

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society

Guardians of the lagoons

term paper
of the course "Introduction to environmental Anthropology"

presented by
Julius Feucht

supervisor: Monica Vasile

handed in: March 14, 2019

Julius Feucht
Hintereschbach 27
79252 Stegen
J.Feucht@physik.lmu.de
Matrikelnr.: 11154507

Abstract

This work elaborates on the protest movement against a mining project in the northern andes of Peru. The mining corporation and the main actors of the protest are presented. The identity of the peasants and their beliefs are discussed. The members of the protest movement are shown to access various 'realities', thus broadening the solidarity for their struggle from the local to the global scale.

Keywords: Peru, Mining, protest, peasant, andean realities

Contents

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 2 |
| 2 | Brief historical review | 2 |
| 2.1 | The Yanacocha mine | 2 |
| 2.2 | The Conga project | 5 |
| 2.3 | The protest against Conga and the main actors | 7 |
| 3 | The guardians of the lagoons | 10 |
| 3.1 | Who are the guardians? | 10 |
| 3.2 | Who are the peasants? | 13 |
| 3.3 | Peasant beliefs | 14 |
| 3.4 | Different 'worlds' | 18 |
| 4 | Conclusion | 20 |
| 5 | Appendix: International gold flows | 21 |
| 6 | Afterword | 22 |
| | References | 24 |

1 Introduction

I first heard about the Conga project and mining in Peru, when i was in the preparation seminar of my volunteering year in the summer of 2013. About one year later i got detained in Cajamarca and was accused of taking part in protest actions against the Conga project. After the hearing, checking of my documents and bringing me to a doctor, who guaranteed, that the police did not mistreat me, they let me go. Few weeks after that i left Peru, because my volunteer year was over. The Conga conflict continued.

I, as the author of this article are aware of my sympathy towards one party in the conflict and that this sympathy (even if i try to be as objective as possible) possibly leads to a bias and compromises objectivity. As a scientist i try to be as objective as i can, but in order to be authentic as a person, i can not deny my solidarity with the resistance against the Conga mining project. I refer to Terence Turner, who introduced the concept of the activist-anthropologist for those, who might question this methodology.

This work will take the reader to a big mining conflict in the Andes in northern Peru, which i experienced, while my stay there. The actors and their beliefs, as well as the realities they live in, will be presented and some reflection will occur that will bring the reader from the local protest to the global perspective.

2 Brief historical review

2.1 The Yanacocha mine

The Yanacocha Mining Company, which has operated in Cajamarca since 1992, is a joint venture of the U.S.-based Newmont Mining Corporation (which holds 51.35% of the shares), the Peruvian company Buenaventura (with 43.65% of the shares), and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (with the remaining 5% of shares) (Paredes Peñafiel & Li 2017).

The name derives from the black lagoon ¹ (Yana = black, cocha = lagoon in Quechua), which were in place, where the Yanacocha mine now operates. It is the biggest open

¹Lagoon in this article refers to a highland lake. It is the way locals call those lakes.

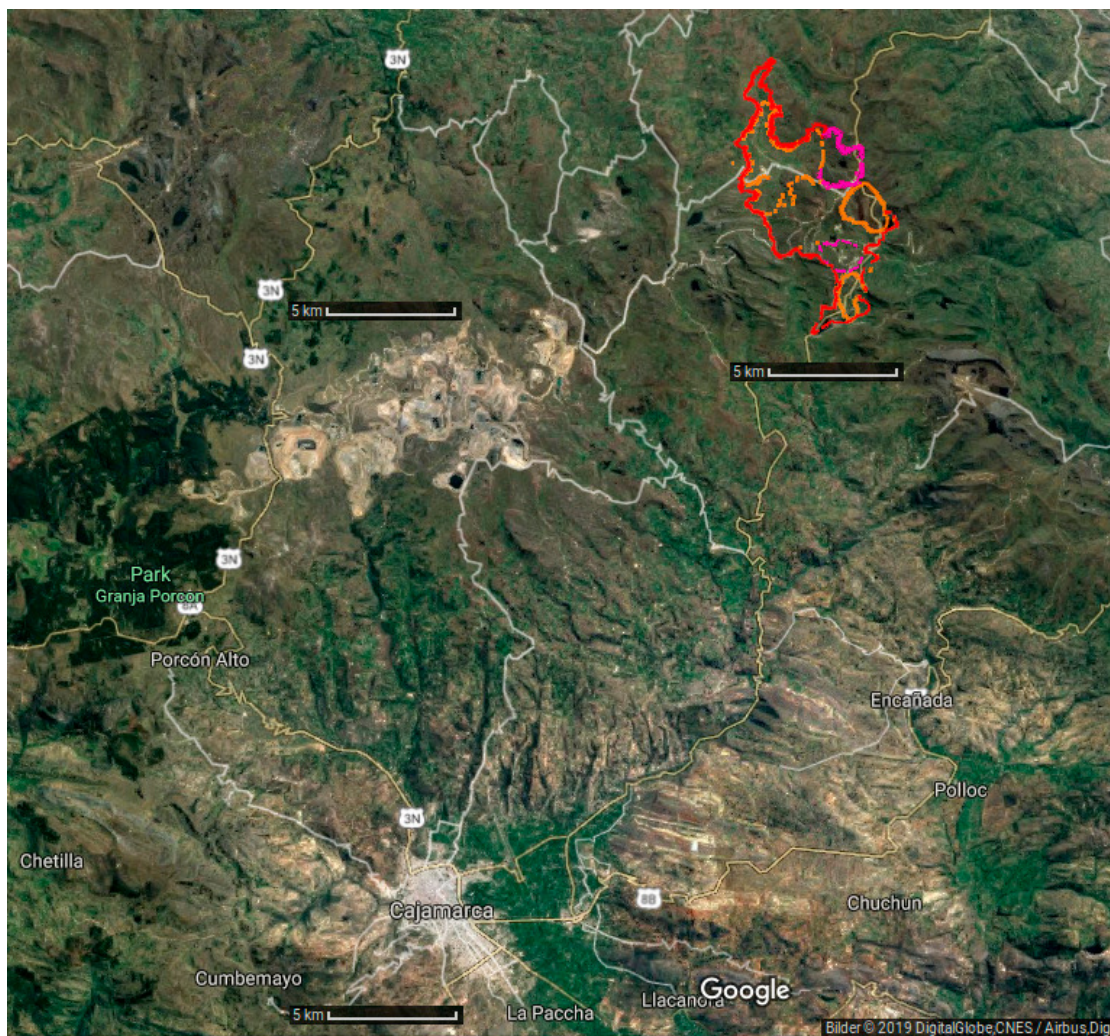


Figure 1: Map of the northwest region of Cajamarca, including the Yanacocha mine and the planned size of the Conga project, marked with colours. A 5 kilometer bar is inserted near the mine, the project and the city of Cajamarca for comparison of scale. The map is taken from google.maps.com, the Conga area was adapted from (celendinlibre.wordpress.com).

pit gold mine in South America (Santiago 2017).

In 2005 the Yanacocha mine had its peak of production with 102 tons of gold, which then fell to 28.6 tons in the year 2015. In the year 2015 it was still the 6th biggest goldmine worldwide (gold.de)². The actual largest goldmine Barrick Nevada (USA) produced 71.9 tons of gold in the year 2018 (investingnews.com).

Bad news for Yanacocha

In 1998 the trouts in the rivers near the mine died (Millones 2016). In 1999 a pastor of a local community (Marco Arana), Nilton Deza, a biologist from the national university of Cajamarca and Reinhardt Seifert, an engineer from Germany funded the ecologist association "ECOVIDA".

In 2000 about 150 kg of mercury were spilled by a truck of the mining company. The affected people were not compensated adequately until today (ocmal.org)

The mountain Quilish

Yanacocha was accused to contaminate the water of the mountain "Quilish", which supplies 70 % of the drinking water of the city of Cajamarca and is the only water source to approximately 9000 peasants. From 2001 to 2004 demonstrations took place to protect the Quilish against the expansion of the mine. In the fight for protection of the Quilish not just hydrological reasons were brought but also spiritual claims, which regard the mountain Quilish as sacred. This was the time, when the slogan "Water yes, gold no" first was heard in Cajamarca. With the Quilish as an Apu, a sacred mountain and an aquifer, the opposition started to regard the resistance as a matter of defending life itself. It was not about working conditions or getting some of the profits for the communities, but it was about resisting the mining activity, because it will take away or contaminate the water, which is the basis for the life and all economic activities (Santiago 2017).

²The URL and date of access of online sources can be looked up in the Reference chapter

After a department-wide strike, which was held for 15 days, with 10.000 people demonstrating in the major place in Cajamarca the company suspended the project. Cajamarca still suffers water scarcity and bad water quality, which is attributed by many to contamination from the mine.

The resistance against the Quilish project brought together various institutions from the cities and the countryside. Although they did not necessarily name themselves like this, but the guardians of the mountain Quilish were the precursors of the guardians of the lagoons.

2.2 The Conga project

In 2011 the Yanacocha Mining Company announced the Conga project, an open pit copper and gold mine. The project would be located near the Yanacocha mine at an aquifer, providing water for the provinces of Celendín, Cajamarca and Hualgayoc. It would require draining four lagoons in order to make the exploitation and the building of infrastructure possible (Paredes Peñafiel & Li 2017).

While running for president in 2011, Ollanta Humala visited Cajamarca, dressed in poncho and sombrero. He asked the people what is more important, water or gold and people responded: water! He said:

“Because you don’t drink gold, you don’t eat gold but we drink water, our creatures drink water, our cattle drink water and from there comes the milk, the cheese, the wealth. Agriculture needs water. I promise to respect the will of Cajamarca... we have to defend our country!”
(Santiago 2017)

But once in office he changed his mind and gave permission to the Conga project, stating that he takes the position: “water and gold” (Santiago 2017). The people felt betrayed.(Isla 2017).

The organisations against the mining project organized demonstrations and strikes during the years 2011 and 2012. As the protest got more intense the Conga project was halted in November 2011, but the company still wanted to continue it later (Paredes

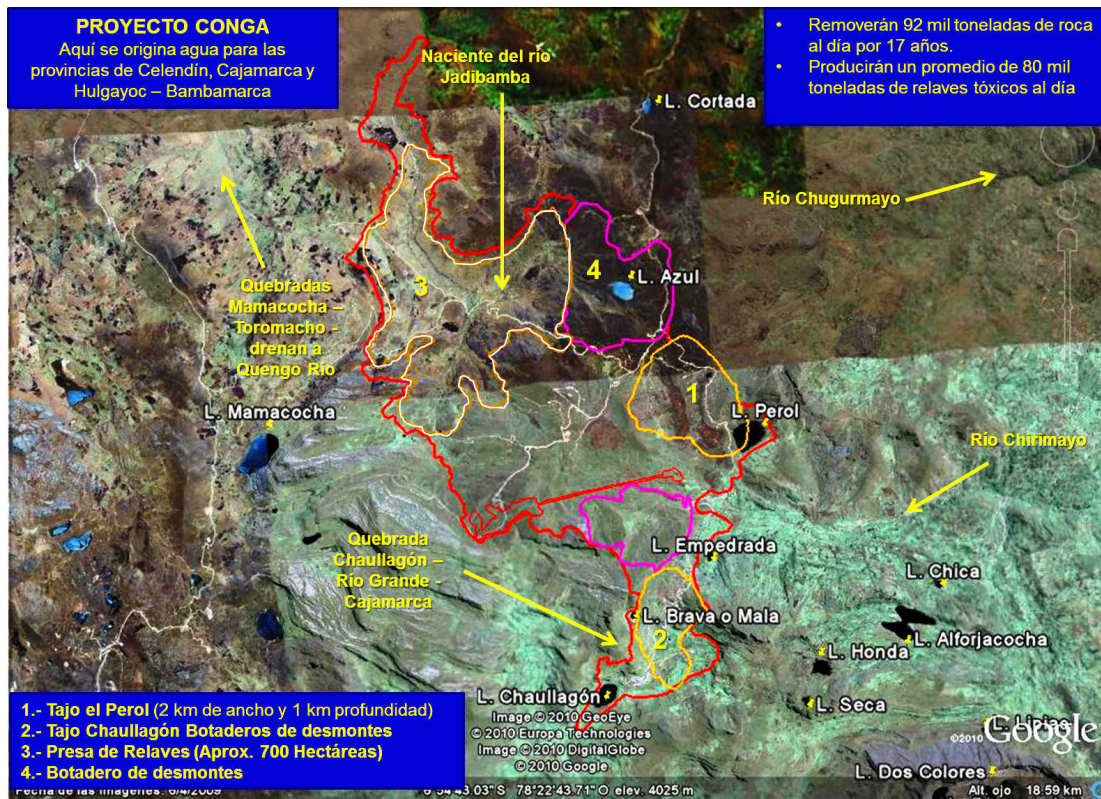


Figure 2: Map of the Conga project. The camp of the guardians is at the Mamacocha lagoon. The lagoon itself is outside the project area, but the guardians argue that it also would be affected, because the lagoons are connected. The place is also strategic as the traffic can be surveyed. Taken from (celendinlibre.wordpress.com).

Peñañiel & Li 2017).

The organizations against the mining project organized a "March for water" in february 2012, where people went from the lagoons through the settlements and cities, demonstrating for water and then all the way to the capital, Lima (Isla 2017).

In July 2012 after more than a month with a strike at regional level, paralyzing the area, the police opened the fire to demonstrations in Celendin and Bambamarca killing 5 people. The responsible policemen were not charged for their actions (Sullivan 2014). The government ordered the state of emergency to restore law and order. (Isla 2017).

The 24th of november 2012 started the surveillance of the Mamacocha lagoon. Mainly peasants from the hamlet "El Tambo" camp since then near the lagoon and

guard the lagoon to make sure that the mining project does not expand. They are called: "The guardians of the lagoons".

In 2016 the Newmont Mining Corporation stated to abandon the Conga project. The main reason is the resistance of the local communities (mining.com).

The guardians of the lagoons mistrust the Corporation and continue the surveillance of the lagoons.

Regarding the corruption scandal around Odebrecht, it is interesting to know that Odebrecht in a joint venture with FLUOR were to build the Conga project, worth ~ 580 million \$ (epcengineer.com).

2.3 The protest against Conga and the main actors

Rondas campesinas

The "rondas campesinas" (peasant rounds) are autonomous organizations of citizen patrols. The first rondas began in Chota, province of Cajamarca in 1976 in order to detain thieves. Local farmers decided to "rondar" (do rounds) in order to stop cattle thieves and other criminals. Neither the police, nor the courts in this time effectively worked in rural areas (Mendivil 2016). They played an important role in establishing order and security in local communities. If a person is accused and caught by the rondas, usually the process is short and the penalty sometimes include physical punishment (Personal conversation and (Li & Paredes Peñafiel 2019)). The rondas can be criticised for applying self-justice, undermining the legal system of the state. They expanded their activities and resolve local conflicts and support social projects in small hamlets, where they have become a kind of local government. (Mendivil 2016). First they were focused inwardly and did not attempt to replace the local or regional state government or organize on a broader level. Now it is a national organisation with thousands of local rondero bases, composed of men and women, who organize themselves in democratic assemblies (Mendivil 2016). They are also recognized legally in the constitution of Peru (pdba.georgetown.edu).

The meaning of the rondas was and is to protect the rural people. But the perception against whom the locals have to be protected, broadened:

In former times the role of the resident coordinators was exterminate the small thieves (the rustlers) nowadays our role is to catch and punish the big thieves (the miners). (Eddy Benavides (2013). Quote from Isla)

The resistance against the mining projects would not have been possible in the way it took place without the rondas campesinas. They can be considered one of the main actors of the anti mining movement. (polemos.pe).

The case of Maxima Acuña and the Chaupe family

Maxima Acuña³ became a symbol for the resistance against the Conga project. Together with her husband Jaime Lopez they live in an area, which the mining corporation claims to have bought. They suffered various physical and psychological attacks from Yanacocha hired 'security' companies, including the destruction of their house, planted fields and violence directly against them (Santiago 2017). They defended their claim that it was their land, which they never sold to Yanacocha in various courts. The regional working non governmental organization (NGO) GRUFIDES provided help with the legal treatments. The case also got attention from international human rights organizations like Amnesty international (amnesty.de) and the latinoamerican union of women (unión latinoamerica de mujeres) (redulam.org).

2016 Maxima Acuña won the Goldman prize for environmental action. The harassment against her and her family continues.

For more details look at the website of Grufides: grufides.org.

Non governmental organizations

Beside the rondas campesinas a lot of NGO's played an important role in the anti-Conga movement as the case of Maxima Acuña makes clear. There are NGO's dealing more or less with the Conga protest at every scale. Local ones like the interinstitutional platform of Celendin (Plataforma Interinstitucional Celendina) or the Front of defense of Cajamarca (Frente de Defensa de Cajamarca). Regional ones like the beforementioned GRUFIDES (<http://www.grufides.org/>), which informs about conflicts and provides help to the affected people. Mirtha Vasquez, member of Grufides helped Maxima Acuña and other members of the Chaupe family on her way through the courts. GRUFIDES also acts in other conflicts than the Conga project.

On national level there is the Red MUQUI, which deals with socioenvironmental con-

³Her full name is Maxima Acuña Atalaya and her husbands name is Jaime Chaupe Lozano. The name of their children therefore is Chaupe Acuña, because children in Peru always get the first name of each parent. So it is not totally right to call her Acuña Chaupe. In order to be correct in this work she will be called Maxima Acuña.

flicts in Peru, especially mining conflicts. And then there are international NGO's like Amnesty International, the latinoamerican union of women and engineers without borders, who in cooperation with GRUFIDES made the documentary: Las damas azules (lasdamasazules.wordpress.com). Of course filmmakers as well as international NGO's have their own interests. There is always the danger that local struggles are coopted by other interests. Local people may consciously accept a distortion of their realities in the representations made by NGO's as long as they think that the collaboration is helpful for their goal.

It is important to mention the different geographical scales of the NGO's in order to understand the conflict and the resistance movement correctly. Although the main actors and actions are local, they know that they have allies at national and international level. To recognize this is to make clear that the people of Cajamarca can not be seen as some pristine indigenous people without contact or ideas about the rest of the world, who fight a transnational company invading their territories. This point will be discussed more deeply in the chapter "The guardians of the lagoons".

Repression and criminalization of the protest

In Perú there has been a series of laws, some of them criminalizing the protest, others giving the mining companies the possibility to hire the police, to whom are given impunity for their actions in social conflicts (Sullivan 2014).

By classifying the social protest as 'extortion', it can be handled as organized crime and be sentenced with up to 25 years of prison. During the Conga conflict over 300 people, mostly social leaders of the protest, were charged for various crimes. The accusations are 'disturbing the peace', 'kidnapping' and even 'psychological damage to the mining company' (Sullivan 2014).

The police is given the right to kill, while in duty, without being hold responsible for it (Isla 2017), (Sullivan 2014). This law was passed in 2014, but in fact the policemen responsible for the 5 deaths in the massive protests in 2012 were not hold responsible neither.

A particularly worrying aspect of this situation is that the police are not only taking orders from the state, but also directly from the mining com-

pany. Law 27238 enables police directors to sign agreements with private companies to provide security services. They can do this in conjunction with or separate from their state duties, but are all the while permitted to wear police uniforms and use state-provided weapons.

Vasquez Chuquilin, translation taken from Sullivan.

The President of the Province Gregorio Santos, who supported the resistance against the Conga project, was ordered to the capital Lima in order to defend himself against the accusation of corruption in June 2014. He was detained for 14 months in remand, while waiting for his trial. Many state that this was done to keep him away from Cajamarca in order to prevent a reelection. Nonetheless he was reelected as regional president of Cajamarca and after a total of 25 months in prison without dealing with the accusations, he was released and went back to Cajamarca (Isla 2017).

So for the activists the potential cost is high. They can get years of prison if they are detained and accused. The police or security company is not held responsible for their violence against them, even if they kill people (5 deaths in 2012). One does not easily join a movement, facing this repression, without identifying with the protests. So the last part of Maxima's most famous song, are not just poetic, but show the strong will to resist the mine operation, even at cost of the own life:

My life I will lose,
For defending my lagoons.
(Translation taken from Santiago)

3 The guardians of the lagoons

"We know from Newmont's Yanacocha mine that, no matter their promises, we can't have both the mine and our way of life" (Li & Paredes Peñafiel 2019)

3.1 Who are the guardians?

There is a short easy answer, which I will give first and then, there is a more complicated answer, which I will try to elaborate further on. The guardians of the lagoons are mainly peasants from "El Tambo" a small hamlet near the Conga project. They built a camp in 2012 near the lagoon Mamacocha to guard it and other lagoons and since



Figure 3: Reunion of the guardians of the lagoons in december 2014, where i assisted. In the background on the right parts of the Mamacocha lagoon can be seen.

that time always some people are up there to control that the mining company does not expand their area of mining activity. There have been several clashes between the peasants and the police, which works for Yanacocha. Some of them violently, but all showed the systematic violence and inequality in power.

Put picture from armed police and peasants

The peasants being up there at an altitude of ~ 4000 m, withstanding the cold and harsh weather are part of a much broader network and organisation of the protest against the mining project. It wouldn't be possible for them to camp there without the local support from "El Tambo" and without the support from the Rondas campesinas. Their protest would be unheard and unseen without the media representatives, who visit them. And the pressure on Newmont would not have been this high without the national and international solidarity and the big demonstrations in Celendin and Cajamarca.



Figure 4: Guardians are stopped by the police because they want to enter property of Yanacocha. In my perception this picture shows the inequality in power of the actors. It should be considered that this scene happens at an altitude of approximate 4000 m above sea level, where there is basically just the lagoons, the camp of the guardians, the new built street of Yanacocha and the police

The peasants near the lagoon risk their life, confronting the police and thus merit to be called the guardians of the lagoons, but not all allies or activists sit near the Mamacocho lagoon. Some use other places or strategies to defend the lagoons.

3.2 Who are the peasants?

Most peasants engage in agriculture and stock farming. Cajamarca is well known within Peru for its dairy products. Most common crops in the higher areas around Cajamarca are corn and potatoes. People also engage in fishing or cultivating trouts and herding sheeps. The wool is used to make ponchos or blankets. The biodiversity in the region is high and many herbs are used as medicinal plants (Santiago 2017). The products are used by themselves or sold mostly in local markets.

A first remark may be that not all peasants are against the mine. The peasants in the province of Cajamarca are not an homogeneous group, all against the mine. There are of course people in favor of the mining project of Conga and there are people benefitting from the mine and therefore tensions arise within in the population. It is important to keep this in mind, as this work focuses mainly on the activists and activist groups, which are against the mine. One may ask if the peasants in Cajamarca are indigenous people. Mirtha Vasquez, active member of GRUFIDES and close supporter of Maxima Acña would probably say something like in Santiago (2017) :

“There is a mixture of everything here. And this is the new culture which is born in Cajamarca. If you ask yourself, what is the culture proper? From where does it proceed? We come from the evolution of all this mixture. That’s why I find it funny when they want to say, ‘You have to value the indigenous and strengthen only the indigenous,’ because they need to recognize that here, this is a new culture that has been greatly influenced by other cultures! It’s a new thing that was born! It’s a hybrid of everything!”

It is also important to note, that peasants or indigenous people in the mass media in Peru are often portrayed as backwarded, primitive people without education. 80% of the peruvian press belongs to the media group ‘El Comercio’, a partner of Newmont-Yanacocha, so it is not surprising that most of mass media is in favour of Yanacocha (Mendivil 2016). There is certain racism within Peru against indigenous or ‘half-breeds’ (cholos). People are being accused of being ‘anti-miners’, thus hindering

development to happen. Millones elaborates on development as an ideology, used to justify the 'second conquest of the Andes', which is the invasive and colonial practice, that displaces people and entire towns

This becomes especially worrying if the peasants start to accept the role, they get ascribed in media representations.

The intellectual and peasant Daniel Gil, himself a long-time *rondero*, puts it like this in Santiago (2017):

No, my name's not important, rather what we want is that the campesino [peasant] values what he is. The government always talks of development. Development isn't having money in your wallet. It's not having a house in Cajamarca or in Lima. It's not having trucks or cattle. Development is having the capacity of knowledge in order to give value to all the potential resources that surround us, and that is what we don't value, not even our own person. Here there are people that don't even value their own personal I. The campesino, the pueblo [town] does not value what it has, and people don't have self-esteem, he or she does not value the personal I, that's why in the song it says 'huataco'. Huataco is someone that serves, prefers to receive a few cents and sell out their pueblo and serve a boss. That's exactly what we lack: identity. Personal, familiar, communal, regional identity. That's what we lack, but luckily with the betrayal of this government of Ollanta, who spoke very beautifully [when running for office], it appears that Cajamarca, Bambamarca and Celendín are now known throughout the world. Human development is the intellectual base. What do we win with the development of resources, when the human development is low? So that's what we want."

But this is, as always not the whole story. The guardians of the lagoons and people like Maxima Acuña are the best examples for proud peasants. They deny to accept the role ascribed by mass media and defend their way of living. They do this being aware of the national and international discourse.

3.3 Peasant beliefs

Point of view of Yanacocha's engineers

It is important to present also the point of view of the engineers to understand why local

peasant's were not satisfied with their proposals.

For the engineers of Yanacocha there was no problem in replacing the lagoons with artificial reservoirs, because in their eyes the lagoons were nothing but natural reservoirs. They state, that the lagoons are fed by the rain in the rainy season, following the water cycle and that's it. Thus building reservoirs, which could hold more water than the lagoons should oversatisfy the needs of the people, permitting the peasants to grow two crops a year instead of one (Paredes Peñafiel & Li 2017).

Remark on science

As a physics student i want to make a distinction. The 'engineering' point of view presented above should not be understood as scientific. Some engineers from Yanacocha may claim that their calculations are based on science and are therefore undeniable. But to just regard lagoons as water reservoirs easily replaced with artificial reservoirs is not honest science at all. An ecosystem analysis must be made, where the complex interactions between the lagoons, the wetlands and all other parts of the system must be taken into account. That does not mean that it is false to understand the lagoons as water reservoirs, but it is not the whole story. So just taking some vocabulary from science and disparaging all critics as uneducated has to be called propaganda.

Caution is needed to not misunderstand different ontologies

First it is hard to say, what all peasants believe, because most are christian, some catholic, others evangelic. There are just few ones, only believing in the andean deities. But there exist various degrees of syncretism (combining andean and christian beliefs)

“If you go to the peasants and say, ‘but your patron saint is a product of alienation,’ they’ll corner you and say, ‘this is mine, this is how my parents raised me,’ and these same people speak to you of their rivers, of their Apus, mountains no? There is a mixture and you can’t deny either of the two heritages. We feel, all the Cajamarquinos, that we are a rare mixture of those two things, of the Andean and the Western”

Mirtha Vasquez in (Santiago 2017)

It is important to have in mind, that the andean beliefs are not static and being

object to different discourses, which also shape them. In the papers of Paredes Peñafiel und Li, the reader is warned of focusing too much on "indigenous ontologies", because beliefs are often viewed and interpreted from a 'western' perspective, thus distorting local realities. This can lead to a romantization and possibly presents andean beliefs as incommensurable with other "worlds" by putting into spotlight the cultural differences. Some environmentalist NGO's still spread a simplified version of 'indigenous' people living in harmony with nature, thus reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices.

In the following some stories of peasants living in the area of Cajamarca are presented, because their beliefs are a driving force in their actions. Nonetheless one should think of the possibility, that people also (at least partly) use certain stories with a political intention.

Stories of peasants

Some guardians argued that the role of gold is to sustain the lagoons and the rivers, enabling the water to flow. A healer, who understands the pacts and relations between the lagoons, the water spirits (duendes) and the local people, would leave sweets as gift for the lagoons. Offering sweets or sugar to the lagoons should make the water sweet. This is an important quality of the water, which would be altered if the lagoons were destroyed and replaced by artificial reservoirs. Water spirits are feared by locals because they have the power to devour people. Therefore one is advised not to go too close to the lagoons without asking them for permission. Springs are considered to be born in one place and can not just be replaced. If destroyed, they would disappear. Bianca, a peasant from the hamlet el Tambo states:

‘the lagoons do not depend on anybody; the rain emerges when the hand of God meets the clouds, and that is why Mamacocha feeds itself in order to feed us’. Bianca’s logic is different from that of the engineers’: if the mine was constructed, the relationality between God, the lagoons and the clouds would be cut.

(Paredes Peñafiel & Li 2017)

Water from the lagoons or a spring should not be stopped. It can be guided by canals as peasants have done for centuries in order to irrigate their fields, establishing relations to ensure everybody can get enough water. People understand the distribution of water in the terms of these relations and see the relation of the water in the canals and the lagoons. Therefore disturbing the lagoons, everybody will be affected. (Paredes Peñafiel

& Li 2017).

Important aspects of peasants relation to the lagoons

In the context of the announced mining project, people reevaluated the stories of the elders and also went up themselves to see the lagoons.

One does not defend, what one does not know (uno no defiende, lo que no conoce) became an important statement within the resistance movement. Probably this is the reason why the march for water started at the lagoons. It is also the main slogan of the Defense Front in Celendín.

”When asked about the meaning of the slogan, ronderos explained that local people are the ones who know and experience the lagoons firsthand, suggesting that it is they (and not the company or the state) who hold authoritative knowledge about the land”

(Paredes Peñafiel & Li 2017).

Another important concept is ”nourishing” (alimentar). The lagoons nourish the rivers say the engineers and the peasants would agree. But nourishing for the peasants is more than just a material flow. It implies a relation between the one, who nourishes and the one, who is nourished. Like a baby is nourished by its mother by breastfeeding, the water nourishes the people and animals. (Millones 2016). This relationality is important and therefore lagoons can not be replaced by artificial reservoirs, like the breastfeeding mother of the baby can not simply be exchanged by a milk-giving machine.

Unlike in modern western thought the distinction between an objectivized, passive nature and active humans or culture is not made. At least not that clear. The existence of water spirits, sacred mountains and an understanding of nature in terms of social relations instead of only its calculable monetary value are clear examples. This can be understood within the framework of the capitalocene, brought forward by Jason Moore. People defend their local practices and relationships against an invasive neoliberal ideology (Millones 2016).

Discourses are evolving

The mountain spirit Apu is one of the reasons why the protest against the mining

expansion to the mountain Quilish was successful. Interestingly the concept of Apu is more commonly used in the southern Andes and was started to use just, when the protest arose. The usage of the Apu concept can be seen as a result from local practices and forms of relating to the environment, combined with the contact with media, activists and environmentalists, who all brought their own ideas and discourses (Li & Paredes Peñafiel 2019).

This is also clearly shown in the analysis of Mendivil, who compares the songs of the ronderos in the 1980's and recent songs. Rondero's use the strong oral tradition, they have and continue it, but include new words and concepts, which are important in their new struggles.

This shows as stated in the beginning, that the beliefs and discourses of the peasants, especially the guardians should not be viewed as static, but are influenced by other actors and their discourses, brought to them directly or via media.

3.4 Different 'worlds'

As stated earlier most mass media is in favour of Yanacocha. I agree with Mendivil, when he states:

Ronderos are not outcasts forgotten by the globalization and media. As I have demonstrated, modernization is present in the rural areas of Cajamarca. Through the access to mass media, campesinos are well aware of how they are being represented to the rest of the nation and accordingly they react.

They use words like environment (medio ambiente), capitalist (capitalistas), contamination (contaminación) and progressive forces (progresistas), which do not belong to the traditional discourse of the local population but come from international media and NGO's working in the region (Mendivil 2016). When rondero's songs were recorded by Mendivil, they choose traditional clothes and wanted the recording to be taken in a place, which represents an intact rural and pristine world, which clearly to all viewers is worth defending.

The case of Maxima Acuña shows that through the help of GRUFIDES, also the legal 'world' on national and even international level, with its own vocabulary, was accessible to them.

The documentary "Daughter of the lake" (La hija de la laguna) presents Névida, a Peruvian woman, from the rural area of Cajamarca, who believes in what she calls the 'Andean cosmovision' (cosmovisión andina). The documentary focuses on the 'spiritual' relationship she has with the lakes and water. To some extent this relationship is romanticized and the documentary mostly tells the simplified story of a heroic woman, fighting a transnational corporation, empowered by her beliefs (Li & Paredes Peñafiel 2019).

The movement against the Conga project includes people with different beliefs. Maxima, who is evangelic and Névida are just two examples. Also people's attitude toward environmental protection or mining in general is not necessarily the same (Li & Paredes Peñafiel 2019).

Leaders of the protest were also invited to Europe, the US and other countries in Latin America in order to tell their stories and learn from activists there (Sullivan 2014). This clearly shows that they are aware of the 'other worlds' or discourses and are able to use the 'language of modernity' in order to make their struggle understandable for those living in other realities and thus strengthen the solidarity and support for the preservation of their livelihood.

This solidarity is not one way. María, a rondera and main actor in the documentary: The Blue Ladies (Las Damas Azules), was invited to Brazil. A megadam was planned there and local people opposed the plans. She travelled to Brazil and spoke in a public event, organized by the university. How she was perceived and more thoughts about south-south activism, can be found in (Li & Paredes Peñafiel 2019).

Summarizing it is possible to say that the guardians of the lagoons are not a homogeneous group, but united in the struggle against the Conga project. Due to their members and allies, working and acting in different 'worlds', they managed to present their case to various audiences in a way, which is understandable for them, thus strengthening solidarity.

These connections have shown that the struggles may be local, but they are local in a globalised world

(Sullivan 2014) page 136

4 Conclusion

This work tried to present the guardians of the lagoons. Some peasants from the rural andean Area of Cajamarca Peru, who oppose the mining project of Conga by protecting a highland lagoon from mining encroachment. The mining project Conga would be an expansion of South-Americas largest goldmine Yanacocha and would require the drainage of four highland lagoons, which are at the head of the water basin, from which the water for three neighbouring provinces derive. The main reasons for the protest are the following:

- Distrust against mining company Yanacocha, fed by former experience with it.
- Lagoons are viewed as essential for water flows in the area.
- Proposals of Yanacocha to replace the lagoons with artificial reservoirs is not acceptable for them because it is based on assumptions, which are in contradiction with peasant's beliefs.

The identity and self-concept of the peasants was shown to be influenced by their interaction with media, traditional ways of organizing (rondas campesinas) and contact with international NGO's. Not all peasants are against the mine, which causes internal conflicts in communities. Furthermore this protest movement is easily criminalized by the peruvian laws and activists have to confront a police, which is often not held responsible for their actions. While most of peruvian mass media shows latent discrimination against peasants and present the guardians as backwarded and uneducated, they use media to present a pristine environment and traditional practices worth protecting. The guardians are not alone in their struggle against the mining corporation. They are part of the rondas campesinas, who are well organized and hold authority in local areas for their long engagement in social justice. Furthermore they collaborate with regional, national and international NGO's, who also influence the discourses and arguments brought forward by them.

The group of the guardians and the protest movement consists of diverse people with different focuses, bound together by the same goal. So each of them can reach various audiences and bring forward their case in different discourses. This is clearly shown in

their ability to move and connect to people in other realities and places, like Europe, USA and Brazil, where they established relations of solidarity.

So the guardians of the lagoons by trying to preserve their livelihoods raise some global questions. (Of course not all of them raise this questions, but those are dominant topics in their discourses and statements)

- They question the nature culture division, with their beliefs of water and agentive landscapes to which some humans have a more than utilitarian relation.
- They question the federalism of state power and argue that local people should have more rights in decision-processes, which affect them.
- They question the extractivism as a way to development.
- They criticize the politicians for being complices to transnational corporations.
- They ask for their rights (human rights and civil rights) to be protected.
- They ask fundamental questions about the value of gold and water

And for the guardians of the lagoons as well as all actors in the protest movement against the mine, one thing is clear:

”Water yes, gold no” (Agua si, oro no)

5 Appendix: International gold flows

The water for which the guardians fight may flows locally, but the gold flows are globally. And so the responsibility for building mines falls not only on the mining corporations and national governments but also on the people, who consume gold.

What is gold worth? ”You don’t eat gold, you don’t drink gold, but you drink water”, the guardians would answer. What is the world using it’s gold for? Figure 5 shows the gold use in 2016.

There are two connections of most people in the global north. One is their behaviour as consumers (and nearly everybody uses a smartphone, but may the reader now thinks twice about buying a golden ring for marriage), the second one is the possible solidarity with the local struggles in regions of the global south. This can take different forms.

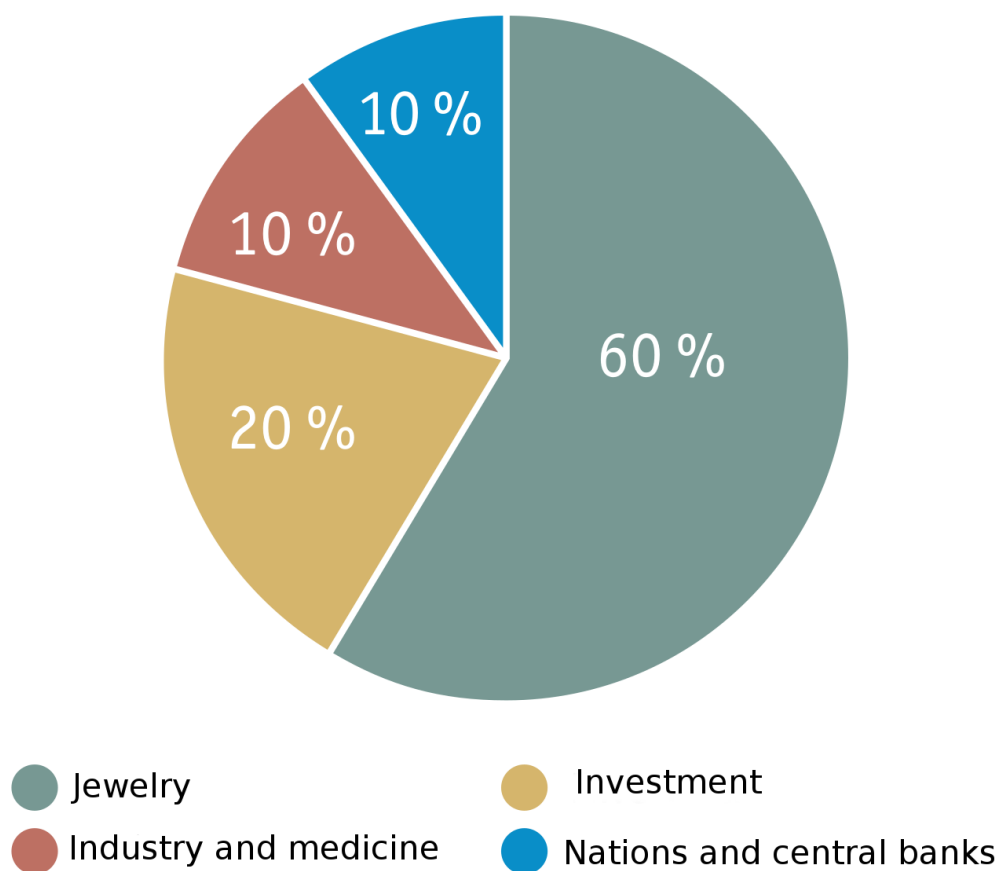


Figure 5: Global gold use in 2016, figure is translated from ().

Maybe a divestment from gold of your pension fund or your university. Maybe you share the story of the guardians and ask about the resource policy of your government.

6 Afterword

To finish the story of the young volunteer, who got detained: I joined the organization of ex-volunteers 'Colour hope' (Color Esperanza) and represent them within the 'campaign mine Perú: wealth goes, poverty stays' (Kampagne Bergwerk Perú: Reichtum geht, Armut bleibt).

This campaign makes great work in offering information around the topics of mining activity in Peru and 'fair' gold. Often the problems are similar in other countries in the global south.

References

- AMNESTY.DE. Amnesty international presenting the case of the chaupe family, accessed 13th of march 2019. URL <https://www.amnesty.de/briefe-gegen-das-vergessen/2016/11/peru-maxima-acuna>.
- CELENDINLIBRE.WORDPRESS.COM. Map of the conga project, accessed 13th of march 2019. URL <https://celendinlibre.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/proyecto-conga.png>.
- EPCENGINEER.COM. Odebrecht involved in conga constructions, accessed 12th of march 2019. URL <https://www.epcengineer.com/news/post/6543/fluor-receives-full-notice-to-proceed-on-contracts-for-conga-mine-project-in-peru>.
- GOLD.DE. Information about yanacocha mine, accessed 13th of march 2019. URL <https://www.gold.de/goldminen/#yanacocha>.
- GRUFIDES.ORG. The case of the chaupe family, accessed 13th of march 2019. URL <http://www.grufides.org/content/caso-familia-chaupe>.
- INVESTINGNEWS.COM. List of largest gold mines, accessed 13th of march 2019. URL <https://investingnews.com/daily/resource-investing/precious-metals-investing/gold-investing/largest-gold-mines/>.
- ISLA, ANA. 2017. Conga no va! the guardians of lagoons: Defending land, water and freedom in cajamarca, Perú. *Rev. Ciencias Sociales* 155.45–62.
- LASDAMASAZULES.WORDPRESS.COM. Webpage about the documentary, accessed 13th of march 2019. URL <https://lasdamasazules.wordpress.com/>.
- LI, FABIANA, und ADRIANA PAOLA PAREDES PEÑAFIEL. 2019. *Stories of resistance: Translating nature, indigeneity, and place in mining activism*, 219–243. Cham: Springer International Publishing. URL https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93435-8_9.

- MENDÍVIL, JULIO. 2016. Singing for water, singing against gold: Music and the politics of representation in the peruvian northern andes. *Trans. Revista Transcultural de Música* 20.1–28.
- MILLONES, JORGE. 2016. Conga mines: Development as conflict in peru. *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 115:3.
- MINING.COM. Newmont abandons conga project, accessed 12th of march 2019. URL <http://www.mining.com/community-opposition-forces-newmont-abandon-conga-project-peru/>.
- OCMAL.ORG. spill of mercury, accessed 13th of march 2019. URL <https://www.ocmal.org/derrame-de-mercurio-en-choropampa-15-anos-sin-respuestas/>.
- PAREDES PEÑAFIEL, ADRIANA PAOLA, und FABIANA LI. 2017. Nourishing relations: Controversy over the conga mining project in northern peru. *Ethnos*.
- PDBA.GEORGETOWN.EDU. Article 149 accepts the rondas campesinas as a legal entity, accessed 13th of march 2019. URL <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Peru/per93reforms05.html>.
- CAMPAIGN MINE PERU (KAMPAGNE BERGWERK PERU). Factsheet about gold, accessed 13th of march 2019. URL <http://www.kampagne-bergwerk-peru.de/infothek/informationmaterialien/>.
- POLEμος.PE. Rondas campesinas are important in protests against conga, accessed 13th of march 2019. URL <http://polemos.pe/conga-la-actual-situacion-del-conflicto-los-aspectos-juridicos-sociales-mas-relevantes/>.
- REDULAM.ORG. Ulam presenting the case of the chaupe family, accessed 13th of march 2019. URL <http://redulam.org/defensora-del-ano-2014-maxima-acuna-de-chaupe/>.
- SANTIAGO, CHRISTOPHER. 2017. *Conga no va carajo!* Columbia University Dissertation.
- SULLIVAN, LYNDIA. 2014. Getting to the bottom of extractive capitalism: A case study of open pit mining in cajamarca, peru. *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review* 19, Autumn.124–143.

VASQUEZ CHUQUILIN, MIRTHA. 2013. La criminalizacion de la protesta social en el Perú: Un análisis a la luz del caso conga en cajamarca. URL <http://www.grufides.org/documentos/la-criminalizaci-n-de-la-protesta-social-como-estrategia-de-desarticulaci-n-del>.

Declaration of authorship:

Name: Feucht

Surname: Julius

I hereby declare that the present thesis is my own unaided work. All direct or indirect sources used are acknowledged as references. This includes passages, images and the like. This paper in this or a similar form was not previously presented to another examination board and has not been published.

March 14, 2019

signature