

University of Tartu
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Institute of Cultural Research

Robertho Miguel Paredes Coral

A photo essay and Amazonian perspectivism
Images from Madre de Dios

Master's Project

Supervisors: Daina Pupkevičiūtė, Carlo Cubero

Tartu 2024

Table of Contents

Table of images	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Chapter 1. The reality of the Madre de Dios region in the Peruvian Amazon.....	7
Chapter 2. Theoretical framework	9
2.1. Amerindian perspectivism	9
2.2. The Amazonian perspectivism	12
2.3. The photography in the Amazon.....	14
Chapter 3. Methods used.....	20
3.1. Autoethnography and photography.....	20
3.2. Interviews.....	23
3.3. Talking circles:.....	25
Chapter 4. Execution of the photo-essay	28
4.1. The process of making the photo-essay: Monte Alto.....	29
4.2. Ethical considerations	32
Conclusion	33
References.....	35
Resümee.....	37
Resumen.....	38

Table of images

Figure 1 Map of Madre de Dios in the peruvian Amazon. Available from: Google Maps.....	5
Figure 2 Comando Matico. Indigenous initiative that complement Western medicine to face the COVID-19 in the Peruvian Amazon Photo: Facebook	14
Figure 3 República peruana book 1900 pg 121. Biblioteca nacional del Peru	16
Figure 4 Charles Kroehle 867 - 1902, Fotograf, Shipibo, Rio Ucayali, 1888	18
Figure 5 Puerto Maldonado the capital of Madre de Dios.....	20
Figure 6 "Conversation with Ronald while rowing on the Tambopata River."	25
Figure 7 Talking circle with my participants	26
Figure 8 Images from the photo-essay.....	30

Acknowledgements

For my parents, Miguel and Nancy, and my sister Lili, thank you for making this dream possible, for supporting me in everything since I left my beloved forest. Thank you for being that support that I know will always be there.

For Daina and Carlo, for allowing those scattered ideas to find a path.

For Christiana, for her encouragement in continuing this project.

To Professor Elo Hanna, without your continuous feedback, this project would not have been possible. Thank you for having the answers I needed.

For the Amazonians, this is yours and mine, but it is more yours, because if I had not stood on your shoulders, I would never have been able to see further. Thank you for allowing me to tell our story.

For God, because in every project He will always be Ebenezer.

Introduction

This master's project explores the representation of Amazonian peoples from the Madre de Dios region of Peru and their identities through a photo essay (<https://roberthoparedes.site/>). It investigates how images can represent the Amazonians, focusing on the intricate relationship between these communities and their natural environment. The primary goal is to allow Amazonian peoples to create their narratives and histories. As an Amazonian photographer, I expect to contribute by reflecting on the natural and spontaneous connection between the Amazonian communities and their environment.

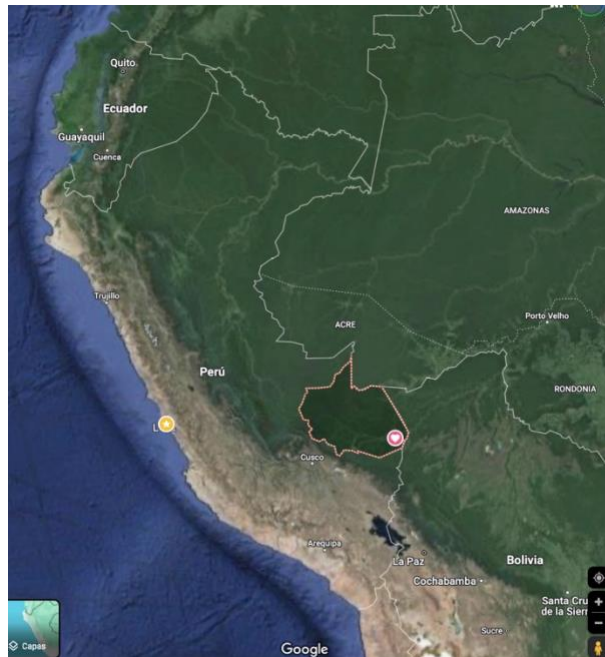


Figure 1 Map of Madre de Dios in the peruvian Amazon. Available from: Google Maps

My motivation comes from my background and extensive experience within the Amazonian region of Madre de Dios. As an Amazonian, my life has been deeply intertwined with the forest, not just environmentally, but as a central element of my cultural and spiritual identity. Living in the Amazon, I learned the connections between the forest and its inhabitants. This includes understanding the changes in the ecosystem, which sometimes are not apparent to an outsider's gaze but signify profound changes in our culture.

The photo-essay is made in collaboration directly as a photographer with the participants to offer an alternative visual imaginary of the Amazon. Theoretical frameworks from

perspectivism and the roles of photography in history aim to highlight how the representation of Amazonians can contribute to make Amazonian history visible.

The project is driven by the following research questions:

How are photographic images relevant in representing the Amazonian people and contributing to the local and global understanding and preservation of Amazonian territories and cultures?

In what ways can a photo essay act as a tool to preserve Amazonian culture and address environmental concerns, and also reflect and communicate the local Amazonian perspectivism in Madre de Dios?

I employ methodology centered on creating a photo-essay of the Amazonian people. This approach is based on the theoretical frameworks of indigenous and Amazonian perspectivism, as well as the role of photography in the Amazon, which guide the interpretation and representation of the images. I argue that photographs from the Amazon, can play an important role in highlighting the local relationship with the forest and preserving cultural identities through visual representations.

The written component of the project consists of four chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the unique biodiversity of the Madre de Dios region, in the Peruvian Amazon, and examine the environmental and cultural issues caused by illegal mining activities. In Chapter 2, I argue how relevant is to understand the Amazon from the Amazonian perspectivism. In chapter 3, I introduce the ethnographic methods used to do my photo-essay. Finally in chapter 4, I present the photo-essay and as the final result of my master's project.

Chapter 1. The reality of the Madre de Dios region in the Peruvian Amazon

The Amazon is a place with vast biodiversity, and many of the species are unique to the region. Additionally, Amazonian communities' traditional knowledge and sustainable practices offer invaluable insights that can inform global efforts to address environmental challenges.

An example of this place is Madre de Dios, a region in the Amazon declared by the 1994 Law N°26311 of the Peruvian Congress as the “Capital of Biodiversity” (Congreso de la República, 1994). Situated within Madre de Dios, critical natural areas include the Tambopata National Reserve, Bahuaja Sonene National Park, Alto Purús National Park, Manu National Park, Amarakaeri Communal Reserve, Purús Communal Reserve, and private conservation territories which have been founded by tourism initiatives or environmental management projects. These places have been important to protect the forest, its flora and fauna and also the people living there. It might seem that the majority of the Madre de Dios territory is protected; however, places outside these protected territories are in danger by informal development initiatives that cause deforestation and contaminate rivers and lakes. These actions pose danger to Amazonian communities.

One of the activities that is highly destructive on the Amazon is illegal mining, which generates immense profits for those who extract the gold. According to Peruvian sociologist Lenin Valencia, in Madre de Dios the situation is comparable to the "Gold Fever" of the United States (Valencia Arroyo, 2014, p.9). The exploitation of natural resources has long been a global concern, increasingly affected in the 20th century by the advance of technology. In Madre de Dios, Peru, extensive gold mining activities began escalating at the beginning of the 2000s, it also increased by the construction of the Interoceanic Road that connects Brazil and Peru. Since 2005, the impact of these activities has been visibly negative to Amazonian communities, applying significant pressure on the resources of Amazonian territories (Valencia Arroyo, 2014, p.18)

Following the global economic crisis of 2008, the demand for gold and the increase in its price led to a surge of informal gold miners in Madre de Dios. The Peruvian government created new legislation to protect this region. However, their efforts were insignificant in a place where

the law is often not obeyed, and the mafias are the ones in charge. As Moore noted, decision-makers' lack of understanding of the socio-environmental dynamics has led to criticism of the Peruvian government's approach (Moore 2018, p. 202.). The situation in Madre de Dios exemplifies the consequences of legislating without considering local context. As a local from Madre de Dios, I have seen how the major decision about the Amazon does not consider local people; in that case, the Peruvian government should reconsider its strategy and involve the local population to aim to understand the environment.

Mining also affects Amazonians and alters traditional practices, ways of life, and the relationship with the land. Since the 2000s, illegal mining has increased the deforestation, making it crucial to understand that this devastation is not only physical but cultural, affecting the heritage and survival of Amazonian peoples. The invasion of land for extracting the gold displaces entire communities, forcing them to abandon their sacred and ancestral places and cultural practices that have been passed down for generations; moreover, according to Chowdhury et al. (2024, para. 8) this extractive gold mining activities “intensify chemical contamination, acid mine drainage, and habitat destruction causing health risks to aquatic ecosystems and humans. These risks include spreading waterborne diseases such as diarrhea and cholera, heavy metal poisoning from mercury, lead, and arsenic, skin conditions, and limited access to clean water”. In Madre de Dios, most of the fishes have been raised in fish farms and those from the rivers probably have mercury contamination. Therefore, traditional practices such as hunting, agriculture, and medicinal plants are disappearing or being modified due to illegal mining activities. Therefore, it is crucial to understand that the devastation in Madre de Dios is both environmental and cultural.

Preserving Amazonian land and cultures is about safeguarding the ecological balance for our “casa común,” which translates to English as the common house, the only house of humanity. As Chowdhury et al. (2024, para. 8) noted, “the ongoing climate crisis in the Amazon is likely to impact major social determinants of health such as migration, economic stability, education, safety, and availability of local traditional medicine.” In the face of climate crisis, the knowledge of Amazonian communities could guide effective, inclusive solutions ensuring that Amazonian voices are now at the center of local and global environmental dialogues. The project aims to give visibility to these Amazonian people, whose knowledge can help to refine our approach to the environment.

Chapter 2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Amerindian perspectivism

In this chapter, I will explore the concept of Amerindian perspectivism of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, and its characteristics in the perception of the relationship between humans and animals, as well as the perception of nature-culture relationship.

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro introduced the concept of perspectivism to give visibility to the worldview of Amerindian peoples, particularly those in the Amazon. Perspectivism offers an alternative point of view to perceive reality, different from the traditional Western tradition.

Viveiros de Castro's perspectivism examines the Amazonian understanding of reality, challenging the conventional Western dichotomy between Nature and Culture.

In particular, as many anthropologists have already concluded (albeit for other reasons), the classic distinction between Nature and Culture cannot be used to describe domains internal to non-Western cosmologies without first undergoing a rigorous ethnographic critique (Viveiros de Castro, 1998: p. 469).

He illustrates how indigenous cosmologies often intertwine these concepts, undermining the Western tendency to categorize them separately. This assertion reflects the need for researchers to approach indigenous worldviews with sensitivity and respect, avoiding the imposition of Western frameworks.

From this framework, the indigenous relationship between humans and animals differs significantly from Westerns tradition. Humans and animals have humanity instead of animality. Humanity serves as a universal concept that goes beyond species distinctions. As Viveiros noted: “The original common condition of both humans and animals is not animality but rather humanity” (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p.472). Therefore, the common reference point for all beings in nature is humanity as a condition, not humans as a species. In this case, the animals and humans are not different from each other; this is different from the Western tradition, where humans and animals are different.

Amerindian perspectivism elevates the role of the body in defining life's experiences; it suggests that every being perceives the world as humans do, but from the position of their unique body existence. Viveiros de Castro argues that European ethnocentrism is based on doubt about whether different peoples have souls like their own, while Amerindian ethnocentrism is based on questioning whether the souls of others inhabit bodies like theirs (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 479). From the Amerindian perspectivism, animals are viewed no differently than humans, they are considered ex-human: "Humans are those who continue as they have always been: animals are ex- humans, not humans ex-animals"(Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 472). The proposal of Viveiros de Castro is not based on the notion that humans are better or superior to animals. Instead, he suggests that animals have lost their human conditions, which is why he calls them ex-humans.

The idea that Amerindian peoples have about nature differs significantly from the perspectives of Western tradition. The traditional Western worldview is based on dualism: body and soul, nature and culture, subject and object. These dualisms have shaped part of the understanding of the world. Eduardo Viveiros challenged the traditional western framework by stating: "My idea was to work with that classic vocabulary of the West, those classic dualisms: body and soul, nature and culture, subject and object, and to invert the metaphysical primacy that we are accustomed to giving to those positions" (Viveiro de Castro, 2013, p. 271). For Viveiros de Castro, Western tradition tends to see nature as singular, however he argues that the Amerindian perspectivism perceives multiplicity of natures. In this context, Viveiro de Castro argues on Amerindian perspectivism by stating:

In sum, animals are people or see themselves as persons. Such a notion is virtually always associated with the idea that the manifest form of each species is a mere envelope (a 'clothing') that conceals an internal human form, usually only visible to the eyes of the particular species or to certain trans-specific beings such as shamans (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 470).

Amerindian perspectivism provides an understanding that some entities in the forest possess a point of view. According to Viveiros de Castro, these are "those species which perform a key symbolic and practical role such as the great predators and the principal species of prey for humans" (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 471). This situation is visible in the Amerindian

communities, where people have learned these animals in the forest. In their communications, humans and nonhuman entities understand each other respectfully. By considering animal and other beings with this humanity, Amerindian peoples perceive themselves as just another part of the entities that inhabit their world, including other cultures and human-animal hybrids.

As mentioned earlier, one of the characteristics of perspectivism is how the concept of the relationship between nature and culture is shaped, Viveiros de Castro argues that in the Amazon, there are worlds where humans, animals, and spirits are entwined in a vibrant web of life, each with its unique cosmo. This vision challenges the traditional nature-culture dichotomy by proposing the concept of multinaturalism, which recognizes multiple natures that are experienced differently by diverse cultures:

All beings see (“represent”) the world in the same way - what changes is the world that they see. Animals impose the same categories and values on reality as humans do: their worlds, like ours, revolve around hunting and fishing, cooking and fermented drinks, cross-cousins and war, initiation rituals, shamans, chiefs, spirit (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 477).

Viveiros de Castro distinguishes between multinaturalism and multiculturalism, where the latter suggests a universal nature experienced differently through the lens of diverse cultures. However, multinaturalism is a perspective deeply rooted in Amerindian thought (Viveiros de Castro 1998: p. 470). According to this view, there is not just one nature but multiple natures, and multiple cultures interact with these various natures in unique ways. These natures are diverse and are shaped by different cultural influences.

Amerindian perspectivism emphasizes that the differences lie not just in perception but in physical and spiritual experience. For example, if everyone is seeking for a drink, it does not mean the same thing universally.

This complex understanding of the world is reflected in the lives of my participants, people from the Amazon, including my father. They embody this framework through their lived experiences and cultural teachings from the Amazon. Amerindian perspectivism encourages a more inclusive approach to environmental policies that respect, value, and incorporate the perspectives of all life forms.

The analysis presented on Amerindian perspectivism and its implications for how nature in the Amazon is perceived by its inhabitants enters a new era with the initial encounters between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. In the following chapter, I will address the topic of Amazonian perspectivism and how it has been shaped from the roots of Amerindian perspectivism.

2.2. The Amazonian perspectivism

The term "Amerindian" is not commonly used by people living in the Amazon. Instead, the term "Amazonian" is widely used. This terminology originated from the people themselves and has been adopted by local governments, environmental groups, and school associations over decades.

In his work, José Uriel García, a researcher and essayist from Cuzco, Peru, developed the concept of the "new indio" to rethink the indigenous identity of the Andes beyond the Inca reference. I argue that this concept can be applied to the "Amazonians". This transition from the "new indio" concept to the Amazonian context represents a new paradigm in the complexity of contemporary indigenous experiences in the Amazon.

García asserts that indigenous peoples are paradoxically seen as mixed-race despite their pure bloodlines, emphasizing that they remain the new peoples of America, as ancient as they are, just as they were before the Incas. García suggests that while the flow of blood remains the same, the spirit of these peoples has somehow been renewed (García, 2011, p.119). This spirit of renovation has been influenced by the encounter of non-indigenous people in the Amazon.

Over time, the Amazonians have assimilated and adapted two realities that coexist within the Amazonian individual: the indigenous and non-indigenous world. This reality reflects the complex nature of Amazonian identity, where the traditional practices and belief are influenced and integrated with non-indigenous cultures, as a result, a unique and multifaceted cultural identity has been created.

Through my immersive experiences in the Amazon, I have come to understand the Amazonian identity. This term refers to a contemporary indigenous identity that has evolved from the

coexistence of non-indigenous and indigenous perspectivism. The Peruvian Amazon is a mix of cultures: indigenous communities, hunters, fishers, mestizo populations, and immigrant communities have lived there since colonial and republican times.

Many traditions and worldviews were silenced during the colonial and republican time. However, the history of interaction between Amazonian and Western people has produced a new identity. For García, this encounter represents "simply the era that begins a new spiritual rhythm in America, signifying the advent of a type of human that has not yet reached its fullness or unity. It is a protohistoric era, gestating a culture that, while still being indigenous, will be distinct" (García, 2011, p.152). The Amazonian represents these mentalities, which, despite being in opposition, coexist and incorporate elements from both traditions.

The indigenous peoples of today, who have returned to the primitiveness of the prehistoric ayllu, have escaped the Incan state and have assimilated and blended post- Incan customs with their own. They have acquired, or are increasingly acquiring, a different consciousness from the one that regulated their actions during the "inkario"¹(García, 2011, p.119).

This new identity incorporates both pre- and post-Inca practices into its traditions, highlighting the process of adaptation and resilience. By recognizing this process, we can better appreciate the diverse heritage of indigenous communities.

During my childhood and youth, I consumed indigenous medicine. Even when I traveled to Europe for the first time, I carried indigenous medicine in my luggage bag in case I needed it to feel better and healthier. To this day, I have natural medicine at home, which comes from my grandmother's indigenous recipes. Even during COVID-19, there was what was called a return to the land, where the use of natural medicine became widespread among the population. This included the preparation of a potion made from leaves called matico, a medicinal plant used by indigenous communities to combat COVID-19. This practice was not in contradiction with Western medicine; in fact, doctors suggested its use as a complementary treatment. Health establishments and local media encouraged this integration of natural and Western medicine.

¹ Inkairo: It was the time when the Incas were ruling in what is now Peru; during that period, their territory was called Tahuantinsuyo. This era began approximately in the year 1438 and ended in 1535

These examples illustrate how the Amazonian identity influences both personal and communal decisions, from health issues to ways of thinking about the environment. Consequently, Amazonian perspectivism adapts to the challenges of modern times to survive and thrive creatively, respecting others within the forest.



Figure 2 Comando Matico. Indigenous initiative that complement Western medicine to face the COVID-19 in the Peruvian Amazon Photo: Facebook

Overall, the Amazonian identity is a rich, evolving synthesis of diverse influences. The Amazonian identity is alive and constantly creating. It embodies the resilience and adaptability of the people, drawing from both traditional and contemporary elements to form a unique and multifaceted worldview. This resilience has its root in a dark period of Amazonian history.

2.3. The photography in the Amazon

The Rubber Era in Peru was an important period for the Amazon, spanning from the late 19th century into the early 20th century. Most of the companies working in the Madre de Dios region were from the United States and the United Kingdom. During this time, Nicolas John Madge, a historian and researcher, mentioned that “the treatment of indigenous people in Madre de Dios was slavery pure and simple”. He believed that there was a “regular slave market” in Madre de Dios and made frequent references to “carrerías” (Madge, 2023, p.131). My family

referred to this time as the era of barbarism, where indigenous people were treated worse than animals.

There is a story in my family that my father told me only once. One day, a young man around fourteen years old, was called by someone. The young man approached and saw that the person calling him was an indigenous man. The man said to the young man, "Por favor, desátame un poco estas sogas, que me aprietan," which means, "Please, loosen these ropes a little, they are too tight." The man had been punished and his hands and feet were tied so tightly that they caused him great pain. The fourteen years old loosened the rope a bit. This brutal and inhuman punishment was part of everyday life in the Amazon. As stated by Madge:

[T]he unfortunate Indians who act as [porters] are driven in the cruellest and most inhuman fashion, many dying on the road from weakness or fevers contracted in the lower country. The... collectors who accompany them flog them unmercifully (National Archives, 1911, as cited in Madge, 2024, p. 147).

In that period, the Amazon region became accessible and desirable because of the rubber boom for national governments. Angus Mitchell mentioned that Peru, Brazil, and Colombia's governments initiated strategies to occupy this land, and a "key instrument of the technology of conquest was photography" (Mitchell, 2022, p.16). The camera allowed photographers to produce images of this new vast territory as a place rich of resources. In that period, the images were created by outsiders.

In 1900, the Peruvian government published a book called "República Peruana 1905." It was a photo book with images from all over the republic. Peru, by that time, had been a republic for 79 years. The section on the Amazon showed images of indigenous people, who at that moment were not even considered Peruvians. They were photographed by government photographers and also by foreigners.

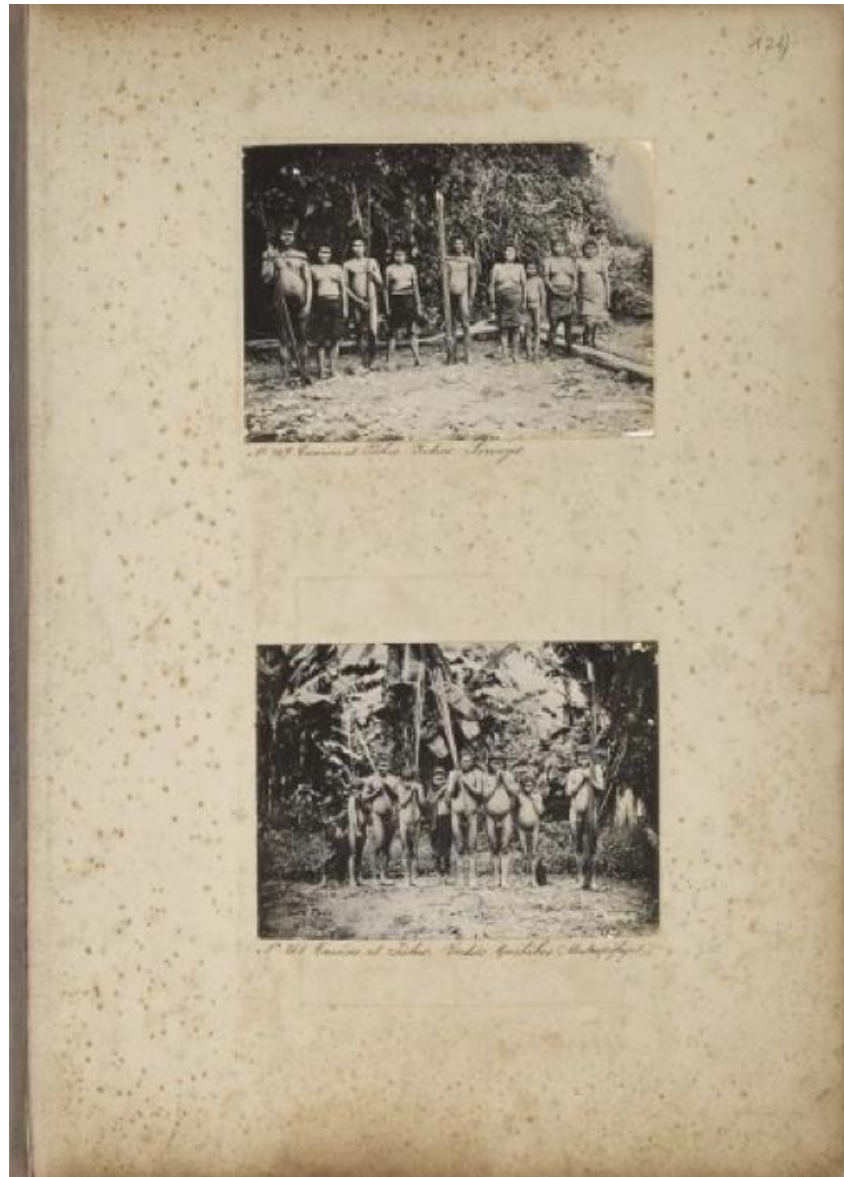


Figure 3 República peruana book 1900 pg 121. Biblioteca nacional del Peru

One one of the pages, the German photographer Charles Kroehle, presented two images of naked people posing for him. These images of the Amazon were re-edited as postcards and sold to Peruvian elites and foreigners to provide a glimpse of the Amazon. These postcards were the only images available that time. For Kummenls this became:

There is notable extent to which these ethnographic photographs constructed ethnicity and race in their intention to create and freeze rigid hierarchical categories. Such images were produced in situations with a clearly biased

distribution of power between those who took pictures and those who had to be content with their role as photographic subjects. (Kummenls, 2016, p.15).

Images shaped our understanding of people, in this case, indigenous people. The photographer's power acted as a tool to re-interpret and create hierarchies. In this case, the camera was not only a tool for documentation but also served as a tool that allowed the stereotyping of certain groups, who have little control over their own representation. Dorotinsky stated:

In this drive to see the faces of both their own people and others, drawing, engraving, lithography, and later photography facilitated the dissemination of knowledge about different human groups. On one hand, they allowed Europeans, North Americans, and the elites in colonized countries to imagine a world that was foreign and exotic (Dorotinsky, 2010, p.104).

These images became powerful in defining the "other," or, in this case, how they looked. This also allowed for a distinction between the non-indigenous world and the colonized one, creating a categorization, as Dorotinsky mentioned: "We can then speak of repertoires of images that served to lay the iconographic foundations of the imaginaries of otherness" (Dorotinsky, 2010, p.104). In the colonial context, these images served to dehumanize and objectify the photographed subjects, denying them agency and dignity.



Figure 4 Charles Kroehle 867 - 1902, Fotograf, Shipibo, Rio Ucayali, 1888

According to Dorotinsky, there were three routes to approach the photography of the Indio: Firstly, registration for social control, it was used to categorize individual, for i.e. prisoners. Secondly, commercial photography as consumer product, these photos often romanticize people. Thirdly, Photographic document for scientific study of indigenous people (Dorotinsky, 2010, p. 106). For many decades, the visual representation of the Amazonian people and their territory has been shaped by foreign imagination. The photographers were often foreigners, having their own goals and purposes; they had the power to frame and interpret those images

Similarly, Ingrid Kummenls discusses a “visual divide” that refers to the comprehensive structures of inequality that people who are categorized as indigenous face in this field: inequality is not merely inscribed in representations, but also the materiality and the social practices of audio-visual media such as in media training and the organization of work (Kummenls, 2016, p.165). For many years Amazonian people have experienced misrepresentation through the lens of the external gaze. The images made by outsiders have been used as a framing tool of the Amazon.

I argue that photography can now serve as a powerful tool for Amazonian people, who are actively fighting to preserve their identity and the Amazon Forest. By using photography, they can portray themselves and bring attention to their cause, raising awareness about the Amazonian community in the Madre de Dios region. Images have played a very important role in Amazonian culture as a means of transmitting knowledge. Historically, this has been done through body painting, handicrafts, and creating paintings.

For many years, the display of the Amazon was made by an outsider's gaze. This approach often focused on stereotypical images. The photo essay I propose intends to alter to shift that gaze. Rather than emphasizing the outsider's gaze, this work focuses on the rich diversity of Amazonian culture and heritage. By doing so, Amazonian photography will be repositioned as a tool to explore the lives of the inhabitants, their spiritual connections, and the importance of their natural environment, both locally and globally.

Chapter 3. Methods used

In this chapter the aim is to give an overview of the methods used in the execution of the practical component of my master project. In the summer of 2023, I travelled to Puerto Maldonado to conduct ethnographic fieldwork. Puerto Maldonado, my hometown, is in the heart of the Peruvian Amazon, it is the capital of Madre de Dios. The primary focus of the fieldwork was to explore the Amazonian perspectivism and examine how a photo essay can capture the lives of Amazonian people.

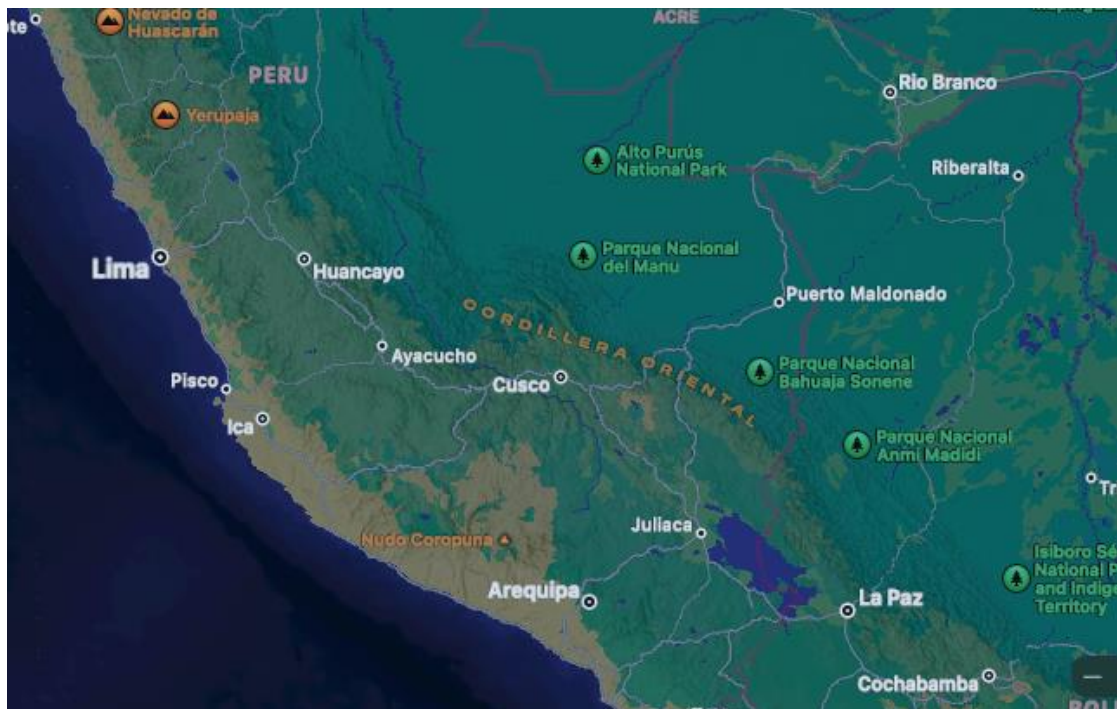


Figure 5 Puerto Maldonado the capital of Madre de Dios

3.1. Autoethnography and photography

My practice as an Amazonian photographer and video maker has allowed collaborating with Amazonian people in different ways. Some of my work was as an advisor for the local municipality of Puerto Maldonado, using a visual representation of Amazonian problems in social media. In 2019, I also participated in art exhibitions in Madrid, with my work about Amazonian cosmivision, and I won the XXVIII Award for Jovenes Creadores by the Madrid City Council for my photographic work titled "He sentido el clima herido y tengo idea de que no aprendemos," inspired by "Madre Selva" by Alfredo Perez Alencart. In 2020, I embarked

on a project to create a photo series called "soy de tierra caliente... no se video APA," a seven-minute presentation that captured the devastation of 100 hectares of primary forest in just seven minutes during a mega-fire in Madre de Dios in 2019.

Additionally, I directed *Anamei* in 2021, a video myth co-created with Yesica Patiachi from the Arakbut people. I am also a member of the Guardians Worldwide Network, where communities from around the world gather to discuss their issues and how they are trying to solve them. Established in August 2021, Guardians Worldwide Network is an international movement to accelerate climate action through indigenous and local community protection of forests and water systems. In 2023, I participated in an art exhibition in Lima, Peru, as a photographer to document the indigenous artistic group "Etochime."

In my master's project, I created a photo essay using autoethnography to offer a different perspective on Amazonian people. Küttel defines autoethnography as a "combination of autobiographical and ethnographic practices" (Küttel 2021, p. 57) and notes that "it usually brings the researcher's emotions and experiences to the fore"(Küttel 2021, p. 59). It is a profoundly transformative experience for both the researcher and their research. The researcher can open meaningful dialogue and understand complex issues by positioning himself in the research.

Küttel writes,"Autoethnography challenges the researcher to engage with questions of positionality and situatedness of knowledge (production)" (Küttel, 2021, p. 58), allowing researchers to critically examine their own biases and perspectives to enhance the authenticity of the research. While autoethnography mostly relies on written introspection, Küttel argues that photographs can serve as a powerful tool for deeper reflection. She states, "Photographs are taken in the field, and the written word is added later, blurring not just the binary of field and not-field, but also stressing how fieldwork is an intimate, personal business" (Küttel, 2021, p. 63). This combination allows for richer exploration, where visual and written narratives complement each other.

The photo essay acts as a method within autoethnography, where images aim to produce a more nuanced narrative. Over the past few years, my research has focused on the relationship between photography and Amazonian communities in Puerto Maldonado, Peru. I mainly

focused on people by taking portraits, but I've also captured personal moments and the landscape where I live.

In my fieldwork, the photographs were my way to revisit emotions and sensations. My fieldwork is deeply personal, and my photography experience is as necessary as my research experience. One particular image of my father captures a moment when he explains his life in the forest and how important it is to him. This image of my father explaining his history made me think about my position and my privilege in my research.

Autoethnography involves several reflections: how images become a powerful tool to explore Amazonian perspectivism, how I approach my photographic practices, including the methods I use to take the photos, the ways I distribute them, and the measures I take to safeguard them. It is also a method that opposes researcher practices that are considered invasive, as these practices often involve intruding into people's lives without consent or consideration of their interests.

Colonial research practices have treated cultures as objects of analysis rather than as communities with agency and their voice. Autoethnography also gives voice to communities that have been silenced for decades. Adams et al. argue that one of the reasons to do autoethnography is to:

1. To critique, make contributions to, and/or extend existing research and theory
2. To embrace vulnerability as a way to understand emotions and improve social life
3. To disrupt taboos, break silences, and reclaim lost and disregarded voices
4. To make research accessible to multiple audiences. (Adams et al., 2015, p.36).

The making of the photo essay as a method has facilitated a better understanding of my cultural context as an Amazonian. The photo essay provides agency to Amazonian communities and allows accessibility to a wider audience, sharing the photo essay via the internet, reaching millions of people in every corner of the planet. This approach aligns with many autoethnographers as Adams et al. stated:

Rather than producing esoteric, jargon-laden texts, many auto ethnographers recognize a need to speak also to non-academic audiences. They satisfy this need by writing and performing in engaging, creative ways. Such techniques make research more valuable because more than a select and trained few will read the work (Adams et al., 2015, p. 42)

The project embraces Amazonian perspectivism by integrating the cultural and spiritual values of the Amazonian people into every aspect of the work. This approach ensures respectful representation. During my fieldwork, I observed my participants in various rituals, which they emphasized as central to their culture. By incorporating these elements, I ensure that the photographic representation receives their approval.

Historically, external photographers have misrepresented the Amazonian people by perpetuating stereotypes. This photo essay aims to change that narrative, granting visual sovereignty to the Amazonian people. They directed how I photographed them, reclaiming their image from external biases. Instead of imposing an outsider's gaze, participants chose how I photographed them, highlighting their perspectivism and spiritual essence.

Amazonian perspectivism recognizes multiple natures and cultures, allowing for a multifaceted narrative that reflects the complexity of Amazonian life. As a researcher and a member of the Amazonian community, my dual role informs the project. This unique position enables me to bridge insider knowledge with the academic world, enriching the project with authentic insights. My reflections and experiences align with the participants' narratives, offering a holistic and nuanced view of Amazonian life.

By integrating these elements, the project challenges historical misrepresentations. It sets a precedent for future works, ensuring that the Amazonian people are depicted with the dignity and accuracy they deserve.

3.2. Interviews

I use interviews as a data collection tool to better understand the Amazonian cosmivision. The reason I chose this method is because "interviewing is one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings" (Fontana&Frey, 1994, p.

361). In the interview, one person is the interviewer, and the other is the interviewee. This research instrument allows us to understand the interviewee's position. It is a conversation where one person asks questions to obtain information from the participant. Learning about the other's perspective and their cosmovision is possible in these discussions.

For interviews, the dynamic of power relation is fundamental, Phatshwane states, “Dialogue, conversations and discussions can be loosely defined as mutual communication or talk between two or more people, which may generally be informal. Conversations can be characterised by their informal set-up. Hence, power relations are level, the listener and the talker are of the same power level, and they interact freely with one another as they exchange ideas and thoughts.” (Phatshwane, 2024, p.215). When the power relation between the researcher and the participants are equals, the participants are more likely to engage in honest dialogue.

For this reason, “The interviewer is instructed to be courteous, friendly, and pleasant” (Fontana&Frey, 1994, p. 369). For my fieldwork, I used semi-structured interviews, which are flexible and are “particularly (useful) when more than a few of the open-ended questions require follow-up queries” (Adams, 2015, p.493). The follow-up questions allow for gathering information that might not have been considered before the interview.

I conducted interviews with people who met the following criteria: they were either guardians, hunters, educators, or artists. They were from Puerto Maldonado City, were involved in environmental conservation in some capacity, maintained indigenous traditions in their daily practices, and valued the teachings of their ancestors. In my fieldwork, I used an indigenous approach as Pahtshawane notes, “Therefore, through the use of Indigenous methods in social movement research, we can witness scenarios where Indigenous people are speaking out freely from their own viewpoint” (Phatshwane, 2024, p. 219). These criteria were established to ensure that the interviewees shared their experiences freely.

Before traveling to Peru, I had identified potential participants but had not contacted them. Instead, I preferred to talk with them face-to-face. When I arrived in Puerto Maldonado, the capital of Madre de Dios, I visited my participants at their homes. After our initial meeting with my participants, we scheduled the time and location for the interview. It is important to remember that this was not an interrogation but a conversation. Phatshwane argues that a conversational method in indigenous research “would include 1. A connection to Indigenous

knowledge 2. A location within an Indigenous paradigm 3. A relational nature 4. A purpose, which would be mostly to decolonize research 5. Follows a specific Indigenous knowledge protocol 6. A flexible nature 7. Collaboration 8. Reflexivity” (Phatshwane, 2024, p.218).

Being Amazonian and knowing my participants from before created empathy, as they did not see me as a foreigner but as part of the group. This was confirmed with expressions like, “You know our cosmovision”. For example, after one interview, a participant invited me to breakfast at his home and continued talking while enjoying his family’s company.



Figure 6 "Conversation with Ronald while rowing on the Tambopata River."

My intention with the interview is to let them know that I am equal to them and have experience in the Amazon forest. Most of the places where I was with my participants were familiar places for them and me. I understand how important that specific place is for them; also, the idea of the interview is to let them know that their voices are relevant and essential.

3.3. Talking circles:

Talking circle is also known as a sharing circle and “is an open-ended method that invites story” (Kovach, 2009, p.124). Sharing circles has been practiced for indigenous people for

generations. Talking circles are relevant because align with the idea that “By recognizing and incorporating tribal cultural protocol and storytelling (Tachine et al., 2016, p. 278) is possible to get a better understanding and respect of tradition in the Amazon.

The decision to do a talking circle was made by my participant. The session was divided into three parts. The first part involved pigment preparation; during this phase, a community member began preparing the pigment while teaching his child about the importance and relevance of this practice. The second part consisted of forming a circle where, as they painted on their bodies, they began to speak in Arakbut, one of the indigenous languages in Madre de Dios. Although I could not understand their conversation then, at the end of the ceremony, they called me to join them. They shared with me the main topics of their conversation in Spanish.



Figure 7 Talking circle with my participants

These circles are vital for preserving and transmitting cultural memory, history, and spirituality. Integrating talking circles into research methodologies embodies the principles of respect, reciprocity, and community participation, ensuring that the voices of Amazonian people are central to the research process. By doing so, this practice honours the commitment to respect Amazonian protocols.

The topic of the talking circle was chosen by my participants, focusing on the importance of art in the Amazonian forest. They discussed how art serves as a tool for reclaiming Amazonian knowledge. This talking circle provided a vital platform for articulating key ideas in forest

conservation, highlighting the integral role of art in maintaining the cultural and ecological heritage of the Amazon.

One of the most impactful experiences of this talking circle was to hear directly from them about their experience, especially in their community, the Arakbut, one of the indigenous communities in my region. These talking circles serve as a symbol of resistance. This was not only a method but a declaration of Amazonian existence, it affirms identity and provides a voice to the community.

Chapter 4. Execution of the photo-essay

The photo essay can be accessed via the following link: <https://roberthoparedes.site/>

Based on the concept of Amazonian perspectivism as a way to understand the complexity of the forest in contemporary times and the reclamation of photography to refocus on using images of the Amazon created by those within the Amazon. The focus of my research on Amazonian perspectivism is how to use photography to visualize this perspectivism and how it can show that all beings in the forest are humans. I created a photo essay in which I took photos of Amazonian people and Amazonian beings. In this chapter, I describe the process of making the photo essay.

As mentioned earlier, I incorporated photography into my fieldwork, capturing portraits and landscapes. Most of the images were taken in and around my participants' homes, where they feel more familiar with the environment. Typically, they live in small houses surrounded by the forest, highlighting the geographical significance of their locations.

My research aims to increase Amazonian people's visibility. As a member of that community, one practical approach is directly involving Amazonians. As a local, my experience was unique because I was there not only as a community member but also as a researcher.

The participants were enthusiastic about the project, and we communicated in Spanish. Some of the participants spoke in indigenous languages in the talking circles. I missed parts of the conversation, but fortunately, a participant later explained the main topics discussed in Spanish. The reason I do not speak the Indigenous language is that my grandparents did not teach it to my parents to avoid bullying for their Amazonian heritage.

I relied on my equipment, the camera, and some flashes, which the community members allowed me to use; I explained to them the purpose of the research. Amazonian people are visual; after taking the photos, we reviewed them in case they needed to add or remove something. I remember that in one of my interviews, someone asked me about my life in Estonia, hoping that my research and photography would increase our recognition.

In the fieldwork, I took a lot of photos, and part of my agreement with the participants was to keep them informed about how I would use the images. We maintain constant communication through WhatsApp and share photos using WeTransfer.

4.1. The process of making the photo-essay: Monte Alto

Monte Alto is a name used by Amazonian people to refer to the “Deep Jungle,” and it is also the title of the photo essay. The photo essay aims to reveal the diversity of the Amazon, which often remains hidden from view and to demonstrate the connection between the forest and its people.

My collaboration with participants is the result of our conversation about the importance of connecting art with Amazonian culture in modern times. I discussed my photo essay with them, and they were eager to participate. My previous involvement with them, as a journalist, artist and as a member of the Amazonian community were the foundation for our collaboration.

For the photo sessions, I coordinated with them to discuss the project's goals, ensuring clarity and understanding of their crucial role in the process. Their input was invaluable in reflecting Amazonian perspectivism, and the photos were presented in a way that honored their representation.

The photography sessions were a blend of planned and spontaneous moments, deeply influenced by my participants' input. These photographs were filled with storytelling, laughter, and shared meals. After taking the photos, I always reviewed them with the participants. They had the opportunity to see the photos and decide whether they liked them. This practice ensured they were comfortable with their representation and could suggest changes if needed. Their feedback and comments were vital in making the photo essay a true reflection of their identity and Amazonian perspectivism. Each participant was deeply involved in the decision-making process. This approach helped ensure that the photo essay genuinely reflected their perspectivism and culture.

Amazonian people are the main subjects in the photo essay. I decided to capture portraits and landscapes of the Amazon. I chose 43 images and organized them into portraits, landscape/forest and animal photography. The elements of the portraits are a background; in

this case, most all the images have the forest as their background and a figure that is a human body. In some pictures, the background was visible because I took the photographs in the morning/afternoon; in others, it was impossible because the portrait was taken at night. In the portraits, I intended to place the subjects in the center of the frame. For the photographs, familiarity was fundamental. The participants know me and feel comfortable with me. These images focus on the people and their everyday activities.

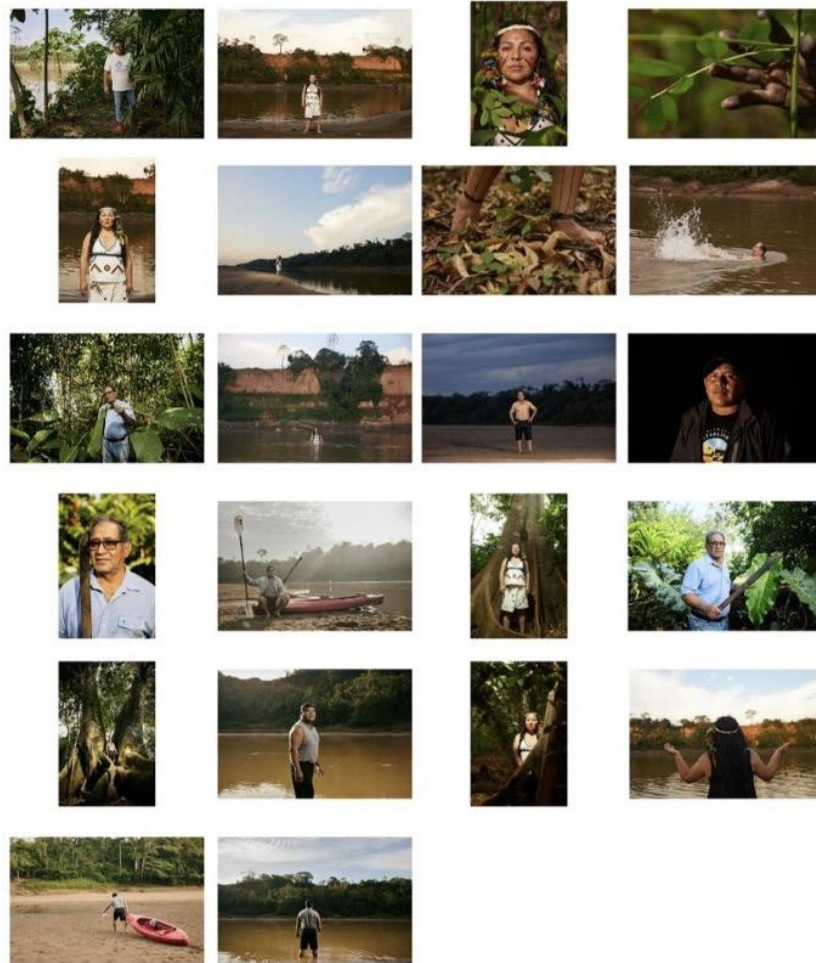


Figure 8 Images from the photo-essay

This photo essay reveals the faces of Amazonian people. The images showed the diversity of the forest, portraits in traditional clothing, and portraits with non-traditional clothing. After downloading the photos on the computer, I used Capture One, a software for photo editing, and Indesign, a software for making layouts; I started to place them in the program. These images reveal a place and a time. The Amazonians, who are in the photographs, became more prominent. They look directly at the viewer. They are no longer subjects without agency; they have decided how to pose and what to do in front of the camera.

The landscape and animal photographs in the photo essay represent the environment of the Amazon forest and the residence of my participants. They witness life in the forest, where human and non-human beings have coexisted for decades. The Amazon is not just a collection of trees or a physical space; it is a vibrant ecosystem where people live in a constant relationship with the environment.

There are three images from my journalism archive. One photo shows an ocelot, a wild feline native to America, looking directly at the viewer, representing that the forest is home to humans and a vivid environment with life. The other two images are from the Peruvian drone army, illustrating how distant the Peruvian government is from genuinely understanding the Amazon. The other two images are drone images from the Peruvian Air Force, facilitated by the government. As a Peruvian citizen, I can obtain these images by requesting them according to the Peruvian transparency law. These images also represent the forest affected by human intervention and how these activities are impacting the forest. The photo essay invites reflection on how our worldviews have been shaped by only one side of history and invites us to explore the other reality within the forest.

In the photo essay, I included parts of the dialogue from the book "Las tres mitades de Ino Moxo," which is translated to "The Three Halves of Ino Moxo" written by the Amazonian artist César Calvo. The book is about Manuel Córdova-Rios, who lived among indigenous people of the northern Amazon in Peru and became a curandero (vernacular healer). In the first pages of the book, there is a conversation between Ino Moxo and his disciple:

Ino Moxo enumerates the belongings of the air —‘it’s a long story, I already told you. If I told you everything, you wouldn’t believe me. You can never believe everything. You know? Never can you listen to everything...could you? No, I don’t think you could—and his head going to one side, bringing back his eyes—: just to give you an example, look at the jungle. If you start listening to everything that sounds in the jungle, what do you hear...? (Calvo, 2000, p.13)

Ino Moxo questioned the disciple about whether he could listen to the jungle. These phrases connect my images to the narrative of understanding the forest. He asked the disciple to look

into the forest to listen to it. It implies that the jungle represents a complex environment of life and stories, which is why it is relevant to look into the Amazonians to try to grasp the complexity of the Amazon.

The photo essay ends with a phrase from the same dialogue:

Memory is more, it is a lot, you know? True memory also preserves what is yet to come. And even what will never come, it also preserves that. Imagine that. Just imagine. Who will be able to hear it all, tell me? Who will be able to hear it all at once and believe it?... (Calvo, 2000, p.19)

Finally, the photo essay "Monte Alto" is available on the internet, leveraging this platform to empower Amazonian people and disseminate the Amazonian imagination. It serves as a resource for learning about the Amazonian people and has the potential to reach millions. This is why I chose to publish the photo essay on the website.

The website is available in Spanish for the Amazonian community of Madre de Dios, where the fieldwork was conducted, and where all the participants are from. This ensures accessibility and engagement for local communities. It is also available in English for other visitors, broadening the reach and impact of the project.

4.2. Ethical considerations

Every photograph is taken with a deep awareness of the power dynamics at play in the act of visual representation. Conscious efforts are made to ensure that the images do not perpetuate stereotypes or exoticize their subjects but instead portray the complexity and dignity of Amazonian lives and landscapes. This includes direct communication with my participants about how they wish to be represented, which provides a richer understanding of each photograph's significance within the Amazonian life and cosmivision. This ensures that the project is not just about documenting Amazonian realities but about creating a platform for dialogue, learning, and mutual respect.

Conclusion

Photographic images serve as a powerful tool in representing the Amazonian people, playing a crucial role in bridging the understanding between the forest inhabitants and the wider world. These visual representations not only foster a deeper appreciation for the culture and significance of Amazonian communities but also contribute to the global effort in understanding and preserving Amazonian territories and cultures.

In addressing the first question of how photographic images are relevant in representing the Amazonian people and contributing to the local and global understanding and preservation of Amazonian territories and cultures, it can be noted that photographic images play a crucial role. They help bridge the gap in understanding the forest and contribute to the appreciation of the culture's importance. The initial questions involve the people from the Amazon, their narratives, and their environment. Through the photo essay, these ideas are effectively represented. To achieve this, I examined the use of photography as a tool for representation and how it relates to Amazonian perspectivism.

The second question was about the ways a photo essay can act as a tool to preserve Amazonian culture and address environmental concerns, and how it can reflect and communicate the local Amazonian perspectivism in Madre de Dios. A photo essay can preserve important aspects of Amazonian culture by building a rich visual narrative based on Amazonian perspectivism, highlighting the many complex realities that exist in the Amazon.

This project can encourage an understanding that the Amazon can lead to a transformation in society regarding how we view the forest and include Amazonian perspectivism in ecological dialogues. The intention of his photo essay is to benefit the wider community rather than just a person. This research has opened various opportunities for dissemination and sharing with others both in the Peruvian Amazon and abroad.

This project has allowed me to reaffirm my identity as an Amazonian. I take pride in that. For centuries, my ancestors were censored and applied self-censorship because they did not want to be considered less than human. However, thanks to their preserving traditions indoors, I am

here doing a project about them and for them. All of them are part of me. This project contributes to a broader discourse on the importance of Amazonian representation in images and calls for a more inclusive approach to Amazonian wisdom.

In summary, photographic images are essential in representing the Amazonian people; they bridge the gaps in understanding our culture and environment. Using this photo essay, I want to highlight Amazonian perspectivism, creating a visual narrative that captures the diversity of the forest. This photo-essay preserves the cultural aspect and incorporates the Amazonian voice to understand ecological concerns. The project reinforces my Amazonian identity and recognizes the importance of Amazonian communities in understanding the forest.

References

Adams, T. E., Holman Jones, S., & Ellis, C. (2015). *Autoethnography*. Oxford University Press.

Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. In H. P. Hatry, K. E. Newcomer, & J. S. Wholey (Eds.), *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* (4th ed., pp. 492–505). Wiley Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19>

Calvo, C. (2000). *Las tres mitades de Ino Moxo: y otros brujos de la Amazonia*. Grupo Editorial Peisa.

Chowdhury, R., Talukder, B., Basta, P. C., Olivero-Verbel, J., Polson-Edwards, K., Galvao, L., & Espinal, C. (2024). Saving the Amazon in South America by a regional approach on climate change: The need to consider the health perspective. *The Lancet Global Health*, *12*(6), e913–e915. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(24\)00125-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(24)00125-6)

Congreso de la República del Perú. (1994). Ley N.º 26311: Declaran Capital de la Biodiversidad del Perú al departamento de Madre de Dios. <https://www.leyes.congreso.gob.pe/Documentos/Leyes/26311.pdf>

Dorotinsky, D. (2010). La fotografía etnográfica en México en el siglo XIX y los primeros años del siglo XX. In I. Morales (Ed.), *El indígena en el imaginario iconográfico* (pp. 103–136). México, D.F.: PNUD, Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (1994). Interviewing: The art of science. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 361–376). Sage Publications.

García, J. U. (2011). *El nuevo indio*. Fondo Editorial de la UIGV.

Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*. University of Toronto Press.

Kummels, I. (2016). Unexpected memories. In I. Kummels & G. Cánepa Koch (Eds.), *Photography in Latin America: Images and identities across time and space* (pp. 165–194). transcript Verlag.

- Küttel, N. M. (2021). Autoethnography and photo-essay. In R. Kogler & J. Wintzer (Eds.), *Raum und Bild - Strategien visueller raumbezogener Forschung* (pp. 57–67). Springer Berlin Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-61965-0_5
- Madge, N. J. (2023). El Tambopata Infernal. Participación británica en la esclavitud del siglo XX en Perú y Bolivia. *Revista de Historia de América* 165, 127–163. Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia.
- Mitchell, A. (2022). *Secrets from Putumayo: Dismantling colonial hierarchies during the Amazon rubber boom*. In L. P. Z. Izarra & M. Bolfarine (Eds.), University of São Paulo.
- Moore, T. (2018). La deforestación en Madre de Dios y sus implicancias para los pueblos originarios. In A. Chirif (Ed.), *Deforestación: En tiempos de cambio climático* (pp. 195–222).
- Phatshwane, K. (2024). The art of talks and conversations in Indigenous research: Decolonising interview methods. In L. Cox, A. Szolucha, A. A. Lozano, & S. Chattopadhyay (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods and Applications for Social Movements* (pp. 214–229). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803922027.00023>
- Tachine, A. R., Bird, E. Y., & Cabrera, N. L. (2016). Sharing circles. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 9(3), 277–295. <https://doi.org/10.1525/irqr.2016.9.3.277>
- Valencia Arroyo, L. (2014). *Madre de Dios: ¿Podemos evitar la tragedia?* Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental. Lima: SPDA
- Viveiros de Castro, E. (1998). Cosmological deixis and Amerindian perspectivism. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 4(3), 469–488. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3034157>
- Viveiros de Castro, E. (2013). *La mirada del jaguar: Introducción al perspectivismo amerindio. Entrevistas*. Tinta Limón Ediciones.

Resümee

Monte Alto: fotoessee ja Amazonase perspektivism. Pildid Madre de Diosest

See magistripjekt uurib fotograafia rolli Peruu Amazonase kogukondades Madre de Diose piirkonnas, rõhutades visuaalsete narratiivide olulist rolli Amazonase perspektivismi esindamisel ja säilitamisel. Fotoessee kaudu süüvib see uurimus Amazonase rahvaste vaatenurka oma metsale, nende vaimsesse sidemesse sellega ning nende võitlustesse kliimamuutustega ja kultuurilise säilimise nimel.

Teoreetiline raamistik põhineb Eduardo Viveiros de Castro perspektivismi ja multinaturalismi teooriatel koos Amazonase perspektivismiga. Selle eesmärk on nihutada narratiivi kõrvalseisja pilgust esitluseni, mis tuleneb Amazonase rahvaste kogemustest ja maailmavaatest. See projekt ühendab Amazonase teadmised kaasaegsete visuaalsete dokumenteerimise tehnikatega, hõlbustades kogukondade oma elu ja suhte esindamist metsaga.

See projekt annab panuse metodoloogilisse kirjandusse piltide tõhususe kohta keskkonna- ja kultuurikaitstes ning annab Amazonase rahvastele võimaluse kasutada visuaalseid narratiive aktivismi ja mälu säilitamise vahendina. Pakkudes uut visuaalset narratiivi, mis on välja töötatud nii isiklikest kui ka Amazonase kogemustest lähtuvalt, püüab projekt anda kriitilise panuse inimese ja looduse suhete diskursusse globaalsete ökoloogiliste kriiside kontekstis.

See uurimus püüab anda olulise panuse keskkonnauuringute, kultuuri- ja päranditeaduste ning visuaalsete kunstide valdkondadesse, pakkudes põhjalikku uurimist Amazonase eluviisist ja selle seotusest tänapäevaste keskkonnaprobleemidega.

Resumen

Monte Alto: un ensayo fotográfico y el perspectivismo amazónico. Imágenes de Madre de Dios

Este proyecto de maestría explora el papel de la fotografía en las comunidades amazónicas de la región de Madre de Dios en Perú, enfatizando el rol crítico de las narrativas visuales en la representación y preservación del perspectivismo amazónico. A través de un ensayo fotográfico, esta investigación profundiza en las perspectivas de los pueblos amazónicos sobre su bosque, su conexión espiritual con él y sus luchas con el cambio climático y la preservación cultural.

El marco teórico se basa en las teorías del perspectivismo y multinaturalismo articuladas por Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, junto con el perspectivismo amazónico. Su objetivo es cambiar la narrativa de una mirada externa a una representación que proviene de las experiencias y cosmovisión de los pueblos amazónicos. Este proyecto integra el conocimiento amazónico con técnicas contemporáneas de documentación visual, facilitando la representación de las comunidades de sus vidas y relación con el bosque.

Este proyecto contribuye a la literatura metodológica sobre la eficacia de las imágenes en la preservación ambiental y cultural y empodera a los pueblos amazónicos para utilizar las narrativas visuales como herramientas para el activismo y la preservación de la memoria. Al proporcionar una nueva narrativa visual desarrollada tanto desde lo personal como basada en experiencias amazónicas, el proyecto busca contribuir críticamente al discurso sobre las relaciones humano- naturaleza en el contexto de las crisis ecológicas globales.

Esta investigación aspira a contribuir significativamente a los campos de los estudios ambientales, estudios culturales y patrimoniales, y artes visuales al ofrecer una exploración en profundidad del modo de vida amazónico y su intersección con los problemas ambientales contemporáneo.

Non-exclusive licence to reproduce the thesis and make the thesis public

I, Robertho Miguel Paredes Coral,

1. 1. grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to reproduce, for the purpose of preservation, including for adding to the DSpace digital archives until the expiry of the term of copyright, my thesis

A photo essay and Amazonian perspectivism. Images from Madre de Dios

supervised by Daina Pupkevičiūtė, Carlo Cubero

2. I grant the University of Tartu a permit to make the thesis specified in point 1 available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives, under the Creative Commons licence CC BY NC ND 4.0, which allows, by giving appropriate credit to the author, to reproduce, distribute the work and communicate it to the public, and prohibits the creation of derivative works and any commercial use of the work until the expiry of the term of copyright.
3. I am aware of the fact that the author retains the rights specified in points 1 and 2.
4. I confirm that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe other persons' intellectual property rights or rights arising from the personal data protection legislation.

Robertho Miguel Paredes Coral
27/05/2024