Government and Community Based Primate Conservation Initiatives in Peru

Noga Shanee

Introduction

Peru is considered one of the most biodiverse countries on earth (Rodríguez and Young 2000; Pacheco et al. 2009; Schulenberg et al. 2010). In Latin America, Peru ranks third in both overall and endemic mammal diversity (Pacheco et al. 2009). Globally it ranks fourth in terms of primate species diversity (47), third in diversity of genera (12), and joint first in diversity of primate families (5 families, together with Brazil, Colombia, and Madagascar) (IUCN/PSG 2012).

Primates are widely distributed throughout Peru in the eastern Amazonian lowlands, Eastern Andean cloud forests, inter-Andean valleys, and the northern coastal forests bordering Ecuador (Aquino and Encarnación 1994). The eastern Andean mountain forest, or *Yungas*, forms part of the "Tropical Andes Biodiversity Hotspot," considered the most biodiverse area on earth and a global conservation priority (Myers 2003; Myers et al. 2000). Three of Peru's endemic primate species are restricted to the north of the country (Shanee 2011; Bóveda-Penalba et al. 2009; Shanee et al. 2011a; Mittermeier et al. 2009; Mittermeier et al. 2012a), two of them are considered "Critically Endangered," the yellow-tailed woolly monkey, (*Lagothrix flavicauda*) and the Rio Mayo titi monkey (*Callicebus oenanthe*) (Cornejo et al. 2008b; Veiga et al. 2013). Both of these species have repeatedly been listed among the world's 25 most threatened primate species (Mittermeier et al. 2012b), due to drastic population reductions caused by massive deforestation. The third endemic primate, the Peruvian night monkey (*Aotus miconax*), is one of the least known of all primates and would be better considered Endangered rather than Vulnerable in the IUCN Redlist of based on estimates of habitat loss and population decline (Shanee et al. 2015).

N. Shanee (✉)
Neotropical Primate Conservation, 23 Portland Road, Stretford, Manchester M320PH, UK
e-mail: nogashanee@gmail.com

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An estimated 4.5 million people live in the Peruvian *Yungas* (CDC-UNALM and TNC 2006), many of them recent migrants from neighboring highland and lowland regions (INEI 2007). The subsistence and economic needs of this large human population places growing pressure on forests. By the year 2000 Peru had lost 7,172,953 ha (10.3 %) of its original forest cover. The regions with the highest deforestation rates were: San Martin with 1,327,736 ha (25.9 %) and Amazonas with 1,001,540 ha (25.5 %) of forest loss (PROCLIM/CONAM 2005). Both regions contain the main habitat for three of Peru's endemic primate species (Shanee 2011; Leo Luna 1980, 1987; Shanee et al. 2011a; Bóveda-Penalba et al. 2009; Cornejo et al. 2008a; Shanee et al. 2012). The steep slopes of the Andes can be a deterrent to agriculture, especially considering that soil erosion and leaching are severe problems for slash and burn and mechanized agriculture (Juo and Manu 1996; Soto et al. 1995; Rumpel et al. 2006; McDonald et al. 2002). Although many different crops are farmed in the Peruvian Andes, cattle ranching is the main cause of deforestation and biodiversity loss (Steinfeld et al. 2006; Kaimowitz 1996; Shanee 2012a). In the lowland rainforests, the main threats to primate species are subsistence hunting, hunting for the illegal pet trade, and habitat alteration related to deforestation for pasture, agriculture, road construction, gold mining, oil extraction, and timber extraction (Finer et al. 2008; Alvarez-Berríos and Aide 2015; Ministerio del Ambiente 2014a; Gutiérrez-Vélez and DeFries 2013).

As is the case in other parts of the world, NGOs influence the dynamics of conservation in Peru. However, this chapter does not specifically discuss NGOs as they are so diverse in their sizes, performances, and challenges that they could not be included in this scope. Government initiatives that directly protect primate species are mostly involved with the creation of protected areas and control measures to tackle the illegal wildlife trade and deforestation. Local communities protect primates and other wildlife through the creation of protected areas which they formally register with the relevant authorities and informal conservation initiatives such as placement of internal prohibitions on deforestation and hunting (Shanee et al. 2014b). This chapter aims to compare the potential and actual challenges and opportunities of both government and community based primate conservation initiatives focusing on the role of individuals within the implementation of these initiatives.

Methods

I employed a range of social science research methods to collect data from a variety of sources. Ethnographic methods are an effective tool for understanding complex, local, social situations (LeCompte and Schensul 1999). They engage the researcher in the lives and activities of the target population by utilizing the researcher's senses and working according to his/her intuition. The conservation initiatives reviewed in this article are from authorities, communities, associations, and individuals who are directly and indirectly involved in primate conservation in Peru.

Interviews with key informants—Individual, in-depth interviews are possibly the most widely used social research method (Fielding and Thomas 2001). They enable researchers to carry out a deep exploration of a wide variety of topics and discover new topics, as well as giving informants time and space to present and develop their ideas (Durand and Vázquez 2010; Schensul et al. 1999). Unplanned, informal interviews, in the form of spontaneous conversations arising from participant observation opportunities, were also chosen because of their non-standardized character, which is beneficial where the subject is complicated or sensitive (Fielding and Thomas 2001). Also, formal interviews, especially if they include recording devices are alien to rural people prove inefficient in generating valuable data. Short outline notes were sometimes taken during the conversation, but normally immediately afterwards. At the end of these interviews, the interviewees were asked if the information discussed could be used as part of the study and if they wished to remain anonymous.

Participant Observations—The extended field work period (approximately 8 years) and participative methodologies allowed prolonged exposure to social and environmental processes in addition to evidently increasing mutual understanding and trust between researcher and participants. Observations took place in a wide range of settings such as forest field trips, internal and public meetings organized by institutions or communities and participating in wildlife confiscations, as well as visiting field sites and conservation initiatives among many other planned and spontaneous observations or conversations. Through contact with authorities in different regions throughout Peru and in the central government, I gathered information about protected areas solicited and awarded, law enforcement strategies, the attitudes of the authorities and the challenges they face. I also reviewed relevant national and international laws. These enhanced the quantity and diversity of data collected through its validation.

Case studies—Case studies are an important and well-known anthropological methodology (Eckstein 1975; Stake 1995; Mitchell 2006; Flyvbjerg 2006). It is a strategy which seeks to understand the dynamics of single settings, extrapolating the insights gained to construct theories (Eisenhardt 1989).

This research was undertaken within one of the most biodiverse and threatened countries in the world using examples from the Tropical Andes Hotspot, which is referred to as the "Global Epicenter of biodiversity." Conservation initiatives directed towards the protection of the yellow-tailed woolly monkey, one of the most endangered primate species on a global level, were also used. Many smaller case studies are embedded throughout the text. The study and its case studies were chosen as unique situations and dramatic events, or, as defined by Mitchell (2006) "atypical cases" chosen for their illuminating power and because they "may make theoretical connections apparent which were formally obscure" (Mitchell 2006). According to Eisenhardt (1989), because of their reliance on actual events case studies are particularly likely to lead to the creation of novel theories due to their ability to expose contradictions and paradoxes. They are also testable, and have high empirical validity. Hence, this methodology is

"particularly well suited to new research areas or research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate." All data and quotes were gathered in Spanish and were translated to English by the author.

Data Analysis

The use of coding classification offered by the NVivo program facilitates systematic, careful handling of qualitative data, as similar themes and concepts are compared and contrasted with each other within a chronological framework (Fielding and Thomas 2001). The study is part of a long-term political ecology research of conservation initiatives in Peru. It took place during my time as a co-director of the Yellow-Tailed Woolly Monkey Project, run by UK non-governmental organization (NGO) "Neotropical Primate Conservation" (NPC). My personal engagement with conservation initiatives in the study area allowed for an intimate understanding of both degradation and conservation processes.

Protected Areas

Governmental Run Protected Areas

According to Article 68 of the Political Constitution of Peru "The state is obliged to promote the conservation of biodiversity and protected areas." Peru has 76 nationally protected areas totaling 19,518,146 ha in ten different protection categories, and 16 regional conservation areas protected by regional governments, covering an additional 2,407,966 ha (SERNANP 2015). These protected areas are made by the ministry of the environment in Lima through a supreme decree as a reserved zone, which passes through a lengthy process of adjustment to its geographical limits in coordination with communities in the surrounding area. The area is then categorized as one of the existing protected area categories. This process can take many years, the Alto Mayo Protected Forest was created in 1987, covering 182,000 ha and protecting Peru's three endemic species. It was not until 2000 that its first park management was established and park guards were employed (INRENA 2008). During the intervening years, protection of the reserve was not enforced, allowing mass in-migration across its boundaries resulting in the deforestation of large areas and hunting. There are an estimated 3000 families currently living inside the reserve and by 2009, 26,000 ha had already been deforested, equal to about 15 % of the area covered by the reserve (INRENA 2008; ICAM 2011). Another often used critique on the way protected areas are created in Peru is that despite the countries cultural and biogeographical diversity, protected areas all over the country are formed and function under the same model, no matter if the model is suitable or not for each

area. A new law (Law No. 30230), signed by President Ollanta Humala in 2014, overrides the authority of the ministry of the environment in creating new protected areas and significantly reduces its authority in controlling environmental damage resulting from extraction projects such as mining and the exploitation of fossil fuel reserves. It also allows exploitation in any newly formed protected areas.

Although it is commonly agreed that the participation of local people is essential to successful conservation initiatives (Adams 2004; Hulme and Murphree 1999), it is recognized that opportunities offered by protected area management is often used as a "lip service" to support top-down practices allowing only passive cooperation and consultation (Durand and Vázquez 2010; Pimbert and Pretty 1997; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Few 2001). This study found in Northern Peru where local people are often discriminated against and ignored during conservation planning and implementation and are subject to prejudice and abusive discourses. It has been suggested that although local people in Northern Peru are attracted to the idea of conservation and initiate conservation projects themselves, they are opposed to the way conservation is often administrated by outsiders such as the government and NGOs (Shanee 2013). Therefore, local participation in government conservation initiatives is limited and there are even retaliatory actions such as the burning of parts of the Alto Mayo Protected Forest in 2010 as well as death threats and physical abuse toward park managers and guards. In another recent case the authorities in charge of the categorizing of the Rio Nieva Reserved Zone were prohibited from entering the area by several neighboring communities. They were taken hostage for a few hours during which time they received numerous death threats. They were later released after having signed an agreement not to enter the area again, an agreement that was canceled in a general meeting with the communities a few months later. The authorities believed the attack on them was a result of incitement against the reserve on the part of land traffickers and maybe also drug cultivators who use these lands for their illegal activities.

Community Run Protected Areas

Peru has two kinds of nongovernment protected areas, one, on privately owned lands, such as titled family plots or community lands, can be registered as a Private Conservation Area (ACP) for an unlimited period through application to the Ministry of the Environment. The other, on untitled state land, involves registration of the area with the respective Regional Government as a Conservation Concession (CC) renewable for up to 40 years. Ecotourism Concessions and Ecological Service Areas are other legal mechanisms under which land can be protected. Currently there are 75 ACPs in Peru, totaling 259,522 ha, 55 Conservation Concessions, totaling 1,041,626 ha, and 44 Ecotourism Concessions, totaling 100,195 ha (Lo and Monteferri 2014).

Local people's rationales for conservation initiatives include an appreciation of nature's intrinsic value, religious or spiritual value, aspirations for sustainability and

a concern for future generations, and as an arena for the struggle for social justice and recognition (Shanee 2013). These communities often take pride and satisfaction in the return of, and increases in, populations of wildlife as a result of their initiatives. The main obstacles faced by local people who want to legally protect lands are the extensive legal requirements for registering the areas and lack of access to support from governmental and nongovernmental institutions, as well as the lack of economic resources to pay for the initial registration and to fund the area in the future (Shanee et al. 2014b).

In Northern Peru the social pressures related to gossip narratives can inspire very strong and even violent acts towards conservation promoters. The initiator of a Conservation Concession in San Martin Region was the victim of a social boycott and allegations that he later blamed for causing him depression, sickness, and other physical side effects. He was accused by his neighbors of selling the land he was protecting to mining companies, being paid by "the NGO," and becoming rich at the community's expense. In another community, which made a private conservation area that protects a population of *Lagothrix flavicauda*, the people threatened to burn the house of a local man who led the conservation process and banned the entrance of all NGOs to the area.

The "farmers for the Conservation of the Natural Forests of Simacache" is a small association of local farmers that took it upon itself to conserve a 41,000 ha Conservation Concession. Inside the area there are many land traffickers, land invaders, loggers, and hunters aided by an increasing number of roads constructed by nearby logging concessions. The association receives technical help from NGOs but does not receive substantial financial help and therefore the members invest much of their own money in many of the activities. Since 2012, the association has filed three complaints at the environmental public prosecutor's office against a group of land invaders, led by an engineer who provides them with false land property documentation. All three complaints were archived by the prosecutor's office without explanation. In December 2013, during a field trip to mark the limits of the concession, six of the association's members were assaulted and kidnapped by a group of land invaders living inside the concession. All their belongings were taken and they were threatened at gunpoint that if they did not cancel the reserve they would be killed. Among the things taken from them was a small digital camera that they used to document hunted wildlife they found in one of the invaders houses as proof of illegal hunting. The kidnappers then used these same photos to file a legal complaint at the environmental prosecutor, with the help of a lawyer, against the association, for poaching. This complaint was only archived after a lawyer hired by the association made a full report proving that the complaint had no factual base. However, in all cases reviewed during this study the gossip narratives and antagonist actions were drastically reduced approximately 1 year after beginning work on the reserves, with a growing number of local people joining the conservation initiators in their efforts. Despite the great social pressures, the initiators themselves sacrifice a great deal to assist their communities and promote conservation programs and the majority of locally run reserves do get registered despite the difficulties.

Another example of grassroots conservation is the work done by the Ronda Campesina, a network of autonomous civil organizations aimed at self-protection. They practice vigilance and civil justice in the rural Peruvian countryside where state control is insufficient (Langdon and Rodriguez 2007; Nuñez Palomino 1996; Rojas 1990; Gitlitz 1995; Yrigoyen 2002; Gallay 2002; Starn 1999). It is the largest and most influential grassroots movement in Peru. The Ronda supports many conservation initiatives run by other institutions but also initiate their own projects. Because of their extended network throughout the country, Rondas are able to reach a wide rural population. They run environmental education talks in rural areas, implement mechanisms for controlling deforestation and hunting within their traditional penalty system and protest against extractive industries. The size of the organization means that environmental messages transmitted through the Ronda are received by a large section of the rural community, including many of the most remote areas. In 2012 the Ronda launched a new conservation model: Ronda Conservation Areas (ARCAs). Reserves are set by signing an internal agreement in a Ronda assembly and are not officially registered with the government offices. These reserves have a double impact, most importantly they allow fast and effective conservation from local initiatives while focusing attention on state conservation systems that necessitate high economic investment and lengthy bureaucratic processes, excluding local people, and missing many opportunities for conservation by a population that does not have the means or academic expertise to follow traditional conservation routes. There are already hundreds of ARCAs throughout Peru that are autonomous initiatives of many different Ronda bases, ranging from tens to thousands of hectares each. Critically, many of these reserves were created autonomously before the launch of the ARCA model; however, these reserves are not georeferenced nor formally registered. Therefore although they have strong presence on the ground, quantifying their coverage and impact is difficult.

Wildlife Trafficking and Deforestation Control

State Law Enforcement Initiatives

Peru is in the process of updating its environmental legal framework and the authorities in charge of tackling deforestation and wildlife extraction were recently restructured and updated with a focus on decentralization (Sears and Pinedo-Vasquez 2011; Ravikumar et al. 2013). However, the authorities still face many problems dealing with wildlife trafficking related to outdated and complicated laws, lack of personnel (especially specialists in fauna), frequent changes in staff and institutional structure, lack of resources and equipment, excessive bureaucracy which hinders both confiscations and prosecution of wildlife crime, lack of rescue centers, the threat of personal lawsuits and physical aggression, and local politics that place extra obstacles in the way (Shanee 2012b).

The authorities are divided into various different offices, each with limited responsibilities and cooperation between them is necessary for all actions. It was repeatedly noticed that the connection between the offices is very lose, in many cases they did not even have each other's contact details. There are many disagreements and the passing of responsibilities between the offices is common. The environmental legal framework is also complex and divided between many different laws and institutional regulations. In several cases, the authorities expressed confusion over which animals should be confiscated or what constitutes an illegal activity or offense. Other doubts expressed by the authorities were observed during the interventions themselves, especially on species identification, handling, and technical information given to the perpetrators to explain the problems related to the maintenance of wildlife in captivity. It is clear that of the different types of environmental crime, such as timber trafficking and illegal gold mining, wildlife traffic receives significantly less attention.

Peruvian law also prohibits the burning or clear cutting of any type of forest without explicit authorization from the competent authorities. However, severely understaffed and underequipped authorities are unable to identify and intervene in many such cases, especially in areas further from roads, where healthy populations of primates are more likely to exist. At the Copenhagen Climate Conference in 2009, Peru announced targets to achieve zero deforestation by 2020, and in 2010 launched the National Program to Conserve Forests for the Mitigation of Climate Change, which aspires to conserve 54 million ha of forest.[1] Even so, deforestation levels are extremely high, rates varied from 123,200 ha/year between 2000 and 2009 to 105,975 ha/year between 2009 and 2011. A sharp increase in 2013 brought deforestation rates to the highest ever with 145,000 ha of rainforest cleared (Mongabay 2014; Ministerio del Ambiente 2014a, b).

Environmental authorities in Peru do not have incentives to take initiative and very often capitulate in front of threats and violence, under strong pressure from their coworkers and the threat of dismissal from their superiors not to act in certain cases, probably due to corruption. In many cases, employees that act against their superiors are dismissed and in others they leave their posts or give up hope of making changes. A common explanation given by authorities for the high level of corruption is that as everyone is corrupt, you either enjoy the bribe like everyone else or are killed by the traffickers, so there is no real choice.

The decentralization process that started in 2008 is still not complete (Ravikumar et al. 2013), some of the regional environmental authorities' responsibilities are still under the control of the ministry of agriculture but all the "Selva" regions, where most primate habitats and traffic exist already have regional environmental authorities run by the respective regional governments. The Forestry Service (SERFOR) of the central government has very little control over the regional authorities. The central government does not stipulate either a minimum budget for each regional government to invest in wildlife and deforestation control nor a minimum of activities the regional authorities are

[1] Supreme Decree 008-2010-MINAM, 15.7.2010.

obliged to undertake. Therefore, the level of efficiency in controlling wildlife crime largely depends on local politics rather than national or international policies (Shanee 2012b).

It was observed that general, human, and economic resources in Peru are dramatically reduced as conservation initiatives get closer to implementation. Budgets descend from the international to local level whilst diminishing drastically (Shanee 2012a). Individuals constantly aspire to higher positions as those that stay at entry level posts, such as field biologists, park guards, and wildlife authorities in charge of interventions are either unmotivated, lack skills and social connections, or individuals motivated by ideology rather than self interest.

San Martin region is a region with comparatively good practices in wildlife trafficking control (Shanee 2012b). In fact San Martin has become known nationally for its unique progress in environmental policies especially in relation to its management of wild fauna. There is a very small group of people in charge of fauna control in the region that, with scarce resources, tackle all types of wildlife crime, organizing dozens of interventions a year to confiscate pets, seize meat from bushmeat markets, transportation companies, private houses, and illegal zoos, among others. They have legalized four rescue centers in the region that not only provide homes for rescued animals confiscated in San Martin, but also receive animals from the rest of the country. There has been a definite reduction in wildlife found illegally in captivity in San Martin since the beginning of the work of this group. Moreover, roadblocks on the main highway between the Amazonian and Coastal regions, which are organized by the regional government of San Martin, help reduce national trafficking levels. The future of this administration is however unclear. All existing staff may soon be placed by the new regional government in San Martin. Another example, an environmental public prosecutor working in Pucallpa, one of the most notorious wildlife trafficking centers in Peru, managed to confiscate hundreds of animals over the course of just a few weeks, including several interventions at the Bella Vista wildlife market, the biggest and one of the least controlled open markets in the country.

Communal Control of Hunting, Wildlife Trafficking, and Deforestation

As explained above local people find it hard to access the resources and expertise needed to officially register conservation areas. Informal conservation initiatives are different ways in which local people bypass these problems. Informal conservation initiatives can include voluntary agreements to control deforestation and/or hunting. These type of initiatives, although sparsely documented and hard to quantify, are very common in Peru and have significant importance for primate conservation (Shanee et al. 2014b).

As mentioned above, the Ronda Campesina is a great example of a grassroots organization controlling hunting and deforestation. In 2009 the Rondas of Amazonas region, and in 2013 the Rondas of San Martin region, decided unanimously to work towards the eradication of wildlife trafficking in these regions. Although they seldom confiscate wildlife themselves, they repeatedly talk about hunting and deforestation in their environmental education sessions in rural communities. They often use primates as examples of animals that should be respected and protected, repeating information they receive from outside conservation agents about primates' importance as seed dispersal agents and vulnerability to hunting. Local people that hunt, burn, and clear cut forest are often sentenced and punished by the Ronda assembly, paying fines, doing communal work, and/or nights of enforced physical exercise, depending on the severity of the infraction. The involvement of the Ronda Campesina is extremely important in rural areas that rarely receive visits from official environmental authorities. The Rondas are part of the communities they operate in; therefore, their ability to identify and capture environmental criminals is much greater than outside agents that arrive for short visits.

A recent study in Amazonas reported increases in group (18.8 %) and individual (35.9 %) densities of the Critically Endangered yellow-tailed woolly monkey (*Lagothrix flavicauda*) as well as a reduction in deforestation rates after 5 years of informal conservation efforts by the Yambrasbamba community (Shanee and Shanee 2015). The same study also reported that after signing agreements to control hunting and deforestation in an ~80,000 ha area surrounding a 7174 ha Conservation Concession, villagers reported that the Endangered white-bellied spider monkey (*Ateles belzebuth*), which until recently were only found 4–5 h walk from villages, can now be found very near agricultural fields just 1 h walk from villages following 5 years of voluntary hunting controls (Shanee and Shanee 2015).

However, initiatives of this type are largely informal and therefore have no legal power against national and regional development plans such as mining and roads. They also struggle to control the constant in-migration of settlers to informally protected areas. The informality of these initiatives often leads to them being less respected by surrounding communities and, in the long term, even by the initiators themselves. A man in Yambrasbamba, Amazonas, complained that he wanted to conserve his forest but his neighbor often trespassed to hunt primates without his permission. In a meeting in Vista Alegre, a local man criticized local authorities for not respecting their own initiatives: "The authorities of the villages announce intangible zones, but after a few years they start dividing these areas between whoever wants them. Then they decide to conserve new areas."

Again, like in all other types of conservation initiatives, the individuals that promote them often find themselves threatened by litigation or violence, both if they are protecting lands and wildlife against private invaders or large extractive industry. Ronda leaders are often denounced to the public prosecutors by the people they have punished, opening legal processes that, because of the inefficiency of the justice system, may take years to be resolved. People fighting against mining, petrol or

palm oil companies find themselves with even greater legal problem, often with false accusations. Edwin Chota, an indigenous leader, was murdered in 2014 together with three of his co-protesters who were fighting against illegal loggers invading their ancestral territory (Global Witness 2014).

Discussion

Many of Peru's primates are under severe threat of extinction and current conservation efforts are far from sufficient to offset the mounting pressures they face. This is especially true for the endemic, altitude restricted primates (Shanee 2012a, Shanee, S. this volume, Shanee et al. 2011b; Shanee and Shanee 2014; Shanee et al. 2014a). Although national laws offer protection to threatened species and forests, legal loopholes, as well as impoverished, untrained authorities, mean that the laws' impact "on the ground" is severely reduced and the system's corruption and ineffectiveness, results of complex legal and institutional frameworks, not only allow but also encourage black markets (Smith et al. 2006; Shanee 2012a, b). This confusion and the overlap of responsibilities regarding environmental issues between different government offices is, at least in part, a symptom of Peru's incomplete decentralization process, leading to the neglect of responsibilities (Dietsche et al. 2007; Ravikumar et al. 2013). These complexities are illustrated by the institutional structures created, allowing different processes to advance simultaneously in different directions, resulting in superficial conservation initiatives such as protected areas with petrol concessions inside or without park guards. This leaves wildlife authorities without resources to carry out investigations or confiscations.

Fortunately, there are individual agents who manage to operate under these conditions. Brockington and Duffy (2010) refer to this phenomenon of devoted people found within the neoliberal conservation system:

> "If there is a conservation proletariat then it is a tiny group of eager volunteers sacrificing time or underpaid staff forgoing better salaries elsewhere to serve a cause. These are social relations that are not well characterised by capitalist exploitation…. The volunteers and employees of the conservation movement are primarily motivated by their desire to make the world a better place" (Brockington and Duffy 2010).

Igoe et al. (2010) propose a theoretical framework to understand current conservation trends. They use Debord's (1995/1967) concept of Spectacle, where social life is replaced by images, as a result of influence from government, capitalism, and mass media. The spectacle promotes continuous consumption of commodities as the justification for people's existence, making people intellectually passive, validates existing ruling systems, and gives complex, conflicted situations a false appearance of unity. Igoe et al. (2010) compare Debord's Spectacle to the predominant current conservation discourses which conceal the contradictions and challenges of conservation interventions, presenting images of phenomenal successes which ordinary people can join only by consuming

certain commodities such as T-shirts, mugs, or adopt a hectare schemes. This framework can be applied to the situation of Peru where governmental initiatives are deliberately ambiguous and superficial with little direct benefit to the survival of primates and other wildlife, but with much advertising and public relations. Local people's recognition of the pseudo participation and ineffectiveness of official conservation agents set them in search of their own ways to effectively execute these same agendas. These local actors and devoted individuals inside the governmental system which push governmental initiatives towards increased efficiency on the ground, thus making conservation paradigms in Peru more effective in protecting primates. However, these people must face excessive bureaucracy, severe pressure from inside and outside their own institution/society and risk to their lives, while receiving very little or no support and protection from the government or other institutions. It was recently recognized that Peru is the fourth most dangerous country in the world for conservationists, mainly due to the government's continual neglect of environmental conflicts (Global Witness 2014). Furthermore, law, no. 30151, was promulgated in 2014 granting legal immunity to security personnel who injure or kill environmental protesters. Therefore, it should be noted that in many cases their success in administrating efficient conservation is in spite of national governmental agendas and not because of them.

Igoe et al. (2010) believe that ethnographic research is essential to the understanding of the production and the possible transformation of current conservation trends. They also emphasize that people and processes that are excluded from mainstream conservation decision-making by choice or by segregation have the potential to contradict the dominating ideologies, but are constantly muted, disregarded, or degraded by armies of experts and groups of economic interest (Igoe et al. 2010).

Existing international, academic literature seldom describes small scale, low budget community run conservation projects (Horwich and Lyon 2007; Horwich et al. 2011). Even more so, conservation programs where rural dwellers are not passive respondents to external conservation agents are active proponents and executers of their own conservation initiatives. They also struggle against a system of which they are part of in order to implement real change.

In answer to Igoe et al.'s critique and the gap in the literature, this article, using ethnographic methods, carefully examined the case study of Peru, its primates and the Tropical Andes Hotspot as well as the diverse efforts to protect these global conservation priorities. Ethnography is designed to describe cultures and societies as well as to understand the sociocultural problems in communities or institutions and to use this research to positively change identified problems (LeCompte and Schensul 1999). Results of ethnographic studies, recognized scientifically, can become a base of evidence for drawing public and decision maker's attention to specific problems and possible solutions. Using this new angle and a novel way of framing the problem has the potential to establish new policy guidelines (Hess 1999).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Governmental initiatives, as described in this chapter, are often much bigger in physical size and in budget than locally run initiatives, but their top down nature limits their effectiveness on the ground. Locally run, grassroots initiatives are more socially adequate and are entirely focused on ground level implementation. However, their relatively small size and the lack of legal basis for informal initiatives such as internal hunting and deforestation control and the ARCAs put their sustainability at risk.

A tremendous amount of work is urgently needed in Peru in order to secure the future of its forests and primates. An amalgam of contradicting agendas, power struggles, superficial-spectacular solutions, and prejudices towards rural populations hinder the efficiency of conservation interventions in Peru. Actions to reduce corruption in state authorities and more transparency in conservation agencies are urgently needed.

Devoted individuals were recognized in this chapter as one of the main forces that turn ambiguous conservation agendas into conservation actions, which is likely the case in many other conservation settings around the globe. I recommend that whenever efficiency on conservation is desired, such individuals should be identified and supported. This support should probably not be monetary, to avoid corruption and dependency, but should ensure that these individuals receive recognition, equipment, information, and encouragement to be able to function within extremely limiting systems. The same is true in the case of local actors who are willing to invest their time and resources in the social and environmental improvement of their communities. This chapter shows that these individuals are under extreme social, economic, and legal pressures. Efforts should be made to compensate for these pressures through different means of non-monetary support.

Informal conservation initiatives as described above are rarely promoted by conservation agencies in Peru but were identified in this study as of high value for primate conservation and socially applicable. Rural environmental educators and representatives of grassroots movements such as the Ronda Campesina often complained that they do not get the support needed to transmit conservation agendas or internally control resource use. Usually, low cost, elementary requests were raised. These included updated ecological or legal information, simple equipment and help printing posters that they themselves had designed. Attentive, open door approaches can allow conservation agents to have a real impact with minimal economic investment. I challenge conservation practitioners to be far more attentive and responsive to the requests and requirements of local communities, providing them with real opportunities to conserve their own environment.

The methodology used in this chapter requires long-term involvement in the studied population and Sisyphean collection of data, and therefore it is not often used in conservation literature. However, it can be the key to understanding conservation problems worldwide. I have many reasons to believe that Peru is not an exception and the same challenges conservation initiators confront are similar in

many of primate habitat countries around the world. This chapter describes an example of a country in which local and governmental conservationists, who try to protect wild and endangered primate populations in the twenty-first century, do not enjoy any of the great advances in technology available globally, nor the growing funds that are channelled into mainstream conservation in recent years, but however struggle with the most basic deficiencies and with insincere and limiting international and national agendas.

I call on academics anthropologists and scholars of conservation to use ethnographic studies to describe and assess the shortfalls and successes of local initiatives and devoted employees over the long term. With proper feedback to the initiating groups, this could help them greatly improve their interventions. Publishing in academic and popular journals will inform conservation practitioners and the general public about the potential of locally run conservation, and devoted individuals, a potential that might be deliberately obscured by mainstream conservation institutions. An informed public has the potential to provide funding to small, locally run projects as well as encouraging highly biodiverse countries to simplify the conservation policy processes. This would give local people equal opportunities to lead conservation initiatives and projects whilst insisting that international donation money be channelled to authorities in charge of on the ground implementation.

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