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CHAPTER 5

Unpicking 'Community' in Community Conservation: Implications of Changing Settlement Patterns and Individual Mobility for the Tamshiyacu Tahuayo Communal Reserve, Peru

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Introduction

Perhaps the core premise of community conservation is that people who have permanent, exclusive rights to land and resources are more likely to manage resources sustainably in the long term (McCay and Acheson 1987; Acheson 1989; Oglethorpe 1990; Ostrom 1990; Lynch and Alcorn 1994; Hanna et al. 1996). Such an approach is based on a clear definition of those who hold permanent or long-term resource rights to a specific area. However, mobility and migration – the subject of this book – represent a basic challenge for this approach. Rural communities are not fixed, bounded entities; they move in location, change in composition as people move in or move away, and do not necessarily have a clearly defined membership. Whilst these issues are increasingly recognised in the

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academic literature (Uphoff, 1998; Agrawal and Gibson, 1999; Kumar, 2005), they are often still overlooked in the implementation of community natural resource management projects, which have typically treated the 'community' as 'a distinct social group in one geographical location, sharing common cultural characteristics, in harmony and consensus: images that actually may be quite misguiding reflections of reality' (Kumar 2005). At a time when collaborative approaches to conservation are subject to an increasingly strong critique (Oates 1999; Terborgh 1999; Terborgh and Peres 2002), there is an urgent need to move beyond this rather simplistic approach to 'community'. The first step is to build up a body of case studies that unpick the concept of 'community' in community conservation, in order to inform the development of a more realistic framework for community conservation projects. This chapter attempts to provide such a case study, with a particular focus on changing settlement patterns and individual mobility of local residents, based on communities neighbouring the Tamshiyacu Tahuayo Communal Reserve in Amazonian Peru.

Peruvian Communal Reserves are an innovative category within the Peruvian National System of Protected Areas, which secures exclusive use rights over large, natural areas 'for the benefit of neighbouring rural populations' (Newing and Wahl 2004: 38). The category is broadly

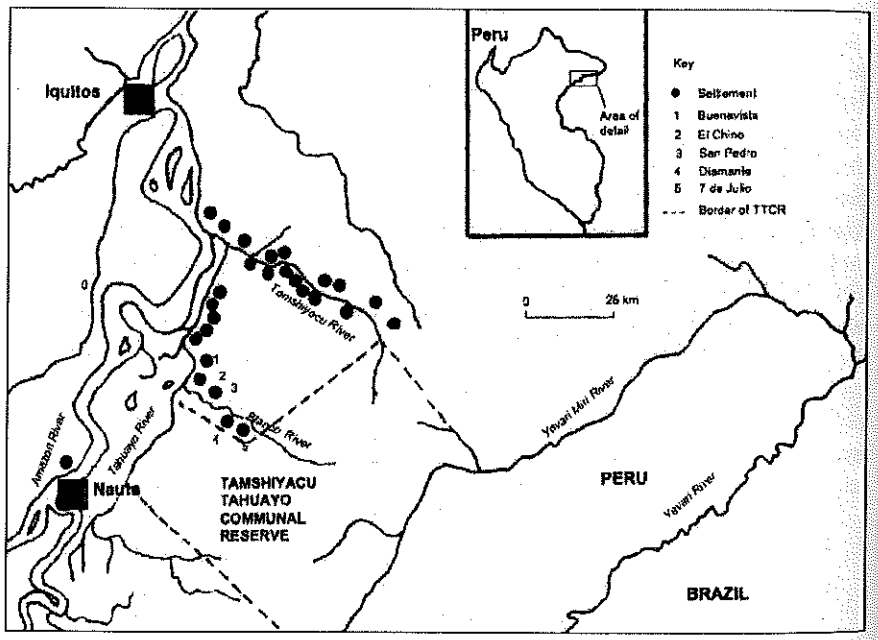

Figure 5.1. Location of the Tamshiyacu Tahuayo Communal Reserve, Amazon River, Peru.

perceived by government officials and conservationists to be most relevant for remote populations that range over large areas and use resources non-intensively. Potentially high-impact activities such as settlement, the clearing of new agricultural land and commercial logging within communal reserves are prohibited.

Case Study: the Tamshiyacu Tahuayo Communal Reserve

The Tamshiyacu Tahuayo Communal Reserve (TTCR) was established in 1991 and was designed to give local *ribereño* communities exclusive rights to certain natural resources within its boundaries, in order to prevent large-scale commercial exploitation by outsiders. Fieldwork carried out ten years later as part of this study aimed to examine how community participation in the management of the reserve had adapted to changing social conditions – particularly changes in settlement patterns and community composition.

The TTCR is located some 100km south of Iquitos between the Tamshiyacu and Tahuayo rivers in the District of Fernando Lores, Maynas province, Loreto (Figure 5.1). Most of the local population is distributed in riverside communities of between ten and one hundred households, each with a primary school and a meeting-house. They have been broadly characterised as *ribereño* peasants[2] with a mixed economy dominated by small-scale agriculture, hunting, fishing and extraction of other forest products (Coomes 1992). *Ribereño* culture (and its counterpart in Brazil, *caboclo* culture) is frequently characterised as a very successful adaptation to ecological and socio-economic conditions in Amazonia (Moran 1981; Hiraoka 1985; Parker 1985; Redford and Padoch 1992; Harris 2000; Schmink 2003), which involves a high level of mobility as individuals and populations move in response to patchy resource distribution and changing market demand for extractive products[3] (see also Alexiades, this

2. A definition for *ribereños* in current use is provided by Padoch (1986: 4, quoted in Chibnik 1991: 173): 'a rural mixed population of detribalised Amazonian natives and their descendants, former immigrants from the neighbouring Peruvian Departments of San Martin and Amazonas and their descendants, the children and grandchildren of immigrants from other South American countries and a few from overseas, and the descendants of any unions between members of the above groups'.
3. *Ribereños* and their Brazilian counterparts, *caboclos*, are in an anomalous position in Amazonian discourses on indigenous identity (Wagley 1953; Moran 1981; Parker 1985; Harris 2000). They are recognised as having a distinct culture and traditional ecological knowledge passed down over some 400 years since European colonisation, and yet are contrasted to truly 'indigenous' tribal peoples, who are generally less integrated into national society in genetic, cultural and economic terms (Chibnik 1991; Santos-Granero and Barclay 2000: 270–77; Little 2001: 7).

volume). Several authors suggest that this is so especially among Peruvian *ribereños*, due not only to ecological and economic factors, but also to cultural ones. The former include the poorer soils in the upper Amazon, which are less suitable for settled agriculture; the lesser early impact in Peru of European colonisation on settlement patterns of indigenous populations (Little 2001: 42–43, 61); differences in the structure of trade (Santos-Granero and Barclay 2000); and differences in the economy of the rubber boom, due both to differences in law[4] and to differences in techniques for exploitation of the two dominant rubber tree species.[5] An important cultural factor is the pioneer image of the *ribereño*, which romanticises exploration and adventure (Santos-Granero and Barclay 2000); thus, movement between different places may be seen as having value in itself. Clearly, this perspective fits uneasily with approaches to community conservation based on fixed land and resource rights.

The history and economy of the Tahuayo Basin up to the early 1990s has been well documented in previous studies, particularly by Coomes (1992, 1995, 1996). This chapter focuses specifically on the inhabitants of the Blanco river, a small tributary to the Tahuayo that was the main location of community support to create the reserve in 1991. Three communities have been created on the Blanco since the late 1980s and therefore do not feature in the earlier socio-economic studies; the only published research on them focuses on hunting and community involvement in management of the reserve (Bodmer et al. 1988, 1997; Bodmer 1994, 2001; Bodmer and Puertas 2000; Puertas et al, 2000; Bodmer and Lozano 2001; Newing and Bodmer 2004).

Methods

The study was based on a review of previous studies of the region, material collected from archival sources and approximately eight months' fieldwork by the author in the communities along the Blanco between April 2001 and March 2004. The original aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between the local people and the Communal Reserve and how this had changed since its creation in 1991. Fieldwork began with unstructured techniques (participant observation and informal interviews) and focused on gathering information on people's attitudes to the reserve; a basic demographic survey was also conducted.

The first field trip revealed that, in fact, many of the people living on the Blanco had not been involved in its creation, having moved to the area in the 1990s. On the other hand, families that had been involved in the lobbying to create the Reserve attributed the decrease in commitment to its management partly to the departure of some key individual community members who had been leaders in the original initiative. Subsequent visits therefore focused on social change and, specifically, mobility of local people. Oral histories were recorded both of the Blanco river basin and the reserve (through individual and group interviews and, at the end of the fieldwork, through community workshops) and of the individual lives of all adult residents. Methodology for the latter is described in more detail below.

Changes in Settlement Patterns

The principle underlying the creation of the reserve was that the granting of permanent, exclusive rights to natural resource use for existing resident populations would keep resource use low and stimulate local enforcement of restricted access by outsiders. However, population densities, settlement patterns and resource use have undergone a series of major transformations over the past 120 years and continue to evolve. The following description is based on work by Coomes (1992), supplemented by material collected during this study with specific reference to the Blanco.

Population densities of indigenous peoples prior to colonisation are not known, but it is likely that overall populations rose during the rubber boom with immigration of rubber workers, dropped substantially after its collapse, and since then have gone through successive periods of relative stability and sharp increases according to changing external social and economic conditions. The focus moved from an indigenous subsistence economy (pre-1880s) to commercial extractivism in the rubber boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and then to intensive riverside commercial farming supplemented by the extraction of a succession of forest products from the hinterlands (Coomes 1992, 1995). The oldest families currently resident in the area arrived to work either in the rubber boom or on the haciendas (farming estates) that developed immediately after its collapse.

Up until the 1950s, commercial extraction of forest products from the upper Tahuayo and Blanco rivers was severely limited by the presence of hostile Matses Indians. Following several violent encounters between the Matses and outlying camps of forest workers, in the early 1950s the

4. In Brazil, but not Peru, it was possible to gain ownership of forests rich in *Hevea* rubber (Santos-Granero and Barclay 2000: 51).
5. *Castilloa ulei* ('*caucho*'), which is more widely distributed in the upper Amazon (including the Peruvian Amazon), is felled by mobile work teams. *Hevea brasiliensis* ('*jebe*') is more common in the Amazonian lowlands, is tapped repeatedly and can therefore be harvested by a settled workforce. However, after 1900, exploitation in the upper Amazon also turned to *Hevea*. See Santos-Granero and Barclay (2000: 51) and Little (2001: 49, 68) for further details.

Peruvian army carried out a 'purge' of the area (*'correría'*), massacring or driving away any Indians who were encountered, thus opening up the area to further exploitation.[6] A second group of the current inhabitants – including many relatively isolated households on the upper Blanco river (*quebrada Blanco*) – are the descendants of men who arrived from the time of the military purge up until the 1970s, with financial backing from hacienda owners and others, in order to extract forest products such as tree resins, timber and animal skins.

A further period of intensive change occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s, due both to the 1969 Land Reform, which dissolved the hacienda system, and to improved transport links with Iquitos, as motorised boats brought the Tahuayo and Blanco within a single day's travel of markets. Along the Tahuayo, many farm workers became independent producers who practised a mixture of subsistence farming and cash crop production, supplemented by the sale of forest products. Due to ease of access to markets, communities on the lower Tahuayo tend to be larger, more fully integrated into the cash economy and more reliant on cash crops. On the upper Tahuayo and particularly on the Blanco, on the other hand, communities are smaller, and most households practise subsistence farming, in some cases together with small-scale production of cash crops and extraction of forest products for subsistence or sale. Thus there is a gradation along the river in terms of community size, socio-economics and natural resource use.

The Agrarian Associations

In the late 1980s, a government incentive programme for the creation of new settlements in agricultural frontier regions triggered a new wave of immigration. The Peruvian government offered plots of land and loans for agricultural tools and labour to communities that registered as Agrarian Associations. This was an effort to consolidate remote areas and increase food production, in line with measures taken by other governments throughout Latin America (Little 2001: 106–7). The Tahuayo basin was a major focus for the settlement programme. As a result, its total population rose by 72 per cent (from 1,816 to 3,130) between 1981 and 1989 (Coomes 1995, 1996), and by another 54 per cent by 2001 (Arévalo 2001). A survey in 1989 recorded that 54 per cent of heads of households along the Tahuayo had arrived in the 1980s (Coomes, 1995). Thus, a third group of the current residents arrived from the late 1980s onwards.

6. *'Correrías'* were common in the rubber boom, with the ostensible purpose of capturing indigenous women and children as slaves for the rubber estates, but also to purge areas of hostile indigenous populations in order to permit colonisation. Occasional *correrías* continued purely for the latter purpose until the 1950s and 1960s (for more detail see Santos-Granero and Barclay 2000, chapter 3).

The more remote Blanco river was also affected by Agrarian Associations. Previously, its only inhabitants were isolated households of people who had moved there from the 1950s to early 1980s to work in extraction of forest resources. There was also one extended family from the community of El Chino, who for some years had been moving seasonally to the higher ground near the mouth of the Blanco to escape annual flooding. However, in the late 1980s, as part of the Agrarian Association process, a group of sixty settlers arrived from Iquitos by boat with a government technician, in order to mark out parcels of land along the Blanco to form a new Association to be called Nuevo Ingreso. The El Chino members succeeded in blocking the creation of Nuevo Ingreso on their existing farms, partly by forming their own Agrarian Association and eventually, with support from biologists working in the area, by blocking government support for the new association, which in turn resulted in the departure of all the new immigrants. The new residents from El Chino stayed permanently on the Blanco, forming the independent community of San Pedro.

Crisis in Natural Resources and Creation of the Reserve

The Tamshiyacu Tahuayo Communal Reserve was created in response to several of the changes in settlement and natural resource use described above. The sudden opening up of access as the old estates disappeared caused a crisis in fish stocks for local people, as freezer boats began to travel from Iquitos to trawl the local oxbow lakes. Some communities, with support from biologists working at a research station on the Blanco, mounted twenty-four-hour guard systems to protect the fish stocks (Pinedo et al. 2000). Biologists at the research station were also concerned about increasing hunting and logging in the upland forests. In the late 1980s, both locals and biologists were alarmed at the immigration associated with the Agrarian Associations (Newing and Bodmer 2004).

Local communities, seeking to secure land-use rights and credits, reacted to the threat of invasion by immigrant communities by forming their own Agrarian Associations, typically behind their existing communities on the riverfront. Coomes (1996) has shown how the Agrarian Association scheme resulted in deforestation of a band of land parallel to the Tahuayo, as both existing communities and newcomers cleared the land in order to gain from government credits – only to abandon the land again a few years later as it became clear that the newly cleared areas were economically unviable.[7] However, this process did

7. Chirif (1989: 189, cited in Little 2001: 108), Martínez (1990) and Painter (1995: 9) have documented similar economic failure and environmental costs of colonisation projects elsewhere in Amazonian Peru and Bolivia.

result in a longer-lasting increase in the population, and its dispersal to areas further from the river into the hinterland.

Meanwhile, biologists presented a series of proposals to regional and national government for the creation of a reserve. Whilst accounts of the extent of active community involvement in this process vary, the proposals had support from a significant proportion of the local population, largely because of their own recent experiences of resource overexploitation and land invasion by outsiders. Two communities on the Tahuayo – El Chino and Buenavista – were particularly involved in the lobbying to create the reserve because they were the nearest to the Blanco, which was both the main access point to the forest uplands that became the reserve, and also the site of the biological research station where proposals for a reserve were formulated. The communal reserve was finally created in 1991, after several years' lobbying, and its creation put a brake on forest extraction and the spread of settlements further upriver. No new logging concessions were granted after the late 1980s, and many extractivist workers left the Blanco as a result.

Changes in Settlement Patterns since the Creation of the Reserve

Although the invasion by Nuevo Ingreso appeared to have been successfully countered, immigration to the Blanco continued for the next twelve years. Although the original immigrants in Nuevo Ingreso had left, friends and relatives – hearing about the good farmland and the abundant animals in the area – continued to arrive over the following years. As a result the population on the Tahuayo continued to increase. Fieldwork carried out for this study showed that, by the early 2000s, the Nuevo Ingreso-related immigrants dominated the population of the Blanco, making up 55 per cent of the ninety-four adults living there. Moreover, immigration related to the Agrarian Association project had not slowed by the late 1990s; twenty-three individuals (45 per cent) arrived after 1995 and thirteen (25 per cent) in 2000 or later. The newcomers established two new communities (Diamante and 7 de Julio) further upriver on the Blanco, between the reserve and the communities that had lobbied for its creation (Figure 5.2). Since the law on communal reserves defines the beneficiaries as 'neighbouring rural populations' it could be argued that the only new communities – the immediate neighbours – should be beneficiaries.

Social relations remained extremely strained between former inhabitants and the new immigrants, and this has been a significant barrier to implementing existing inter-community agreements on resource use. The implications for communal reserves and broader co-management models will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Individual Mobility

During the study period, individual mobility was so prominent that residency in the Blanco was hard to define. Although the total population size was stable from 2001 to 2004, in the twelve-month period from April 2002 a total of nineteen adults (20 per cent of the total) moved out of the Blanco, apparently permanently; but by January 2004, seven were back again. Only one adult had lived on the Blanco for his entire life, although there were residents who had been there since the 1950s.

Mobility of individuals and households raises additional challenges for community approaches to conservation based on fixed, long-term resource rights. In the case of the Tamshiyacu Tahuayo Communal Reserve, the original reserve management agreement in 1992 defined those with rights to the reserve as people born in the two communities of Chino and Buenavista (Newing and Bodmer 2004). This has clearly been insufficient and, more recently, beneficiaries have been defined more simply by membership of participating communities, which now include the new communities of San Pedro and Diamante–7 de Julio. Nonetheless, the high degree of mobility makes even this hard to define.

In order to better understand individual and household mobility, and also to shed further light on changing demographics, oral life histories were collected from adult 'residents' of the Blanco that were present at the time, as well as from a sample of those in El Chino on the Tahuayo. Particular attention was paid to moves in location and their underlying motivations. At the end of the interview, if necessary, people were asked specifically why they had come to the Blanco and whether they knew anyone there before they came. The information gathered was cross-checked in subsequent interviews, except in a small number of cases where individuals were not present during any of the subsequent field trips. Between one and four interviews were carried out per person, depending on the completeness and consistency of the information collected. A total of ninety-two life histories were collected in this way, which represents all except two of the inhabitants registered during field trips.

The following account gives a summary of common choices and types of movement at different stages in an individual's lifetime, and examines the variations in this general pattern between the three subsets of the population that have been described above, hereafter referred to as the 'older farming families', 'extractivist workers' and 'post-Agrarian Association immigrants'.

One striking feature of the life histories was that sixty-six individuals (72 per cent of the total sample) had at some time lived in the city of Iquitos, in some cases for extended periods; thus, the characterisation of local people as rural subsistence dwellers is over-simplistic. Common reasons given for moving to the city were access to schools, to seek work, to seek a husband

or wife or simply to spend time with family. Twenty-one individuals (23 per cent) had spent a period of time in the city either for their own schooling or, if they could afford it, for that of their children. Fifteen (44 per cent) of the women born in rural locations had gone to Iquitos as teenagers, ostensibly to work – either for income or to assist relatives – but also to seek a husband; all but three of them met their future husbands there. Young men also went to the city to sign up for national service, which until recently was compulsory, or to seek employment. Much manual labour takes the form of short-term contracts for the extraction of forest resources and, since the 1960s, oil, for which workers are recruited in Iquitos. Young men commonly work in numerous locations, during periods ranging from months to years, according to changing demand and local depletion of resources, returning to Iquitos in between jobs to look for further employment. Over half (55 per cent) of men in this study had worked on short-term contracts of this type and, partly as a result, 51 per cent of men had lived in more than three different rural locations, with a small minority (five men, or 10 per cent) having lived in more than ten different rural locations. Wives and children might accompany their menfolk on contract work or stay in either the city or a rural community. As a result, women are less mobile; only six women (15 per cent) had lived in three or more locations and none had lived in more than six.

When men are unable to find work in Iquitos, a fallback option is to move to a rural community and set up small-scale farming for subsistence. Seventeen men (33 per cent) reported that they had had to do this at some time in their lives, and several mentioned specifically that this had happened in the early 1990s at the time of economic collapse during Alan García's presidency. However, a switch from city life to farming was also reported as a positive choice by some young couples, so that they could spend time together as a family. Similarly, three middle-aged couples had chosen to return to live in the countryside after their children had grown up, in two cases while also maintaining a household in Iquitos, explaining that they did so not just to grow crops or collect forest produce, but because they preferred the rural lifestyle to the noise and bustle of the city. One elderly resident from an old farming family, who also has a house in the city, explained as follows:

> I would spend all the time here if I could; the only reason for going to the city is so I see my grandchildren. The life is not good there, with all the noise and pollution and heat; and you sit up until midnight watching television. Here I sleep much better, and we eat better, it's a better life.

Indeed, part of the reason why residency was hard to define was because of the constant movement of individuals between households in the Blanco and family households in Iquitos. Seven of forty-nine households (14 per cent) in the Blanco also owned a house in the city, and

the members of the households moved back and forth according to both economic needs and lifestyle choices. A further twenty-five (51 per cent) households had close kin – parents, children or siblings – who lived in the city and could therefore stay there, or send their children to school there, for extended periods at low cost. Children at school in Iquitos often came back to the Blanco during school holidays; in some cases their mother stayed with them in the city during term-time and the whole family joined the father in the holidays and helped with smallholder production. During each field trip, some individuals would be reported by locals to have moved away permanently from the Blanco, only to reappear a year or more later, having been living with family in Iquitos.

Variations between Subgroups

The broad outline given above was common to all three subgroups of the population, but some more detailed variations between groups will be described here. Among the older farming families from the Tahuayo, although individuals moved between their home community and the city or other rural locations for all the reasons given above, larger extended family groups were present, because many young adults had returned to live near their parents. Thus, the community of San Pedro consisted almost entirely of one extended family, originally founded by two brothers and their wives, who were sisters. The closest two communities on the Tahuayo also each contained a small number of large extended families. The economic and social links with Iquitos appeared to be stronger further down the Tahuayo river; during a two-day visit to Buenavista, local residents stated that every household except one had a second house in the city, and many family members came upriver seasonally to harvest tree crops such as avocado and *camu-camu*, and to escape from the heat and noise of the city. Livelihoods were based mainly on farming and people frequently commented on the beauty and peacefulness of the community, contrasting it to the noise and dirt of larger towns and cities. Some staff of non-governmental organisations even commented that the Tahuayo appeared to be moving away from subsistence or commerce, towards hobby farming.

Moving on to the extractivist workers, all had arrived in the Blanco on short-term contracts with financial backing from local or city-based patrons, or were the children of those who had done so. Those who had stayed were only a small fraction of the original workers, and now lived principally from small-scale agriculture, in at least three cases supplemented substantially by hunting. Several people explained that they wanted to escape from the pressures of waged labour ('I prefer it here. Noone controls my work') or simply that they liked the peaceful life in the forest. An old extractivist in his seventies liked to tell how: 'Before,

there were no people. Everything was silence; there was absolutely nobody, no houses. Pure silence, silence, silence. Nobody, nobody, nobody ... afterwards the people arrived, they have destroyed everything.'

The post-Agrarian Association immigrants included a small number of wealthy middle-aged couples – six of the seven families who owned a house in Iquitos were in this category – and a much larger number of young couples or singles. The reasons given most frequently for choosing the Blanco as a destination included the abundant wildlife and good farming land (n = 21) or visiting relatives or moving to be near them (n = 22). However, many of the men appeared to be living primarily from hunting and frequently talked of the adventure of the hunt; members of the other two groups stated that most of the post-Agrarian Association immigrants had come specifically to carry out commercial hunting in the reserve, although the subject was too sensitive to allow for this to be confirmed directly. Moreover, the husband and wife in a single family often gave different reasons for such moves, no doubt reflecting their different priorities:

> Sometimes I went to the Pacaya Samiria Reserve, but there was the risk of having the game confiscated by the park guards. I came to the Blanco because there's a lot of hunting. [Husband]

> We came to the Blanco because my mother lived here. She invited us. I came to visit her and I liked it; I made my *chacra*. I live in Iquitos, but we have our *chacra* here. [Wife]

All except five post-Agrarian Association immigrants had arrived through contacts that stretch back to just two of the original group that came through the Agrarian Association scheme, and came from a small cluster of communities on the River Marañon neighbouring the Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve. Twelve were born in a single community – Shapajilla – which has suffered repeated floods and violent conflicts between local people and park guards over access rights to natural resources. The remaining five had come from a second region, where they had been displaced from their natural resource base by the creation of a protected area – the Allpahuayo Mishana Reserve. Four of the five stated specifically that the reserve and the subsequent loss of resource rights were the reason why they had come. Thus there is evidence that immigration to the Blanco was connected to displacement of local people by stricter protected areas elsewhere.

Discussion

The case study raises several important issues in current debates about community conservation. These are divided below into those related to changes in local settlement patterns and those related to personal mobility.

Changing Settlement Patterns and Population Densities

The greatest challenge for effective community participation in management of the communal reserve has undoubtedly been caused by the continuing trickle of immigration that has its origins in the Agrarian Association scheme. To a certain extent this fits in with conventional approaches to conservation based on secure resource rights for defined 'insiders', since the problem arose because there were areas of untitled land neighbouring the reserve, and this allowed the influx of newcomers who gained rights to resources within the reserve. At least three other communal reserves in Peru – the El Sira, Asháninka and Machiguenga Communal Reserves – have prioritised the securement of community land rights in a complete band along the borders of the reserve in order to avoid this problem (Newing and Wahl 2004). However, once this is done, communities cannot move on in response to local depletion of natural resources, as they would have done in the past. As a result, the perimeter of the reserve is likely to suffer increasing resource depletion. Meanwhile, prohibition of even temporary settlement within the reserve means that its core is largely inaccessible. Thus, rather than supporting the low-impact, extensive use of natural resources by mobile populations as originally conceptualised, communal reserves are more likely to accelerate the settlement process, increase local depletion of resources on the perimeter, and prevent – or criminalise – use of resources at the centre.

Such problems are not unique to communal reserves in Peru; Little (2001: 167–69) argues similarly that the collaborative management plan for Cuyabeno Reserve in Ecuador favoured those indigenous communities that just happened to be within the reserve boundaries at this time, and discriminated against those that happened to be outside, given that communities were traditionally highly mobile. The result was to break traditional patterns of mobility and resource use: 'By tying them to specific areas indelibly etched in maps, the establishment and expansion of the Cuyabeno Reserve negated the traditional practice of resettlement practised for centuries by indigenous peoples of the area.'

When the category of communal reserves was created in the Peruvian protected areas system, it attracted much interest both within Peru and internationally as an innovative mechanism that could address these issues and 'fit in' with traditional extensive resource use patterns (Newing and Wahl 2004). However, the above case study demonstrates that the

mechanism for the management of communal reserves needs to be redefined if they are to meet the purpose for which they were originally envisaged. One possible direction would be to allow settlement within the reserves and to work with communities to prevent resource depletion in other ways. A broader conclusion is that community conservation based on exclusive, permanent resource rights and systems of zoning for different levels of use may solve immediate problems of invasion by outsiders, but may be inappropriate in the longer term in places where people have traditionally used resources non-intensively over large areas.

Community Composition and Personal Mobility

The case study has shown that individuals on the Blanco are highly mobile, typically moving several times in their lives between different rural and urban locations. Again, this throws up some specific challenges for current approaches to community conservation. Most obviously, for approaches based on exclusive resource rights for local residents, it exposes the difficulty of defining who is resident – and therefore a member of the group with rights to resources in the communal reserve – and indeed raises questions about the level at which membership of this group should be defined. To date, this has been done at the level of individuals, but, in terms both of local systems of social organisation and of subsistence economics, it would make more sense to do so at the level of households or even multi-locational extended families.

Extended families act as the basic unit for social and economic organisation in many traditional non-indigenous Amazonian societies (Nugent 1993; Little 2001: 37), and there is increasing documentation of the importance of multi-locational families that maintain households and economic activities in both urban and rural locations (Nugent 1993; Pinedo-Vásquez and Padoch, this volume). However, to take account of these networks would raise new challenges in defining where the limits of membership lie. Conservation projects based on a livelihoods approach (for example, Fisher et al. 2005) also need to take such links into account if they are to understand the economic context of natural resource use.

Lastly, drivers of individual and household mobility in the Blanco include not only economic need and social networks, but also, at least for a small minority of families, lifestyle choices. Whilst some local families are driven to rural farming by economic necessity and are thus susceptible to economic incentives, a small number of families are motivated more by the aesthetic aspects of farming and life in the countryside. It is unclear to what extent this is likely to increase in the future, but some staff of non-governmental organisations working along the Tahuayo commented on the possibility that the area would be increasingly dominated by hobby farming. A last issue raised by the case study, then, is the possibility that

support for conservation may increase with increasing local valuation of natural landscapes per se. This is an area that has yet to be extensively researched, but recent work elsewhere has shown that the aesthetic aspect of forest living is more widespread in Amazonia than may be expected (for example, Kaimowitz 2002: 234).

Whilst unpicking the concept of 'community' in community conservation involves far more issues than can be discussed here, mobility is one complex factor that deserves more attention. These issues have only recently started to be discussed in international conservation policy fora (Chatty and Colchester 2002; Dana Declaration 2002), but the creation of the World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP) at the 2003 World Parks Congress has put the issue of conservation and mobility firmly on the international agenda.[8] It will be important now that social scientists provide in-depth studies to inform the development of new policy approaches to this complex issue.

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8. At the World Conservation Union's (IUCN's) 2003 World Parks Congress, a World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP) was created to explore areas of conflict and synergy. WAMIP is affiliated to IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) and is defined as 'a global alliance of nomadic peoples and communities practising various forms of mobility as a livelihood strategy while conserving biological diversity and using natural resources in a sustainable way' (http://www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/WAMIP.htm).

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PART II

TRANSFORMATIONS: KNOWLEDGE, IDENTITY, PLACE-MAKING AND THE DOMESTICATION OF NATURE