lived dispersed: brothers there, cousins out there... so as not to scare animals away. Then the animals were in the middle of the forest and they had their food to eat, [for example] the *guayos*⁴¹. Also because of that, people made their crops far away. But sometimes, as communities, we want to be organized,⁴² right? To be together [in the centre of the community]. I believe that, in this sense, it would be a matter of managing the community. By saying this, I mean to choose an area that is not for use, that no one can enter. The same population would have to search for a *cocha*⁴³ where people can fish and hunt, and on the other side no. Have it off-limits for five years. For five years, the animals could reproduce and then (...) we can hunt there (conversation with OIDIT representative, Galilea, November 2012).

Throughout our conversations, *comuneros* expressed concern over the scarcity of food, housing supplies, and areas where resource extraction projects should not be conducted; areas left for them to express their spiritual beliefs, without which their health, culture, and identities would be put in danger (Waters, 2005). A FECONAPA representative said:

... we inherited from our ancestors free territories to make our crops where it is convenient, and thus not be in a restricted territory where, in time, we would not be able to even use our own resources (Private Session with FECONAPA, Atalaya, February 2013).

How would it be possible for indigenous peoples to implement self-determined indigenous economic strategies *vis-à-vis* a legislative environment which promotes extractive-based concessions in their territories? Indigenous communities are susceptible to changes that happen in their territories. Community members and representatives therefore recommend that their institutions should seek out, promote, and practice self-determined activities that do not violate

⁴¹ Palm fruits.

⁴² *Comuneros* have been told since the time of SINAMOS (National System of Support for Social Mobilization), a social program that started in 1971, that the way to get organized is through forming a community. This new form of living followed a new concept/distribution of organizing indigenous societies in the Amazon and is seen as incongruent to many indigenous Amazonian ways of living and their environmental context, which leads to unique problems (based on conversations with community members and representatives, November 2012 - February 2013).

⁴³ Little Lagoon.

their conceptualization of territorial integrity, as mainstream perceptions of territory are inconsistent with their realities and practices. Likewise, other indigenous federations together with the national federation, AIDESEP, have presented to a Peruvian state agency (related to indigenous peoples and to the Ombudsman) a set of files and maps asking for recognition of their territory including sub-surface, surface, and air (Radio Oriente, 2011).

4.5.2 Respect for all living and non-living beings

Respect for living and non-living beings is another component that Amazonian indigenous peoples take into account when making any economically-related decision. A Yine-Yami community member from Nueva Unión commented about the extraction of *shihuahuaco* (*Dipteryx micrantha*). This tree is seen as a protector of Yine-Yami, people but is in high demand in world markets, especially China. Now, *shihuahuaco* represents over 50% of Peru's timber exports (Putzel, 2010).

Here are some people (...) that are destroying our [way in which] we defend our community, which costs a lot. For example, they cut *shihuahuaco*. That *shihuahuaco* that grew in one hundred years is being knocked down in a little bit. And later to recover that *shihuahuaco*? It takes many years. *Shihuahuaco* provide to us a lot and protect us (conversation with community member, Nueva Unión, December 2012).

Shihuahuaco is a keystone species for human and non-human beings. During the dry season when fruit resources are scarce it provides food and shelter for monkeys, peccaries, other mammals and the trunks are inhabited by the spirits that protect the Yine-Yami people. For the Amazonian people, Nature is a living being to whom you ask permission to survive (Olórtegui, 2007). The interwoven destinies of humans and Nature lead Amazonian people to resist the destruction of Nature and, consequently, their lives:

When I talk about our history as Amazonians and as part of the plant Earth, we are also part of sustaining of humanity. The Amazon now, more than ever, as you know, plays an important role in the world. Where there is forest, there are also Amazonian people. Where there are no Amazonian people, the Amazon has been destroyed. That is why it is important to support the agenda [of Amazonian indigenous peoples] and their aspirations.... Amazonian peoples have contributed to humanity by preserving the forest ecosystem. It is an

Amazonian struggle, otherwise a long time ago it would have been plundered, but that did not happen thanks to the Amazonian resistance (conversation with FECONAPA representative, Atalaya, November 2012).

4.5.3 Spirituality

According to representatives and *comuneros*, spiritual values play a role in delineating an indigenous economy. All beings have a soul and have wisdom. Plants, for instance, have three powers: to feed, to heal, and to teach (based on conversations in the communities and personal communication with Oscar Gutiérrez, November 2013). So, human beings are not the pinnacle of creation and the only possessors of wisdom; human beings also can learn from other living and non-living beings (Olórtegui, 2007). OIDIT's representative, for example, talked about a plant that teaches indigenous medical doctors, through visions, what can be the cause of their patient's illness (much like x-rays help western doctors to see their patients' internal physical traumas):

The *ayahuasca* is for so-called shamans (we call them *doctors* because they know how to cure us) to learn how to heal the sick ... for that the *ayahuasca* is prepared. They ingest it and see visions and immediately identify what the patient has and say, "Yes, your spirit is sick, or such-and-such makes you sick." And if they can heal you [at that time], they heal you immediately (conversation with OIDIT representative, Galilea, November 2012).

He continued, saying that this sacred mixture of plants is taken just by medical doctors who follow a rigorous process in which several other spiritual requirements and a special diet are followed before taking the spirit of *ayahuasca*. In this reality, each woman and man establishes reciprocal and interdependent bonds with their surroundings. Humans are not superior beings, but rather they are at the same level as any other form of life, guided and protected by powerful spirits with whom there is coexistence through constant dialogue (Viteri Gualinga, 2002).

4.5.4 Indigenous vision

The accumulation of money is not the ultimate goal in the everyday economic process in Yine-Yami and Ashéninka. Viewing it as such is argued to be irrational because it means the deterioration of the ecosystem and, consequently, leads to self-destruction. Van Kessel (1989) mentions that the indigenous economy is not at the service of humans and is not based on principles such as efficiency, but instead, is guided by the emotional, affective, and relational.

A community member from Bufe Pozo reflected in the group session with the men that material possessions are not the most important aspect in their lives. While analyzing whether or not they would accept oil exploitation in their territories (after seeing some propositions), *comuneros* in the same Group Session connected social, environmental, and cultural deterioration to monetary affluence, citing undesirable issues that emerged in a nearby community that currently has a higher income because of oil taxes (Group Session, Bufe Pozo, December 2012).

An indigenous vision is a holistic perspective that consists of a search for spiritual and material conditions to create a harmonious life, the *kametsa asaike*⁴⁴ philosophy for Asháninka people (Central Asháninka del Río Ene, 2012; Viteri Gualinga, 2002). *Kametsa asaike* is one of the pillars of Asháninka indigenous identity, together with the rights to territory and self-determination. This term encompasses eight principles: (1) live as *Asháninka sanori*⁴⁵; (2) live eating what we know; (3) live safely and in peace in our own territory; (4) live in peace without suffering from the *terrorismo*⁴⁶; (5) live better producing from our *chacras* to buy what we need; (6) live healthy with our knowledge and also well attended by clinics; (7) live with an education that give us power as Ashánikas; and finally (8) live well with a federation that listens to us and defends our rights (Central Asháninka del Río Ene, 2012). In light of these eight indicators developed by Asháninka people, “high monetary income, access to urban services, and consumption of goods and services” seems irrelevant to achieve a fulfilled life (Central Asháninka del Río Ene, 2012, p. 6). It would be easy call them “poor” under western assumptions of what a quality of life should look like. Therefore, it is fundamental for many indigenous peoples’ survival to clearly differentiate their own expectations for their future and ways of live.

⁴⁴ This term literally means “living well” although as indigenous philosophy concatenates ideas that are conceived and shaped by the Asháninka people in the Peruvian Amazon.

⁴⁵ This term refers to a person that lives as authentic person (*ashaninka sanori*). Asháninka people further explain that this term comprises knowing how to behave, how to invite things that one has to others, how to receive what others give to you, how to celebrate, how to eat, so that we can live like people (*ashaninka*).

⁴⁶ This term is understood as the violent conflicts between Marxist-Leninist-Maoist and Peruvian Government through its armed forces.

To summarize, it was argued that an indigenous economic development strategies could be strengthened by taking four issues into account: integral territory; respect for every living and non-living being; spirituality; and indigenous vision. Ashéninka and Yine-Yami peoples want to see these values reflected in determining their economies. To achieve this, representatives mentioned that some of them were being trained to provide oversight on behalf of the communities, in order to influence and control some economic activities that are negatively affecting them, like logging (Private Session with OIDIT, Atalaya, February 2014). This role of overseer (*veedor*) would be complementary to the work that the federations are already doing to advocate for their member communities. OIDIT's representative explained more:

The representative of the local or regional organization should witness what the business person has committed. The forest *veedor* is seeing and hearing what [the company] is committing to do (Private Session with OIDIT, Atalaya, February 2013).

Community members and representatives identified the importance of federations in promoting a self-determined economy based on relational, emotional, and affective arguments (van Kessel, 1989). They clearly described their indigenous economy as drastically different from euro-western economic development paradigms. In fact, Viteri Gualinga (2002) argues that the concept of “development” as a lineal dichotomy between development and underdevelopment does not exist in Amazonian worldviews, and neither do western concepts of poverty or richness based on accumulation of material goods. Yet, Bebbington (1996) states that indigenous federations have been analyzed primarily as political agents, and less attention has been paid to their potential role as economic actors. It is critical to frame their economy as a *self-determined indigenous economy*.

Waters (2005) argues that it is not possible to exercise full autonomous self-determination within current indigenous contexts in the Americas. However, by exercising certain degree of a self-determined economy, indigenous peoples can celebrate and cultivate the diversity of alternative ways of life, coexistence, and interaction with the world. Developing these alternatives is crucial to finding more congruent solutions to their very specific challenges. De Sousa Santos (2010) agrees; these indigenous alternatives are usually ignored by theories and concepts developed in

the global north and in the academic realm, as they are not seen as particularly valuable contributions to building a better world.

4.6 Increase political participation

Representatives, communal authorities, and *comuneros* agreed that the political participation of indigenous peoples in politics is important, so they can be part of decision-making processes in the elaboration of public policies that have the potential to shape their lives, under their terms, in the present and the future. A *comunero* expressed his thoughts about the municipal elections: “we want to elect a person who knows our community, reality, and way of living. We want to elect an indigenous brother to govern” (conversation with community member, Diobamba-Chanchamayo, November 2012).

An indigenous advisor to two federations stated that the way to be part of decision-making in the development of public policies that will affect indigenous people’s contexts is through the formation of indigenous political parties:

...we must first touch our hearts, our ethnic identity in the country. On the other hand, because of democracy, there is the rule of the game in our country that gives us the opportunity to prepare the indigenous movement, indigenous peoples in the whole country, not just the Amazon, but the Andean and coastal areas as well. So far, we have only been invited, have followed groups of people who own those games, but we have not created our own political entity that truly represents us, including cultural identity of our multicultural country, committed to truly be a better nation, that look for the wellbeing of all and not just a group of families who have captured our country to the detriment of millions of Peruvians who live here. Then, natural resources benefit only a few groups of powerful people with whom [the politicians] are in collusion because of royalties.

Van Cott (2005) argues that the pinnacle of indigenous federations will be the formation of political parties along ethnic lines. Certainly, that would be a platform for influencing decision-making processes for the benefit of the communities. However, one wonders whether those same spaces (which, from indigenous perspectives, are incongruent because of their very epistemological, ontological, and axiological foundations) are the best channels to achieve their objectives and resolve their struggles. AIDSESEP, the most influential national federation, has

stated that it is not among their highest priorities “to participate in the political party system but to participate in their own ways by forming their own parliaments governed by indigenous cultural values” (Van Cott, 2005). A few years later in 2010, AIDSEP formed a political party called *Alianza para una Alternativa Para la Humanidad* (APHU), indicating that this indigenous political movement is neither left, right, nor central, but has a goal “to stop the destruction of Mother Earth because of the western civilization’s ambition based on consumerism and individualism” (Jimez, 2010). Van Cott (2005) drew a parallel between indigenous movements and political parties; both are channels used by collectives to advance their interests. She also mentioned that in some countries like Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, these indigenous organizations have participated in elections without forming parties since the 1990s (Van Cott, 2005).

Indigenous federations and community members are envisioning multicultural systems of government in this already multicultural context, and, at different levels, are looking to indigenize the system from its roots, a concept also mentioned by De Sousa Santos (2010). So, I still wonder: what are the implications of analyzing and qualifying the strength or success of indigenous movements (whose members have sets of values, ways of doing things, and perspectives that are different from those of the west) by western ways of analysis/qualification? What are the metrics, values, and assumptions used? From indigenous perspectives, is the pinnacle of all indigenous movements really the formation of political parties? Should indigenous peoples form indigenous institutions that are more independent from western-based governments? Or should these institutions be part of the western systems and try to fit within them?

The cycle of political influence/participation in these contexts is illustrated in Figure 25. The member communities are the roots and drivers of the federations’ existence, the *raison d’être* of the cycle. Member communities (should) identify the objectives, functions, and institutional policies of the federations. Representatives develop the objectives of the institution based on the objectives of communities and in collaboration with them. Finally, the federation develops institutional policies based on recommendations of community members as well as

representatives' reflections as the insiders in that role. Outcomes of this process are institutional objectives, functions, and policies.

In this way, federations could participate in the political arena by providing inputs to elaborate more congruent public policies that will later impact the communities. In doing so, these policies could affect communities in these dynamic contexts, and new inputs would be formulated based on communities' values, worldviews, and ways of doing things. This cycle then continues to produce information from the roots to again inform public, private, and non-governmental stakeholders for the development of more congruent indigenous public policies, and to improve indigenous systems of self-government and, consequently, their self-determined well-being.

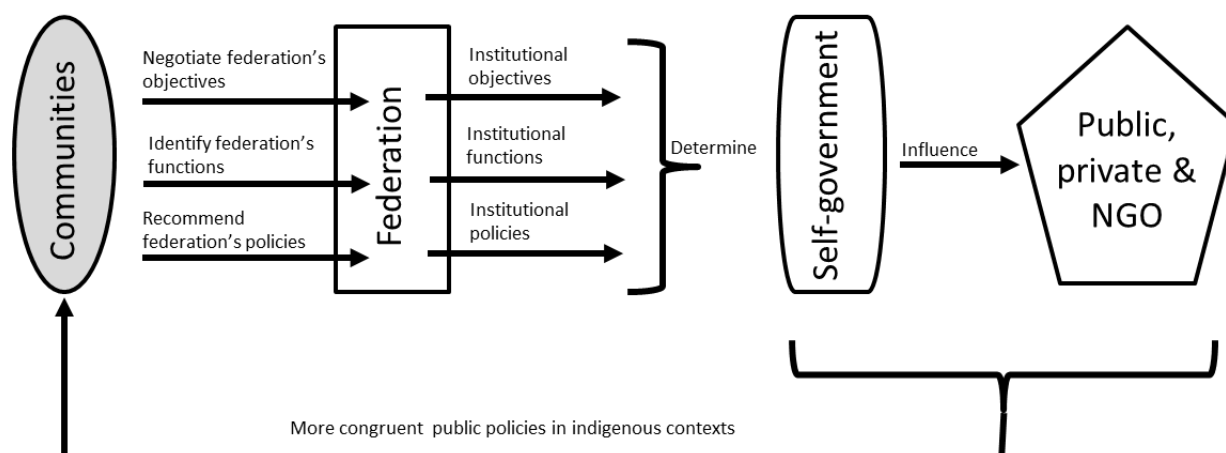


Figure 25: Proposal of a cycle of political influence in indigenous contexts

4.7 Conclusion

Community members from six Ashéninka and Yine-Yami communities expressed their current concerns and desires for their own futures during interviews and group discussions. All of their insights are important inputs for federations as they elaborate their objectives, define their functions, and develop institutional policies as part of their dynamic system of self-government. This chapter has portrayed the recommendations of community members and federation representatives—the experts of their own realities—for improving their institutions, and, consequently, their systems of self-government.

The salient recommendations from communities and representatives are to:

1. define the jurisdiction of the federations;
2. formalize the federations;
3. improve processes of interaction;
4. strengthen self-determined indigenous economy; and
5. increase political participation.

Community members also stated that they believe and want indigenous federations to be their spokespersons because they have similar value systems, ways of doing things, cultures, and languages, compared with non-indigenous organizations. Likewise, community members and representatives reflected on what democracy could look like in these contexts, contesting current models of representative democracy in order to move toward a communal democracy in which decisions are made by consensus by community members. Community members want their representatives to make decisions only after coordination and authentic consultation.

Indigenous peoples have expressed aspirations to further self-determine their systems of government, which has led to the notion of pluri-national states, implying the transition from homogenous to heterogeneous states (de Sousa Santos, 2010). Multi-epistemological and multicultural realities can, thus, have their individual and collective rights represented and respected. An example of why the promotion of pluri-nationalism is important is the critical difference between prevalent euro-western and Ashéninka and Yine-Yami self-determined economies. De Sousa Santos (2010) argues that we need to be cautious and aware, because mainstream economies are transforming societies from market societies to ones “where everything is bought and sold, including ethical values and political choices” (p. 203). Realizing a self-determined indigenous economy could additionally be a way to indigenize current dominant, non-indigenous political and social systems that presently govern indigenous realities.

Hopefully, these recommendations can influence indigenous internal institutional policies which, in turn, can improve the Ashéninka and Yine-Yami representative systems and, influence and improve public policies that impact indigenous communities.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

“The entire Amazon and indigenous peoples who are the dwellers here, want our wellbeing like any other human being in the country, in the world. We want human dignity. All development should not pollute the environment or be destructive, otherwise it is not development. What I see is a policy of hypocrisy of the euro-western culture, of capitalism, when it mentions the necessity to preserve Nature, to work in a sustainable manner. But in practical terms it’s destroying her and polluting her.”

(Indigenous representative, Atalaya, 2012)

5.1 Introduction

In this thesis, we brought to light community members’ stories and histories that are often made invisible (Arat-Koç, 2012; Ross & Rein, 2014) or not taken into consideration by traditional analyses of indigenous federations in the Amazon. Together, with six Ashéninka and Yine-Yami communities and their local institutions, we collaboratively conducted research on how indigenous peoples—as experts of their own realities—can improve their systems of self-government. We specifically looked into indigenous federations as one institutional aspect of the current indigenous system of self-government in the Peruvian Amazon.

In addition to collaborating for this study with Ashéninka and Yine-Yami communities, we also worked with the NGO, Law, Environment and Natural Resources (DAR). The staff provided a great deal of support, especially with the study’s financing and logistics. The study was conducted in person with the NGO, communities, and their representatives from September 2013 to April 2014.

The collaborative nature of this study also necessitated multiple deliverables. For instance, communities and their federations identified specific information that they desired as an outcome of the research. This information was delivered in a magazine-format document, in their own languages, and with photographs taken in their communities. Likewise, the NGO identified the information that it desired, which was delivered in a series of reports, presentations, and by

supporting participatory processes between the NGO and indigenous peoples. Finally, the information needed to fulfill the requirements of a Master's thesis in the Faculty of Forestry at UBC. Each of the deliverables achieved in the study was framed within indigenous theories, including the indigenist theoretical framework (Rigney, 1999), indigenous research methodologies (Chilisa, 2012), and decolonizing methodologies (Smith, 1999).

Two different problems were addressed in this thesis. (1) Chirif and García (2011) argue that, within the overwhelming contexts in which representatives find themselves, one of the major challenges for indigenous federations is the weakening of the relationships between member communities and federation representatives; community members and federation representatives suggest that the weakening of this relationship prevents representatives from effectively addressing member communities' objectives. (2) The formulation of public policies in Peru are seen as incongruent to indigenous perspectives and contexts in the Amazon (Espinosa de Rivero, 2009; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005).

To address each of the aforementioned problems, two research objectives were developed: (1) to identify which factors contribute to indigenous federation representatives successfully representing member communities, from community members' perspectives, and by doing so, possibly strengthen the relationships between representatives and community members; and (2) to determine specific recommendations at the institutional level for improving their self-government system at the federation level from the perspectives of community members and their representatives. While the recommendations focused on functions/actions that the federations can take, these recommendations can also inform public, private, and non-governmental organizations for improving policies that are applied in indigenous peoples' contexts in Peru. Both objectives were addressed from indigenous people's perspectives using emancipatory indigenous research methodologies (Chilisa, 2012; Rigney, 1999; Smith, 1999).

5.2 Decolonizing the study

“Indigenous people now want research and its designs to contribute to the self-determination and liberation struggles as defined and controlled by their communities” (Rigney, 1999, p. 109). If

we are equal partners in research, control over the process and the power to make decisions are shared among allies. My empowered role to make decisions in this study ended at the moment of deciding which federations would collaborate in the study; it was left to the federations to coordinate with their member communities, and decide which communities would participate in the study. This potentially introduced biases and may have limited the results by including certain communities and not others. However, shared decision-making and control of the process was a critical feature in conducting a collaborative study.

Our interactions with indigenous peoples needed to be guided by theories congruent with their worldviews. Rigney (1999) recommends the use of emancipatory research methodologies that seek more congruent ways of conducting research with and for indigenous peoples. In research in indigenous settings or about indigenous peoples, indigenous worldviews and concerns must be placed at the centre of the research by using decolonizing methodologies, methods, and theories to inform the research (Smith, 1999). Moreover, indigenous and non-indigenous researchers need to develop better emancipatory/decolonized skills and paradigms when designing and conducting research and disseminating results. These skills tend to be more appropriate and meaningful to addressing real-life issues affecting local and indigenous peoples.

5.3 Research limitations and adaptation

5.3.1 Limitations

In summary, the limitations of this study are related to implications of my privileged position as researcher, the restrictions in generalization and possible compromise of research rigor, errors of interpretation because of the use of different languages (Ashéninka, Yine-Yami, Spanish, and English), and inability to assess positive and negative impacts of the study in the long term.

I found inherent language limitations while writing this thesis. It became a challenge to not further stereotype, marginalize, or oppress indigenous peoples. English and Spanish, like any other language used to colonize other societies, are limited in expressing decolonizing and emancipatory ideas (Rigney, 1999). Smith (1999) argues that academic writing is a type of discourse that is never innocent; rather, it can be dangerous when analytical thinking and self-

reflection are not involved in the process. Still, what is the right or necessary amount of self-criticism and reflection when a colonized mind writes? Would a researcher even notice that one's own mind is colonized, and that one's practices, attitudes, and language are a reflection of that? Nader goes so far as to caution anthropologists not to study the powerless, "because everything that you say about them will be used against them" (1972, p. 18). There is a great responsibility in the words that I use in this thesis and in the translations that I have made to convey collaborators' perspectives. In other words, I have attempted to avoid causing further harm to indigenous peoples in the Amazon first, by continual exchange of ideas with cultural advisors to help me decolonize my mind; second, by acknowledging limitations inherent of a study conducted in less than a year; and third, by being aware of the words used while writing the thesis.

To achieve rigour and to address key limitations in the study, and to enhance validity and reliability, some measures were taken. As proposed by Chilisa (2012), strategies to address limitations in qualitative research are to build *credibility* for internal validity, *transferability* for external validity, *dependability* for reliability, and *confirmability* for objectivity.

Credibility was important for cultivating internal validity. We had prolonged and substantial interactions with collaborators, to cultivate rapport and friendship, and also for collaborators to recognize their human experiences reflected in the co-created knowledge. Within the research team, consultation was done through peer debriefing about the study procedures. Peer debriefing helped us to identify and challenge our own values guiding the study. Member checks – the process by which the researcher seeks feedback from collaborators, verifying that results, analyses, themes, and patterns recorded accurately reflect the collaborators' views – is the most important strategy in building credibility (Chilisa 2012). We implemented member checks through post-interview and post-group session consultation with communities and representatives, and through communal assemblies at closure of the study. The formation of relationships within the research team, and between the research team and collaborators, created a space of trust for collaborators, allowing spontaneous reflections and suggestions for how to improve the research process. Collaborators provided feedback to the research team when

consulted about whether the knowledge co-created was accurately reflecting their thoughts and whether the methods were appropriate.

Triangulation also improves credibility (Chilisa, 2012). We achieved this through the use of multiple methods (conversational interviews and group sessions). Also, triangulation within the research team enhances credibility by bringing diverse perspectives to understand the phenomena under investigation. Theoretical triangulation was achieved by bringing, besides indigenous perspectives, other scholarly works that address the phenomena researched, and by confirming or challenging the knowledge created in indigenous contexts. Finally, continuous multi-layered reflexivity processes (self, interpersonal, and collective) were followed throughout the co-creation of knowledge (for more description, see section 2.5).

How can credibility be built when the researcher's biggest limitations are culture and language illiteracy? My indigenous roots are from the Andes, so I am an outsider in the Amazon. Cultural advisors helped me to make our interactions a better experience for everyone, and facilitated a better understanding between people from different cultures. During the interviews and group sessions, whether collaborators spoke in my mother tongue (Spanish) or in their mother tongue (Ashéninka and Yine-Yami), there were limitations in our communication. The best way to address this would have been by having the researcher learn the indigenous language or languages. Given that this was not feasible, the way I addressed this limitation was through three specific actions. First, I learned some basics of the languages and became familiar with some of the words, to the point where I was able to probe with questions for further clarification. Second, the research team convened peer debriefing sessions. In addition to conversing about coordination-related issues, we revisited the interviews and group sessions of the day to discuss the meaning of the collaborators' testimonies in greater depth, and how the cultural advisors framed the questions. Third, triangulation between interviews and group sessions constituted an important mechanism for the internal validation of information created by the collaborators.

Transferability is necessary to establish external validity. In this case, it was not possible to generalize the findings to other indigenous realities in the Amazon because indigenous perspectives recognize the differences between indigenous groups. However, it is possible to

adapt to similar situations. In similar indigenous settings in the Amazon and (depending on the indigenous group) in Latin America, the recommendations for the federations provided by collaborators can be used, not just at the local, but at the regional, national and international levels of indigenous self-government systems. Moreover, as the basic unit and reason for the existence of any other level of government in indigenous contexts, community members' perspectives are crucial to understand and incorporate at all jurisdictions of government (from local to international).

Transferability of the co-created knowledge by Ashéninka and Yine-Yami people was enhanced by using purposive sampling, one of the proposed sampling strategies by Chilisa (2012). The purpose of this study is to present indigenous communities' perspectives, based on the assumption that they are the experts in their own realities. Therefore, in the process of inviting collaborators, any community member has the knowledge to collaborate in this study. Additionally, a rich description of the context, collaborators, and setting of the study allows those reading the study to discern if findings of the research can be adaptable and applicable to other contexts.

There are several lessons learned through constructing this thesis that could be valuable to other researchers when pursuing collaborative research with emancipatory methodologies. Following the principal guidelines of the approach, the methodology could be adapted to other similar research settings.

Dependability, the equivalent of reliability, is useful in quantitative research for replication purposes. Because human interactions are dynamic, replicability in qualitative research is not possible, yet, reliability is possible through a dense description of research methods for use in other applicable settings (Chilisa, 2012). The process of understanding phenomena and obtaining findings can be applied in other research settings. For instance, the methodology and approach could be used in any other collaborative work, especially while working with oppressed and marginalized groups. Moreover, the development of principles that expose researchers' values and motivations to conduct the study are aspects that could provide comparable results. As

suggested by Chilisa (2012) and raised in the credibility section, triangulation procedures were implemented in this study to enhance dependability of the information.

Another limitation was that it was a challenge to work within a one-year time frame on this study. Since the communities had suffered the disappointment of many empty promises made by outsiders, it was important to first prioritize, finish, and release the deliverables for the communities and their federations, and then focus on the objectives of my thesis. Time constraints were felt throughout the study and it is important to consider these when designing methods. For instance, during the Final Session, collaborators had several recommendations to share, but there was insufficient time to fully discuss them during the two-day event. To address this limitation in the methodology, I invited collaborators to meet with any of the research team members individually afterward to further share their thoughts with us. Consequently, I had two conversations with two women: one who was the chief of her community, the other a representative of a regional federation. I also had personal conversations with each of the cultural advisors about additional thoughts shared by other collaborators. For future studies of this kind, it would be important to work within more flexible timeframes, or to define with collaborators other means of conveying thoughts that they could not express or discuss during the defined events in advance.

Confirmability is similar to objectivity in quantitative research. Confirmability is useful to provide evidence that the results of the study are faithful reflections of the research collaborators' perspectives, rather than the researcher's own biases (Jensen, 2008). Researchers—as meaning-making and measurement tools in the study—bring their own biases. In this study, biases were addressed with a variety of strategies as suggested by Chilisa (2012) and Jensen (2008). First, we addressed biases by recognizing up-front the positionality of the researcher in the study and multilayered-reflexibility procedures (respectively addressed in sections 2.3 and 2.5). Moreover, the set of seven principles that the research team put together transparently acknowledged our motivations and values to ensure rigour in the research. For example, we considered specific principles (see the list in section 2.5) for communication: based on the 4th and 6th principles, we respected collaborators' own processes and timelines of thought; and based on the 3rd and 7th principles, we respected and valued collaborators' narratives and perspectives. Within the

research team, we internally reflected on these principles, and avoided making interventions and suggestions that could influence collaborators' testimonies. Second, we addressed biases by using appropriate methodological procedures. Indigenist and indigenous research methodologies stress emancipatory approaches in the study. These research approaches provide a set of guidelines strongly rooted in indigenous peoples' perspectives as experts on their own realities. Third, we addressed biases by using the multiple triangulation procedures mentioned in the credibility section. Fourth, we addressed biases by the level of trustworthiness of the researcher. Cited in Chilisa (2012, p. 168), Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest four conditions for trustworthiness, that the researcher: (a) is familiar with the setting and phenomenon under study; (b) has strong interest in conceptual or theoretical knowledge and has the ability to conceptualize large amounts of qualitative data; (c) has the ability to take a multidisciplinary approach; and (d) has good investigation skills.

Errors of interpretation may have occurred because of the use of different languages. Ashéninka and Yine-Yami were translated into Spanish and later into English, this might have carried not just errors in the interpretation of terms and ideas, but reflection of the research team's subjectivities during the different phases of the study. Following I mention how the research team tried to diminish the negative impacts of this limitation. The research team recognized that the ultimate goal of the collaborative study was for indigenous peoples to improve their institutions and their system of self-government, which would only be possible if all collaborators were able to express their perspectives transparently and without distortion. It could be argued that the fact that cultural advisors also held posts as representatives in the federations under study may have affected the collaborators' openness in group discussions. However, there was no evidence that collaborators held back their opinions in the presence of these cultural advisors; community members' and representatives' feelings of autonomy were very strong.

5.3.2 Adaptation

As a result of reflexivity procedures and collaborators providing feedback, we adapted the methodology and methods. In our first General Session, we provided pencils for community members to reflect their desires for the future through illustrations. However, we realized that

this excluded all the people who have had traditional indigenous education based mainly on oral methods of conveying information. Using familiar elements of their surroundings such as plants, clay, charcoal, and natural dyes instead, community members' creative expressions bloomed. This might be because it created a more comfortable and safe space, or because they felt proud of the richness of their lands. Thereafter, we decided to leave it to community members' own discretion to bring whatever desirable material they wanted to express themselves on paper. Likewise, in the Three Filters activity in the Final Session with representatives and communal authorities, we soon discovered that it was a mistake to use pencils and asked them to read certain phrases out loud. Although the cultural advisor facilitated participants in expressing their thoughts, this dynamic had the potential to perpetuate the notion of doing things one way and positioning the collaborators (with mainly indigenous education) as "ignorant" since Ashéninka and Yine-Yami are oral cultures. The concern here was that the collaborators (community members and their representatives) would not feel comfortable expressing their thoughts fully.

5.4 Contributions

This thesis provide some suggestions how to solve critical problems in Ashéninka and Yine-Yami contexts from the communities' perspectives themselves rather than theories and researchers.

To address the large questions of this study related to indigenous federations and the perspectives from the member communities, we found indigenous research theories to be consistent with indigenous realities. This contributes to larger debates proposed by Yashar (2005) and Van Cott (2005) about claims made regarding power, influence, and the absence of indigenous movements in Peru. Community members and representatives approved the methodology and methods used in this study. For instance, collaborators stressed features of the study that were of particular value to them. They highlighted the importance of: (1) recalling stories from the past; (2) drawing on their own indigenous worldviews; (3) following their own already-established protocols; (4) sharing control of the research as equal partners; and (5) consulting with them prior to any action being taken as to whether they agree or disagree. These features are particularly valuable in highly diverse societies such as Peru and elsewhere in Latin America, especially since the previous and ongoing consultation methodologies used by the Peruvian

government have proven to be inappropriate and discriminatory (Gamboa & Snoeck, 2012; Schilling-Vacaflor & Flemmer, 2013).

Addressing the first objective, to identify factors that could contribute to improving the federation representatives' roles, community members provided specific characteristics that were grouped into three main "factors of success." Community members prioritized these in order of importance: (1) Close Interpersonal Relationships; (2) Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours; and (3) Organizational Capacity. Representatives agreed that desirable Spiritual-Ethical-Moral Behaviours are a highly valued characteristic in federation representatives.

We were able to understand the sources of the capacity for representing member communities' interests. Part of what is critical in building the influence for indigenous movements in the larger political arena is consolidating first any internal successes based on interpersonal relationships between representative and member communities, as well as embracing those values. Importantly, community members stated that the list of desirable characteristics could be used as a general guide or model of an exemplary person in their society, rather than just being a desirable trait in their representatives.

In addressing the second objective through interviews and group sessions, five recommendations were made that could contribute to improving how indigenous institutions function in the Peruvian Amazon. These were: (1) to define the jurisdiction of the federations; (2) to formalize the federations; (3) to improve the processes of interaction; (4) to strengthen their self-determined indigenous economy; and (5) to increase political participation. These recommendations can also serve to inform public institutions' decision-making processes with respect to the creation of more consistent public policies that have historically tended to be discriminatory and oppressive (Chirif & García, 2011; Espinosa de Rivero, 2009).

The methodology developed with the cultural advisors for this study provides concrete proposals about more sensitive and congruent interactions between persons holding different epistemologies, axiologies, ontologies, and methodologies, for instance, through designing culturally sensitive methods based on local materials and familiar metaphors. These methods

were validated by the collaborators themselves through consultation and incorporation of their feedback. The study reinforces the importance of including cultural advisors in giving context to the research and providing their cultural knowledge in shaping the study. Together, we developed seven principles that were fundamental in guiding our work and our interactions within the research team, as well as between the research team and the collaborators (see list in section 2.5).

5.5 Concluding remarks

Underlying the contributions emanating from both research objectives, indigenous peoples in the Peruvian Amazon are: (1) striving for an ethno-development approach or a culturally-congruent vision for their future (for instance, the *kametsa asaike* from the Asháninka people); (2) advocating for the recognition and practice of a pluri-national state in which both individual and collective rights are respected (see Figure 1).

Scholars, including Bonfil (1982) and Assies (2009), call the self-determined formulation of development, “ethno-development.” Viteri-Gualinga (2002) argues that “development”—as currently conceived in euro-western paradigms—does not exist in the Amazonian indigenous worldview. Moreover, he states that such a conception of development is “inappropriate and highly dangerous” to apply in Amazonian societies (Viteri Gualinga, 2002, p. 2). Indigenous peoples have their own indicators for achieving their desires for the future—*kametsa asaike*—based on their own philosophies and practices recognized by themselves as healthy for their lives and environments.

Indigenous peoples in Peru are advocating for the recognition and practice of a pluri-national state (Yashar, 2005). Diversification leads to resilience, and just as a monoculture is susceptible to diseases in an agricultural system, if we force homogenization on the highly epistemologically-diverse cultural landscape of Peru, we eliminate valuable alternatives to addressing current and future ills of society (de Sousa Santos, 2010). According to conversations and interactions with Ashéninka and Yine-Yami people, high degrees of autonomous self-determination were evident in their everyday life. Past and ongoing power asymmetries and structural problems promoted by global market pressures and international political and

economic powers are threatening any remaining independent thinking, indigenous sciences, and self-sufficiency in Ashéninka and Yine-Yami people the Peruvian Amazon.

As illustrated in Figure 26, the study outcomes (three identified factors of success, and five recommendations) are, ultimately, based on arguments of strengthening autonomous self-determination. These factors contribute to improving the federation representatives' roles, and the recommendations affect this improvement at the institutional level. Addressing both representative and institutional levels delineates the possible improvements to their self-government systems. With strong indigenous federations' policies grounded in member communities' perspectives, the influence on policies would more consistently reflect indigenous peoples' perspectives, to advance: (1) internally, by identifying indicators that delineate, under their own worldviews, the actions to achieve their desires for the future (ethno-development); and (2) externally, by influencing national public policies in the recognition and practice of a plurinational state. If autonomous self-determination is threatened, there is a risk of disrupting multiple jurisdictions of government.

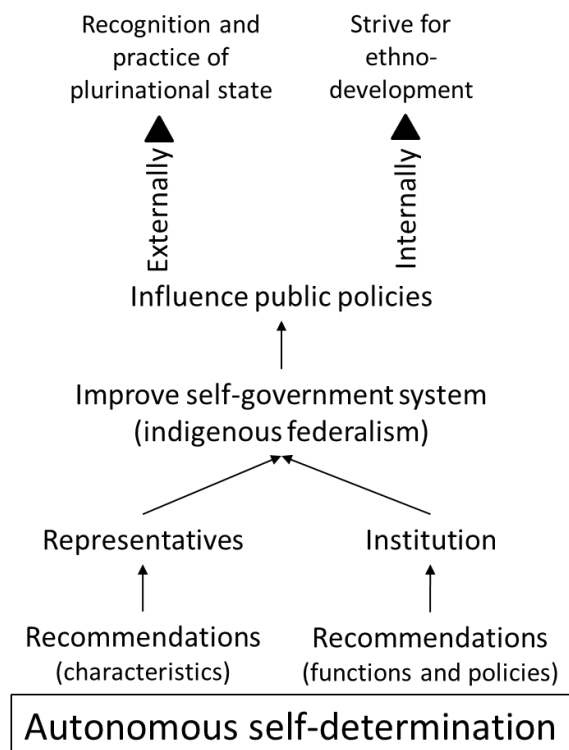


Figure 26: Underlying outcomes in the study are arguments to strengthen autonomous self-determination

Democratizing Peruvian society based on the diversity of indigenous epistemologies could promote a positive path to create solutions within these complex realities. Indigenous communities in Peru teach us that there are other options besides the mainstream political, economic, and social systems. This does not mean a total rejection of external inputs, but rather implies a process of critical analysis of those inputs (Smith, 1999). A pluri-national state could allow for the creation of more adequate combinations of perspectives that are conducive to strive for ethno-development in indigenous realities, and in addressing current and future problems in our diverse societies. In pluri-national contexts, autonomous self-determination is the foundation of a series of processes in indigenous self-government systems. Autonomous self-determination is critical for responding to indigenous peoples' own necessities and visions of the future.

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Appendices

Appendix A : Interview schedule

Note 1: All the interviews will be open-ended. The following questionnaire provides an example of questions that the researcher may pose, but it is important to adapt them to the conversations and the context involved in the interview. Not all questions need to be asked. The duration for the questionnaire is approximately two hours. The interview will be conducted in Spanish and when the collaborator is not fluent in Spanish is monolingual (speaks only her/his mother tongue), an interpreter will be required.

Note 2: Any collaborator that is not a federation representative is called a regular community member or a non-federation representative. The federation representatives are the ones that form part of the “consejo directivo” (directing council) and are the spokesperson for the member communities.

Pre-interview checklist

- Introduce myself.
- Introduce the study.
- Mention some of the mutual benefits such as: the federations will gain valuable information that could potentially be used to improve their institution and more accurately represent/address the needs/concerns/barriers identified by their member communities. I will be able to complete a theses research toward my master's degree and the NGO could use the generated data as a tool to adjust the design of their programs.
- Make clear that there is no right or wrong answer and they can withdraw from the study at any time or decide not to answer a specific question.
- Indicate that all data will be analyzed and presented as collective knowledge created in a particular community. The participants' identifying information will not be reported during any presentation or report. All names will be replaced by pseudonyms.
- Indicate that the conversation will last approximately two hours and ask if they have that time available.

- Ask them if they agree to be recorded.

Interview

I. Introduction of federation representatives

Note 3: The objective of this section of the interview is to allow the interviewee to introduce himself or herself, and also an opportunity to probe about whether there are any perceived challenges in his or her community. The questions will be inquired in the form of metaphors, appropriate for the Amazonian indigenous reality, as mentioned in Chapter 2 (methodology and methods).

1. Maybe we can start by having you introduce yourself? [Prompt: name, age, genealogy, indigenous group, and location]
2. How long have you lived here and what is your principal activity/occupation?
3. How do you envision your community in the future?
4. What do you think are the principal challenges/concerns in your community?
5. What is the name of the federation you belong to and your current role in the federation?
What are the communities this federation represents?
6. Do you know how the federation was created? Could you please explain to me all the process from the beginning?
7. How many representatives does the federation currently have? Do all form part of the board of the federation?
8. What is the current role of the federation?
9. Does spirituality play any role in your federation?

Leadership

10. How is the distribution of the representatives in the federation? Is there a president or leader in the federation? [If there is,] who is he or she and how did you select him or her?
11. What would you describe as the federation's current priority areas of work?
12. Have these areas always been central to the federation's objective?

Maturity and consolidation

13. What do you think are the main challenges or concerns in your communities?
14. What is your sense of how the federation's role is changing in response to these challenges?
15. What do you think are the reasons that are driving those challenges?
16. So far what has the federation achieved?
17. Are there factors you would describe as inhibiting the achievement of the federation's goals? [If yes] Which they might be? [Prompt: Financial resources, institutional capacity, access to expertise, other]
18. How would you like the member communities to be in the future?

Insertion in political federational structure / multidirectional levels of coordination

19. Does your federation have any relationship with any other communities that are not under your jurisdiction?
20. How do you usually coordinate with the other communities that are part of your jurisdiction?
21. Does your federation have any relationship with any other type of organization? [If yes] Could you describe that relationship? [Prompt: important/not important, formal/informal, regular/irregular]

Accountability mechanisms

22. What are the ways federation representatives meet member communities?
23. How often do you meet with the community in a general assembly?
24. Does your federation receive financial support? [If yes] Where does that funding coming from?
25. Do you discuss the budget within the general assembly? [If yes] Could you walk me through the process of how it is usually conducted?

II. Introduction of the community members

Note 4: The objective of this section of the interview is to allow the interviewee to introduce himself/herself, and also an opportunity to probe about if there are any perceived issues in

his/her community. The questions will be inquired in the form of metaphors, appropriate for Amazonian indigenous reality, as mentioned in Chapter 2 (methodology and methods).

1. Maybe we can start by having you introduce yourself, and tell me please a little bit about your background (name of the community, family members, current activity, genealogy, indigenous group, etc.)
2. For how long you have lived in this community?
3. Now let's talk about your community. How do you envision your community in the future? [Prompt: through referencing with the years their children or grandchildren have now (for instance if they have 2 or 3 years) to envision the future of their community when their children and grandchildren have 20 years old]
4. What has been achieved in your community so far?
5. What are the challenges (concerns or difficulties) your community has faced?
6. Are there challenges now? [If yes] What are they?

Availability of competent leadership / maturity and consolidation

7. Have you heard about the federation _____? [Here is mention the local and regional federations' name]
8. [If yes] Could you tell me please what you know about that federation?
9. Do you know who the representatives of that federation are? Could you please tell me their names if you remember them?
10. What do you think about your community being represented by the federation _____? [Here is mention the local and regional federations' name]

Insertion in political associational structure / multidirectional levels of coordination

11. Do you know if that federation works with other organizations or collaborate with other communities in the region? [If yes] Could you please explain me which are they?
12. Do you think it is important that your federation is well contacted with other public, private or non-governmental organizations?
13. How your federation does communicates and coordinates with your community?

14. How he followed your federation _____ communicates with the community?
[Depending on the means of communication that the person mentioned in the last question]

Accountability mechanisms

15. How often the representatives of that federation approach you to discuss about community's challenges or concerns? [Complement the question after the answer with] or you know that have approached others in your community, or other member communities?
16. Do you know if there are communal assembly? [If yes] How often are they?
17. Do you attend to those assemblies?
18. Which topics are discussed in those assemblies?
19. How often federation representatives are invited to community meetings? [If yes]
20. Do you remember how many times they have come to participate in community assembly?
21. Do you know about of the work your federation does?
22. Do you feel that your federation properly represents your community?
23. If I here, in front of you there would be one of your federation representatives, what would you recommend to him/her?
24. How do you think a good federation representative should be?
25. Is there anything further comment that would you like to add?

Post-interview checklist

- Ask the interviewee if they have anything further they would like to contribute that was not already discussed in the conversation.
- Thank the participant for his or her time.
- If appropriate, mention the intention to potentially follow up on the interview with a further discussion in the future.
- If it is necessary, restate that their participation in this interview is confidential.

Appendix B : Three Filters

We formed randomly selected workgroups so that collaborators would feel more comfortable volunteering their ideas internally in a group than in front of everybody. For the random selection of group members, we had prepared a bag containing folded papers with the names of 5 different animals (there were to be 5 groups) written in languages Ashéninka and Yine-Yami. Each name was repeated 3-4 times (the number of members per group). We passed the bag around the circle so that each participant take a paper from the bag and pass it to the next partner. After the last person took a paper, all opened it and everyone who had the same name of animal formed a group. Names were used in both indigenous languages regardless of whether the session was for a specific language group; this generated conversation (not knowing what a name means or trying to pronounce it in the other language) and began to break the ice between collaborators. Once formed, the groups were given a flipchart and markers for the exercise. We used indigenous elements to try not to reproduce a colonialist power dynamic, but it was explained in the Chapter 5 the reflections and lessons learned on this particular method.

Then, the participants generated alternative solutions for the difficulties mentioned by the cultural advisors, and wrote them down on a flip chart. The cultural advisor selected two difficulties, and the participants had to formulate alternative solutions for both. The premise for this first phase of the exercise was to set a high standard for the ideas that each group came up with, and we set a short time limit. We aimed to have ideas presented without any judgement of them: all ideas were welcomed and given equal value. When the time was up, the group was told that they could take more time to finish up. For the following phases, we used colour papers to visually symbolize each level of filtering the ideas toward action.

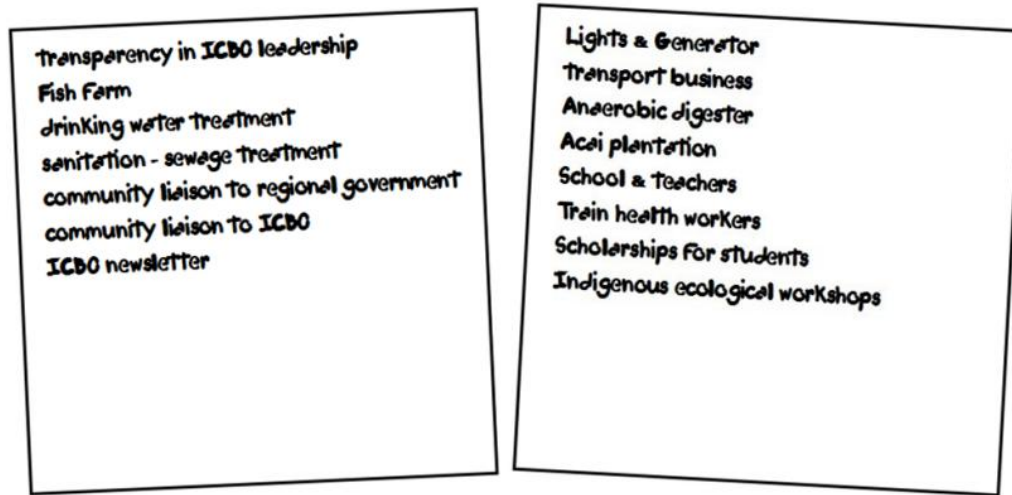


Figure 27: Brain storming of ideas in flip charts

First, there was a vote on desirability. We gave the participants three sticky notes each and had them write down the names of three different ideas (from those developed during the previous brain-storming session) that were most appealing to them. “What I would desire most for my community,” or “what I think would bring the most benefits to my community or communities (in case of a representative).” The participants put their sticky notes on the board at the front of the room. Later, we read out the different ideas (asking the group if we needed further explanation of certain options) and grouped them together, as in Figure 28.



Figure 28: Selection of alternatives from flip charts

In this example, some of the ideas received many votes (indicating that many people agreed that certain ones were more desirable than others), some received only one vote, and others received no votes. Before moving to the next step, we explained that the omission of an idea did not necessarily mean that it was undesirable, only that other ideas were considered more desirable, and we also removed from the board the ones that only received one vote.

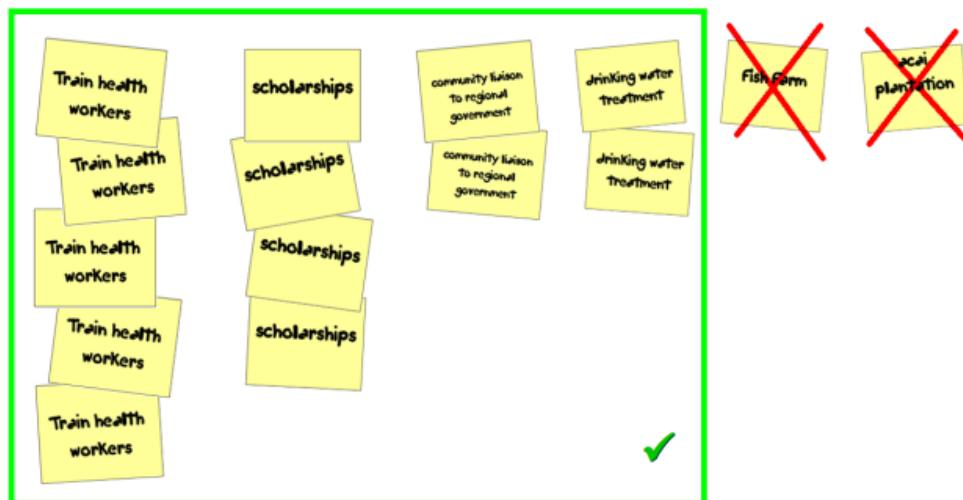


Figure 29: Desirability selection

Secondly, there was a vote on feasibility. We explained the idea of feasibility—whether the community, group of communities, or the federation has the abilities, the capacity, and the

people available to complete any of these recommendations. The group had already voted on what is desired for the good of the community. This second filter was to vote on what they thought was actually feasible. “Do we have the abilities, skills and people available in our communities and/or federations for this alternative?” We gave them each another one sticky note (of a second color), and had them write down the name of the idea that they thought could answer this question; the idea had to be one still remaining on the board. The participants then went to the front to post the ideas around the remaining desirable sticky notes on the board.



Figure 30: Feasibility selection

When all of the votes were on the board, the group visually identified the most popular ideas after this second filter. If all the options received the same number of votes, they remained there for the next step. If an option received no votes, or substantially fewer votes than others, it was removed.

Thirdly, there was a vote on financial possibility. After desirability and feasibility had been identified by the members of the group in a transparent and democratic manner, financial possibility was considered – a project or idea sometimes may only happen if there are funds available for it, a way to finance it, grants can be applied for, or if it can be run in a way that will earn money and can sustain it in the long-term (for example, raising and selling chickens can

make sufficient profit to continue investing in the project itself). So, participants voted again using the ideas that were still on the board.

We gave group members one post-it note each (of a third color), and had them write down the option they thought best answered the question: which alternative is financially viable for our communities or federation to undertake? This time the facilitator (the cultural advisor or I) collected the sticky notes in a bag, and placed them by the idea on the board, so everyone could see that there was only one vote from each person, and which ideas had passed the desirability, feasibility, and financial possibility filters. They could thus see which ideas the group had identified as best, given the conditions of desirability, feasible and financially possibility.

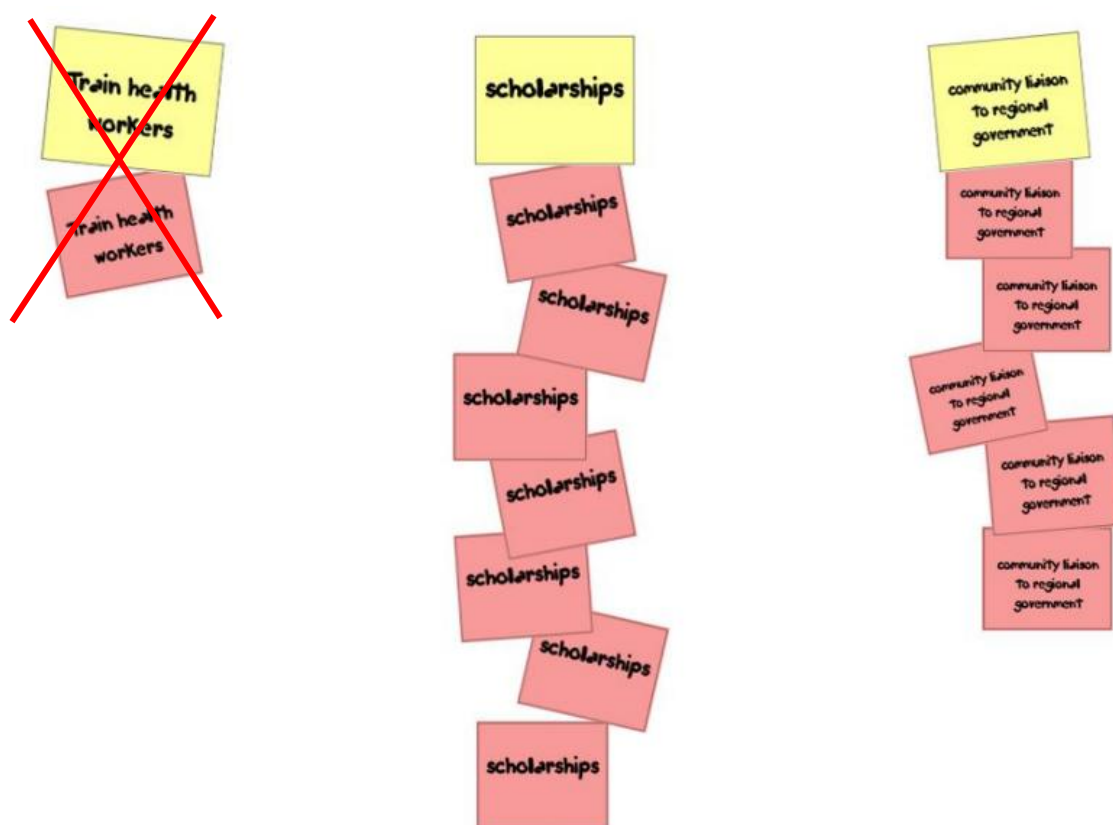


Figure 31: Financial possibility selection

At this last filter, we learned that we can also use voting by a number. For that, we assigned a number for each option, so at the moment of selecting an option also allowed for some

anonymity, if necessary. The facilitator passed a bag where the group placed the folded papers with the vote encouraging freedom of thought (so people do not change their mind from an unpopular vote if they see that everyone else, or a powerful leader, is voting for a different idea). The facilitators then placed them on the board. This strategy was used with the FECONAYY/FECONADIS session because the last alternatives were opposite and a bit controversial alternatives (whether there should be one of two federations in the same jurisdiction). When “discarding” an unpopular option, we always explained that it was not that the option was not good, but that for this activity’s purposes it was not the most popular.