

From Andes to Amazon: Translocal Livelihoods in the Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining Sector

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# Abstract

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASM) in Peru is associated with high environmental and social costs and those who work in the sector are often labelled as criminals. A more nuanced understanding of the communities that engage in ASM is vital for the development of transformative policy that can reduce the sector’s ecological footprint. Recognising the key role that migration plays in ASM, this thesis explores these communities from a translocal livelihoods perspective that incorporates the experiences of both men and women. It draws on Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice to conceptualise the translocal ASM community as a social field, highlighting how discrete locations are connected through migration and social practices. Within this social field, it is shown that ASM livelihoods trajectories tend to diverge, reflecting the heterogeneity of the translocal mining community.

Through this research a clear distinction emerges between those who engage in the sector permanently and those who do so on only a temporary or seasonal basis. This highlights the importance of the temporal dimensions of translocality, as divergent translocal livelihoods and competing long-term interests contestations, or ‘temporal frictions’, within the community. Meanwhile, other contestations emerge between mining communities and the Peruvian Government. In particular, the community members are shown to develop a shared sense of injustice towards a policy that labels them as criminals and threatens their home. This is shown to create a collective identity amongst permanent residents that is reflected in the narratives adopted by local people in their legitimisation of their ‘deviant’ livelihood. The research concludes by building on observations of divergent mining livelihoods to present three broad categories of translocality that contribute to our understanding of translocal livelihoods in other regions of the Global South.

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# Acronyms

ASM Artisanal and small-scale mining

CINCIA The Centre for Amazonian Scientific Innovation

CONACAMI The National Confederation of Peruvian Communities Affected by Mining

DRC Democratic Republic of Congo

FDI Foreign Direct Investment

GIATOC Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime

IGF The Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development

ILO International Labour Organisation

IMF International Monetary Fund

INEI The National Institute of Statistics and Information

IS Import Substitution

MINAM Ministry of Environment

MINEM Ministry of Energy and Mining

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

SAPs Structural Adjustment Programs

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) is recognised as providing an important source of livelihood for poor families in mineral-rich countries in the Global South. The sector represents an increasingly significant part of the rural economy, particularly as global pressures continue to reduce the profitability of agriculture. In several countries in Latin America, ASM provides an opportunity for poor families to benefit from natural resource endowments in a way that large-scale extraction often does not. However, the environmental impact of ASM is devastating. In the Amazonian region of Madre de Dios in Peru, mining of gold deposits resulted in the deforestation of 64,586 ha of rainforest between 2009 and 2017, continuing at an accelerating pace throughout that period (CINCIA, 2018). Pollution is also a problem, with the mercury and cyanide used in gold mining activities posing a threat to local waterways and human health (Martinez et al., 2018). There is a clear need for policy reform in the sector in order to create sustainable transformations, but the current approach of the Peruvian state has effectively criminalised the sector, pushing it further into illegality. While this has contributed to the marginalisation of those working in the sector, it has had little discernible impact on the number of mining operatives.

Public discourse tends to view ASM operatives as a collection of greed-motivated criminals (Nyame & Grant, 2014; Thornton, 2014; Tschakert, 2009; Tschakert & Singha, 2007), which is extremely unhelpful given that involving miners and local people in policy discussions is thought to be crucial for creating change. Several authors have highlighted the importance of understanding ASM communities if successful policy reform is to be achieved (Dondeyne et al, 2009; Hentschel et al, 2002; Hilson et al, 2007; Hilson, 2005; Spiegal, 2009) yet few states have adopted this approach. The rising levels of crime and interpersonal violence in and around gold mining sites in Madre de Dios further underscores the need to build a clear picture of life within the ASM sector. While the notion of community often seems to imply some element of cohesion, people working and living in mining communities are far from homogenous (Lahiri-Dutt, 2011). An individual’s or household’s engagement in the sector and their reasons for doing so may take many forms. While ASM remains a diversification option for some, for others it may represent a long-term career, and livelihood trajectories should therefore be expected to diverge.

Viewing ASM primarily as a livelihood issue allows for the incorporation of mining communities into policy discussions aimed at limiting the environmental and social costs of ASM. However, many ASM livelihoods rely on high mobility, which has implications for formalisation processes as well as the environment (Dondeyne et al., 2009; Siegel & Veiga, 2009). Attempting to understand the people and communities that engage in ASM therefore necessitates an analysis of this mobility and its implications. This thesis attempts to address this by applying a translocal approach to both livelihoods and community it its analysis. This approach acknowledges that the migratory processes inherent in ASM create a community that is not spatially bound. It emphasises the flows of people and capital that connect multiple towns and settlements (Benz, 2014; Greiner, 2010; Steinbrink, 2009), creating a web of interconnections far more complex than simple A-B models of migration can accommodate. The Bourdieusian concept of the social field is used to frame this translocal ASM community, as it allows for not only an analysis of the relationships between the people engaged in the sector, but also of their interactions with the state and the dominant society. This includes incorporating the experiences of women, who despite playing a crucial role in maintaining ASM livelihoods, have until recently been over looked. Moreover, my approach places emphasis on the temporal dimension of translocality, which manifests through tensions that emerge between miners and other migrants. I refer to these tensions as temporal frictions, arguing that they represent a type of contestation, in the Bourdieusian sense, that occurs within translocal social fields.

## 1.2 Justification

Those working both directly and indirectly in the informal gold-mining sector in Madre de Dios are almost exclusively migrants, the majority of whom arrived from the Andes. This is largely due to the high rates of poverty in the Andean region, which is compounded by climate change, water scarcity and decreasing agricultural productivity. Furthermore, Andean people often face discrimination when they migrate to urban centres (Steel & Zoomers, 2009; Takenaka et al, 2010). High labour mobility is not a characteristic of ASM that is unique to Peru and it is widely acknowledged in the literature. However, I was unable to find an analysis of the mining community that incorporated all sides of the spatial divide. Places of origin are treated as discrete locations that exist separately from mining settlements and are usually only focused on with regard to remittances or the pre-existing conditions that led to migration. Understanding this is important but the knowledge of whya household decided to migrate tells us little about their plans for the future, their experience of the migration process or its impact on community dynamics. Furthermore, as mobility is gendered, including these places of origin into the analysis ensures that the contributions that women make to ASM livelihoods is emphasised.

ASM is known to provide a means of diversification and can be used to support other livelihood activities, but may also represent a sole source of household income. The implication here is that while some individuals may be ‘career’ miners (Bryceson & Jønsson, 2010), for others engagement in the sector is temporary, suggesting that over time, livelihood trajectories have a tendency to diverge. While academics have shown that engagement in ASM occurs for myriad reasons and for different lengths of time, there is little analysis of how divergent livelihood trajectories shape local communities. This seems an oversight, given that livelihood and place are often strong elements of one’s identity (Bryceson & Jønsson, 2010; Gieryn, 2000) and both may be undermined by high mobility, which is a key characteristic of translocal livelihoods such as ASM. If we are to understand mining communities, it is crucial that the relationships between the various actors working with the sector are explored, and this includes analysis at the household, local and translocal level. By conceptualising the translocal ASM community as a social field in the Bourdieusian sense, the contestations that emerge between the various actors can become a key area of focus. This is important because divergent livelihood trajectories suggest the existence of competing long-term interests that will result in some form of contestation.

In contexts where ASM is illegal, the issue of criminality has central importance. As in many countries with a significant ASM sector, public discourse in Peru vilifies artisanal gold miners. While this trend has frequently been observed in the literature (Nyame & Grant, 2014; Thornton, 2014; Tschakert, 2009), the impact of this criminalisation on local people is not well understood. Although it has been noted that criminalisation may exclude miners from the debate, the impact of this marginalisation on collective identity has not been thoroughly explored. This is surprising, given the focus on identity within the literature (Bryceson & Jønsson, 2010). Given the importance of engaging ASM operatives and the wider community in discussions regarding the future of ASM policy and regulation, this seems like a crucial avenue of investigation. At the same time, the impact of criminalisation cannot be considered independently of the divergent migratory processes that underpin mining communities, as these are likely to influence the views of the residents and their engagement with policy processes. Through its analysis of translocal livelihoods, this thesis brings together debates on migration and place identity with theory on criminality and deviance in the context of ASM.

## 1.3. Objective and research questions

The overall objective of this research is to understand how migratory processes and divergent livelihood trajectories within the ASM sector shape community dynamics and collective identities.In order to achieve this aim, four research questions were selected. These are:

1. Why do people become involved in ASM and what do their livelihood trajectories look like?
2. What role do women play in ASM livelihoods and how do they contribute to the translocal ASM community?
3. What is the role of translocal livelihoods in shaping mining communities and to what extent do divergent livelihood trajectories lead to tension and contestations?
4. How is community identity linked to the competing discourses of legality and illegality that emerge around ASM livelihoods and to what extent is this affected by the translocal nature of the ASM community?

## 1.4. Approach

Given that the main objective of this research is to provide a holistic understanding of ASM communities, including origin and destination communities and all the links between them, I have taken a translocal livelihoods approach to the analysis. ASM communities have previously been identified as translocal by Werthmann (2010), who recognised that they are ‘poly-ethnic, multi-national, fluctuating and extremely mobile’ in character. Although this description perfectly illustrates the interconnections that exist between mining communities due to the flows of people between them, Werthmann only used the term to apply to destination locales, such as mining towns and settlements. In fact, the translocal space that emerges due to ASM not only connects various mining towns and camps, but also connects all of those locations from which the workers and other residents migrated. This is important in the context of the mining areas of Madre de Dios, as there were only a few indigenous tribes inhabiting the area before the arrival of miners and now the residents are almost exclusively migrants. I have based this translocal livelihoods approach on a Bourdieusian perspective of social fields, in which livelihoods are seen as social practices. In this conceptualisation, ASM is viewed as a social field, which incorporates all the various towns and settlements that make up the translocal community. Within the field however, agents hold different positions and may struggle over resources, both within the field and in relation to external powers. This is important, as it allows for the analysis of contestations within the social field, which seems highly relevant in the context of illicit livelihoods, marginalisation and government regulation.

Through the application of a translocal livelihoods approach to ASM, I provide a holistic account of migratory livelihood practices that includes left-behind populations in places of origin. While several authors have highlighted the importance of understanding ASM communities if successful policies are to be developed (Hentschel et al., 2002; Hilson et al., 2007; Hilson, 2005; Saldarriaga-Isaza et al, 2013; Spiegal, 2009) they have too often focused their analysis on spatially bound localities that inevitably overlooks the relationships between places. Taking this approach alongside a focus on the residents of the translocal community, rather than those specifically engaged directly in ASM activity, I provide further clarity on the role of women in ASM. A translocal analysis also enables consideration of livelihood trajectories, and I show that the divergences in livelihood trajectories creates competing long-term interests that lead to temporal frictions within mining communities. I then show how the tension and insecurity caused by translocal livelihoods, high mobility and the marginalisation that results from the government’s criminalisation of the sector has contributed to the emergence of a collective identity. This identity legitimises the continuation of an illicit livelihood and other forms of everyday resistance at the community level. For the purpose of this study, I distinguish between the translocal community and the smaller, more traditional conceptualisation of a local community that is spatially bound. However, given the emphasis on tension and contestations, unlike many definitions of ‘community’, I am not suggesting that all the people that reside within one locale can be considered as a homogenous group.

The application of a translocal approach to ASM has not just been enlightening due to the empirical contributions to the ASM literature, but also because it has revealed important limitations to its own conceptualisation. Most importantly, the divergent nature of ASM livelihood trajectories calls for an extension of the concept that accounts for the temporal variations in translocal livelihoods. This is because levels of translocality vary over time, with people becoming effectively less translocal if they root themselves in a destination community or eventually return home for longer periods. I refer to this as *diminishing–settled translocality* and *diminishing-returning translocality.* At other times, individuals may move on to a completely new location, outside of the social field, which is a more *reorientating translocality*. This is an important extension to the predominantly spatial considerations of translocality, which also emphasises the differences between individuals, drawing on the understanding that not everyone within the translocal space is equally embedded within each location. The rural/peri-urban context of most ASM communities provides an interesting alternative to normal translocal livelihoods studies that continue to focus on migration to urban areas. This is because the relative small size of the host population in comparison to the number of migrants illuminates the impact of translocality on destination areas.

## 1.5. Structure of this thesis

Following on from the introduction, Chapter 2 provides an overview of the ASM sector in order to highlight the relevant the gaps in the literature. The broad debates in the extractive industries are presented, with a particular focus on economic and social inequality. The discussion then moves on to looking specifically at ASM. After highlighting the persistent informality of the sector, I introduce the literature that relates to migratory practices. This points to the benefits of migration and the motivations behind such choices, as well as the negative impacts a household may face as a result. I then highlight how a single-sited approach to analysis tends to leave out left-behind communities, while focusing on direct engagement in ASM also ignores people engaged in providing services. In both cases this risks obscuring the role of women in the sector. A further issue is the lack of focus on the heterogeneity of ASM livelihood strategies and the tensions that may arise in the community due to these divergent trajectories.

Chapter 3 aims to provide a contextual account of Peru, setting the scene for the findings and discussion that follow. Given the crucial role that extractives have played, and continue to play, in Peru’s economic development, the chapter starts with an overview of the economy. This covers economic history from the early 1900s, discussing the implications of Import Substitution and then going on to discuss the changes brought in by President Alberto Fujimore in the 1990s. I then go on to discuss the human population of Peru, giving particular attention to the structural inequalities that continue to disadvantage Andean people. This leads into a discussion of *Sendero Luminoso*, a guerrilla movement who were initially driven to take up arms due to the poverty they saw around them in Ayachucho, a city in the central Andes. The violence that came to characterise the 1980s and early 1990s is important background for the livelihood trajectories of many migrants that now live in mining towns in Madre de Dios. I then move on to discuss the political economy of mining, as Peru has a rich history of extractive industries and it is impossible to understand the ASM sector without contextualising it within broader sectoral trends. Finally, I conclude with an overview of resistance in Peru, particularly that which has occurred in recent years in response to the expansion of large-scale extractive industries.

Chapter 4 elaborates on the use of the translocal livelihoods approach adopted by this thesis, which is underpinned by Bourdieusian notions of social fields, social practices and social capital. This approach views livelihoods as social practices and accounts for the contestations that emerge as actors attempt to make the most of the resources and capital that are available to them within the sector. I briefly explain why linear models of migration are inappropriate for a consideration of ASM livelihoods, before explaining the conceptualisation of translocality as applied to both livelihoods and communities. This notion of the translocal community as a social field is then illustrated through a model which draws on an earlier conceptualisation of transnationalism (Carling, 2008). Given the centrality of place to this research, I discuss this in relation to translocality, with particular consideration given to the implications of migration for place identity. In doing so, I suggest the need for an extension of the concept of translocality to include temporality. Chapter 4 concludes by introducing notions of deviance as a means through which to understand the implications of the illicit nature of ASM for those within the social field.

The exact methodological approach used in a multi-sited research study is elaborated on in chapter 5. After presenting the overall objective and four research questions, I then justify the use of qualitative methods as stemming from the ontologically constructivist and epistemologically interpretivist nature of the research. I then move on to discuss the choice of a case study as a means of understanding and analysing the ASM sector in Peru and the people that operate within it. This requires some elaboration, given that the case in question is a translocal social space, which is not the bounded system entity one would normally associate with case study research. I stress the importance of multi-sited data collection, and introduce the two key field sites of Laberinto and Ocongate. The chapter then goes on to discuss the use of in-depth interviews. Finally, I provide a descriptive account of the multiple challenges that I experienced in the field.

Section 6 is the first empirical chapter and directly relates to the first research question, which is concerned with people’s motivations for engaging in ASM and their livelihood trajectories. In this chapter, I demonstrate the divergent nature of ASM livelihoods in order to illustrate the need for a conceptualisation of translocality that accounts for both spatial and temporal variations. The chapter begins with a discussion of the myriad reasons for which households embark on migration to ASM settlements. In Madre de Dios these are often poverty-driven motivations, and I particularly note the tendency for people to turn to ASM in order to recover from a previous failed migration. The chapter then builds a typology of mining migrants, distinguishing between permanent, temporary, floating and non-migrants. The key point is that while all these migrants are linked together within the translocal space created by ASM, they all have different degrees of translocality and these are subject to change over time. I apply this typology and theorisation to the analysis of the subsequent empirical chapters.

In chapter 7, I focus exclusively on the role of women in ASM communities, which until recently had been rather neglected in the literature. In this chapter the analysis of ASM livelihoods is broadened to cover indirect engagement in ASM as well as direct engagement. This gives a more holistic account of ASM settlements and also emphasises the various roles that women play in these local communities. However, through the translocal approach to the analysis I also highlight the important contributions that women in origin locations make towards the continuation of ASM livelihoods. This included an examination of the gendered dimensions of mobility and the implications for individuals, households and community dynamics. I show that women’s mobility is restricted in relation to men’s, yet they can and do migrate to mining sites independently. A key contribution of this chapter is the understanding of women’s active role in maintaining social relationships and the household’s place attachment in origin communities, and their expressions of agency within household livelihood strategies.

After the consideration of the implications of translocal ASM livelihoods at the household level in chapter 7, chapter 8 then goes on to broaden this analysis to the community level. The conceptualisation of the translocal ASM community as a social field is particularly useful here, as it allows for the analysis of contestations between the community members. A key point is that these individuals occupy different positions within the field, which is in part due to their relative mobility. I draw on the typologies identified in chapter 6 to highlight the key sources of tension in the community. I then argue that these tensions represent forms of contestation that can be characterised as temporal frictions, emerging as they do from divergent livelihood trajectories and competing long-term interests. In the second half of the chapter, I discuss the problems of crime, violence and government clampdowns, and their impact on insecurity. More specifically, I use these issues to illustrate how permanent and temporary/floating miners react to these insecurities in very different ways, and begin to demonstrate the existence of a shared collective identity forming between the permanent residents.

Chapter 9 is the final empirical chapter, and it builds on the identification of a collective identity in chapter 8 and considers it in relation to the continuation of illicit livelihoods activities and other forms of resistance against the government. After illustrating the process through which the Peruvian state has criminalised miners in Madre de Dios, and particularly their lack of differentiation between illegal and informal miners, I will argue that this creates a place-based identity within the mining community, which is reflected in their adoption of discourses that neutralise the deviant behaviour of their community. This is done both by positioning themselves against a more deviant out-group elsewhere whilst also seeking to delegitimise the dominant society that has labelled them as deviant. In Bourdieusian terms, such narratives reflect the contestations that occur both within the social field and with external forces and powers.

The thesis concludes by highlighting the key contributions to knowledge made during this thesis and draws them together, reiterating the links between collective identity and translocality. I start by reviewing the empirical contributions this thesis made, which have strengthened our understanding of migrant livelihoods in ASM using Madre de Dios as a case study. I then use these empirical findings to draw out theoretical contributions to the understanding of translocality and translocal livelihoods. I reflect back on the diagram of translocal social fields introduced in chapter 4 and map different groups and livelihood trajectories on to it, emphasising the temporal dimensions of translocality. Three broad types of translocality can be identified; *diminishing-settled, diminishing-returning* and *reorientated* translocality. I also take time to reflect on recent developments in the ASM sector in Peru, particularly the Government’s new Operación Mercurio that aims to remove mining activity from La Pampa and formalise it elsewhere. This new intervention is likely to have implications for all the people within the social field of ASM, albeit in different ways. I therefore suggest several future avenues of research that build on the findings presented here whilst also exploring the impact that Operación Mercurio has had on people in the various locations within the translocal community and their responses to it. I also suggest there is scope to explore the relevance of the notion of temporal frictions and long-term patterns of translocality in urban settings.

# 2. Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining

## 2.1. Introduction

As outlined in the introduction, this thesis explores artisanal and small-scale gold mining from a translocal perspective. In doing so, it intends to provide a deeper understanding of the communities that are involved in the sector and the implications of their high mobility. Before this, it is important to situate the research within the existing literature on ASM, in particular to highlight the gaps in knowledge that are being addressed. This chapter provides a contextual understanding of the sector and introduces the key debates to which this thesis intends to add clarity.

I start this chapter by introducing the extractives sector and its inherent inequalities, before moving on to give a broad overview of ASM. The first section highlights the potential for poverty reduction alongside the myriad social and environmental problems that are associated with it. I then move on to focus specifically on the role of migration in ASM, highlighting how high mobility is characteristic of ASM livelihoods and thus warrants further investigation. The next section then discusses the existing knowledge on the formation of mining communities. This has often focused on the importance of social networking and the various ways, most notably male, miners do this when arriving in a new mine site. However, I also highlight the tendency for the literature to treat these miners as a homogenous group. The chapter then points to the lack of a multi-sited analysis of ASM, and the tendency until very recently for the role of women, both in mine sites and in origin-communities to be obscured from the analysis. There is then some discussion on the little that is known about miner identities, which has focused more on a shared professional identity than exploring the implications of high mobility between transient communities. Finally, I concluded the chapter by looking at the criminalisation of ASM and the portrayal of miners in public discourse. I also look in depth at the forms of conflict and resistance that emerge within mining communities, with a particular focus on the Latin American context.

## 2.2. Global mining trends

Mining and other forms of natural resource extraction have played a fundamental role in capitalist production and have thus been linked to economic growth (Huber, 2009). However, the actual performance of mineral-dependent economies has been extremely uneven (Davis & Tilton, 2005; Ross, 2001). Not only has an over-reliance on minerals such as gold been shown to have adverse consequences for economic growth (Sachs & Warner, 1999), but it has also been linked to a wide variety of social issues, including corruption, political instability and civil war (Bebbington, 2011; Collier & Hoeffler, 2005; 2004). This is at least in part due to the legacy of colonialism, which ensured the extraction of vast amounts of mineral wealth, as well as other commodities, from the Global South in order to power economic development in Europe (Galeano, 1971). This was most notable in African and Latin American countries, and effectively entrenched an unequal relationship between the ‘core’ of Europe and the ‘periphery’, which has endured far beyond the end of colonialism (Frank, 1966; Galeano, 1971; Wallerstein, 1974).

Contemporary debates have pointed to the increasingly asymmetrical power relations between global mining corporations and peripheral nation states (Ferguson, 2005; Maconachie, 2014), as the mineral-rich countries of the Global South have implemented reforms to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in a bid to secure economic growth (Hilson & McQuilken, 2014; Smith et al, 2012; Tubb, 2015). However, mineral dependence is strongly correlated with income inequality (Ross, 2001) and the power of mining companies has often resulted in the emergence of enclave economies (Bloch & Owusu, 2012; Heeks, 1998; Maconachie, 2014). As a result, large-scale mining is often thought to damage social cohesion and produce social unrest, particularly in the Latin American context (Arce, 2014; Arellano-Yanguas, 2011; Bebbington et al, 2008; Helwege, 2015; Paredes, 2016).

In most gold producing developing nations, large-scale mining is not the complete picture. Instead, as in other mineral sectors, there are also thousands of miners trying to earn an income from artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASM), which generates approximately 20% of the world's gold production (IGF, 2017). The price of gold increased fourfold from 2002 to 2012, which increased investment in large-scale gold projects across Latin America (Tubb, 2015), but also led to a sharp increase in ASM gold production and the number of people employed in the sector (Cremers & de Theije, 2013). Although ASM labour intensive and makes use of simple technology (Ibid.), more elaborate mechanics and highly sophisticated divisions of labour and revenues have been developed in some areas (Butler, 2015; Huggins, Buss, & Rutherford, 2017). As gold deposits can become quickly exhausted, ASM is more commonly associated with migration than large-scale mining (Nyame and Grant, 2014).

Artisanal gold miners often exploit alluvial mineral deposits, which are found at the bottom of rivers or lakes, through a process known as placer mining. These alluvial deposits are far easier to detect than hard-rock deposits and do not require extensive economic and technical feasibility studies (Nyame & Grant, 2014). While placer mining may be done without mechanised technology, such as through panning for gold in rivers, most artisanal miners do use some form of mechanization. In the Peruvian region of Madre de Dios for example, mechanized equipment includes water-pumps, dredges, sweepers and hydraulic excavators (Damonte et al, 2012). If the alluvial deposits are on land, as they are in some parts of Madre de Dios, bulldozers may even be a common sight (Cremers and de Theije, 2012). Once miners have saved enough money, they may consider buying such equipment, as this makes it easier to mine larger quantities of material in less time and with less effort (Ibid, 2012). There is some artisanal and small-scale mining that exploits hard rock and primary material deposits, such as in the Andean Department of Puno in Peru[[1]](#footnote-1). In order to reach these deposits, miners must dig narrow tunnels along the gold seam that they then fill with explosives, before using machines to crush the ore (Damonte et al, 2012). Whichever way the gold is extracted, afterwards the miners clean it with mercury or cyanide. It is the unregulated use of these chemicals that has led to some of the environmental and health problems heavily associated with ASM.

## 2.3. Key debates in artisanal and small-scale gold mining

### 2.3.1. The evolution of “greed v need”

The literature contains much discussion on the precise role of ASM in rural livelihoods. For many years this was dominated by a ‘need versus greed’ debate, with some authors arguing that as mining offered a ‘get rich quick’ scheme it was greed, rather than poverty, that attracted people to the sector (Havnevik et al, 2007; Hinton, 2005; USAID, 2005, Hirons, 2014). Over time however, ASM increasingly became seen as poverty driven, and it was recognised that a lack of viable alternatives led miners to accept the poor working conditions and other risks associated with ASM (Banchirigah, 2008; Fisher et al, 2009; Hentschel et al., 2002; Hilson & McQuilken, 2014; Siegel & Veiga, 2009; Tschakert, 2009; Tschakert & Singha, 2007; Wilson et al, 2015). ASM certainly creates a range of jobs for unskilled and semi-skilled workers (Fisher et al., 2009; Hilson & Osei, 2014; Verbrugge, 2016), as well as providing economic opportunities for millions more in downstream industries (Bloch & Owusu, 2012; Hilson & McQuilken, 2014; Maconachie & Binns, 2007; Nyame et al, 2009; Teschner, 2014). Furthermore, the sector’s resilience in times of economic hardship has enabled it to contribute to rural poverty reduction (Hilson & McQuilken, 2014; Hilson & Osei, 2014; Labonne, 2014; Maconachie & Binns, 2007).

More recently, academics have further interrogated the nuances of the sector and have challenged the idea that all ASM operatives are living in persistent poverty. While there continue to be many individuals and households that engage in ASM out of necessity, the sector can, and does, provide strong opportunity for capital accumulation. While Verbrugge (2016) acknowledges that poverty is likely behind the constant supply of ASM workers, he also argued that the one-dimensional focus on poverty risks obscuring the socially segmented nature of diversification into the sector. Using the example of the southern Philippines, he highlights both the mechanisation of the sector and the emergence of a dominant stratum of ASM entrepreneurs. This elite group are no longer pushed into mining by poverty but are driven by a desire for capital accumulation (Verbrugge, 2014). Crucially, they occupy a position of command within the sector and are therefore able to benefit from the exploitation of the vulnerable labour force (Verbrugge, 2015, 2016). Support for these arguments can be found in several Latin American countries, where there are high levels of mechanisation and profitability and a clear distinction between the mining proletariat and the elite (Cortés-McPherson, 2019; Salman, 2016).

### 2.3.2. Women in mining settlements

ASM has often been viewed as a male-dominated livelihood, and as a result the experience of women in ASM has traditionally received little attention from researchers, donors and governments (Hinton et al., 2003; Huesca, 2013). Research that involved women often focused on prostitution and human trafficking (Salman, 2016), but often with men remaining as the primary focus of investigation. Research on women in mine sites has also been criticised for having a rather one-dimensional focus on sexual violence, particularly in the context of conflict minerals in African countries (Bashwira et al., 2014; Buss et al., 2019). In general, the literature has painted ASM as a place of risk and economic and sexual exploitation for women, which has been reflected in policy making in the DRC for example (Bashwira et al., 2014). Recently however, academics have started to pay more attention to the role that women play in the ASM sector, albeit with a focus on African countries (Bashwira et al., 2014; Buss et al., 2017; Buss et al., 2019; Huggins et al., 2017).

Women are often engaged indirectly in ASM through the provision of ancillary goods and services, including prostitution and sex work, rather than directly in ASM activities (Buss et al., 2019; Hoogbergen & Kruijt, 2004; Kelly et al., 2014). In some countries, this is because they are forbidden from entering the mineshaft (Buss et al., 2019), either due to their perceived lack of strength (Heemskerk & Duijves, 2013) or because they are believed to bring bad luck if they enter the mine, such as in Papua New Guinea (Moretti, 2006) However, in some areas women do work directly in ASM activity, despite the cultural barriers (Hinton et al, 2003; ILO, 1999; Lahiri-Dutt, 2006; Lahiri-Dutt et al, 2014; Moretti, 2006; Perks, 2011; Yakovleva, 2007). Evidence from several African countries shows women engaging in processing activities, such as carrying water, crushing and grinding stones, and washing and sieving stones and tailings (Buss et al., 2019; Hinton, 2005; Huggins et al., 2017; Werthmann, 2009). In Latin America, this is less widely observed (Hoogbergen & Kruijt, 2004), although there is some evidence from the Brazilian Amazon (Graulau, 2001). However, this does not mean that women are unable to hold relatively elite positions within the mining community. In Suriname it was shown that women may be the owner of mining equipment or a concession (Heemskerk & Duijves, 2013), whilst in the DRC women may find roles as buyers, traders, transporters and negotiators of minerals (Alusala, 2016).

In general, women in mining sites are still more likely to be caught in poverty traps than their male counterparts (Yakovleva, 2007). As they are thought to lack physical strength and are often busy with reproductive work, they earn considerably less than men (Buss et al., 2019). This is despite the fact that their engagement in ASM is likely to result in them being over-worked and over-burdened due to their competing household responsibilities (Lahiri-Dutt, 2006). The types of ancillary jobs they tend to do are generally less well remunerated than direct mining activity (Huggins et al., 2017) and are less valued than that of their male counterparts (Buss et al., 2019). This means that women are often not considered to be ‘miners’, which hinders their ability to become involved in cooperatives or labour organisations (Buss et al., 2019; Huggins et al., 2017). Examples from East Africa also highlight how women are often unable to access the training, knowledge and networks necessary to accumulate or invest capital (Buss et al., 2019).

Despite these setbacks, there is a growing body of literature that explores the potential opportunities that ASM can provide for women in the sector, although much of this comes from the Africa context. Evidence from Burkina Faso and Ghana has also shown that some women have been able to accumulate wealth through engaging in migratory ASM practices (Werthmann, 2009; Yakovleva, 2007). Drawing on their work in Mali, Brottem and Ba (2019) have documented how women who travel to work in ASM are able to use various investment strategies to gain a level of financial autonomy that would be difficult to achieve in other sectors or activities. Evidence from East Africa also shows those who are successful can find themselves in positions of power by default, as being the only woman who owns a mineshaft automatically makes them a good representative of all women (Rutherford & Buss, 2019). Furthermore, ASM sites in Africa seem to offer women sexual as well as financial agency compared to rural areas, with many women remaining unmarried or in less formalised conjugal relationships than they perhaps would at home (Bryceson et al, 2014; Buss et al., 2019).

### 2.3.3. Informality and formalisation

Whilst ASM is more likely to benefit local people and does not create the same inequalities as large-scale extraction (Bebbington, 2011), it is still associated with numerous social ills. Mining settlements across the world are characterised as places with high levels of prostitution, crime and violence (Hilson, 2005; Hilson & Gatsinzi, 2014; Siegel & Veiga, 2009). ASM also comes with numerous environmental costs, linked primarily to deforestation and mercury contamination (Hoffman & Grigera, 2013; Jønsson & Bryceson, 2009). These problems are often blamed on the informal nature of the majority of ASM, defined by the workers’ lack of legal entitlement to work a given plot of land (Carson et al., 2005). It is argued that successful formalisation of ASM, involving the creation of private property rights through the registering of legal and transferable titles, could improve conditions in ASM communities (Hilson & Gatsinzi, 2014; Hilson & Potter, 2005; Nyame & Grant, 2014; Tschakert, 2009; Tschakert & Singha, 2007). Formalisation is widely believed to change behaviour through engaging currently marginalised people in policy dialogue (Heemskerk, 2005; Siegel & Veiga, 2009). Evidence from numerous countries shows that often ASM operators would like to be formalised (Fold, Jønsson, & Yankson, 2014; Heemskerk, Duijves, & Pinas, 2015; Hilson & Osei, 2014; Siegel & Veiga, 2009), although for others, such as miners in the Chocó in Colombia, it seems too distant a possibility to even be of consideration (Tubb, 2015).

National governments have the power to lease mineral rich land for mining, known as concessions (Helwege, 2015), and in recent years many countries, in Latin America and elsewhere, have embarked on formalisation processes. However, successive governments have struggled to implement these effectively, and ASM therefore remains largely informal in most countries (Cremers & de Theije, 2013). For example, in Brazil artisanal miners can in theory obtain a license, yet many continue to work illegally, without paying tax, and ignoring rules and regulations (Kolen, de Theije, & Mathis, 2013). Although most individuals therefore lack legal rights to land, some may have customary rights that are widely recognised and respected. This has been illustrated well in the cases of Suriname (Heemskerk & de Theije, 2010; Heemskerk & Duijves, 2013) and Brazil (Kolen et al., 2013). It has been noted that these local cultural laws can be more effective at regulating the sector than state efforts to formalise it (Heemskerk & de Theije, 2010). However, customary rights can be overruled by national legislation at any time (Cremers & de Theije, 2013) and are inherently insecure. For example, Salman, de Theije and Vélez-Torres (2018) have shown how the creation of formal concessions in Suriname has deprived small communities of their traditional access.

Occasionally, state governments may decide to propose an area be set aside for artisanal and small-scale miners to obtain legal rights to mine, as was the case in the Guineas (Smith et al., 2012). However, the remainder of the informal labour force is left to negotiate access with title holders, as illustrated in examples from Tanzania (Fisher, 2007) and the Philippines (Verbrugge, 2016), or to encroach on the land of others, often leading to outbreaks of conflict as seen in Colombia (Vélez-Torres, 2016). It is also important to remember that a portion of gold mining takes places on the ‘twilight zone’ of land not licensed for mining, either to the operators or anyone else (Fold et al., 2014). Some of this may occur in areas where ASM is completely prohibited, for example in forest reserves in Colombia (Sarmiento et al., 2013) and Brazil (Kolen et al., 2013), meaning that these miners can never be legalised. This distinction will become important later in this thesis when we consider the competing discourses of criminality within the ASM sector in Peru. The persistent informality of the ASM sector in many locations means that the majority of mining operatives can remain trapped in vicious cycles of vulnerability and insecurity due to the lack of legal rights (Cremers & de Theije, 2013; Heemskerk, 2005; Sinding, 2005; Wilson et al., 2015).

Numerous explanations have been put forward for the frequent failure of effective formalisation policy (Fold et al., 2014; Hilson et al., 2007; Hilson & Potter, 2005; Nyame & Grant, 2014; Teschner, 2014; Tschakert, 2009; Verbrugge, 2015). Drawing on research in the Philippines, Verbrugge (2016) has argued that regulatory frameworks tend to be fraught with internal inconsistencies and subordinated to government efforts to support the expansion of large-scale mining. Furthermore, due to the requirements necessary to secure formalisation, such policies risk reinforcing existing inequalities if they are prohibitively expensive or have other requirements that are unachievable for the poorest miners (Geenen, 2012). For example, in Colombia, the formal requirements and parameters related to financial capital, technical capacity and efficiency in production were near impossible for small-scale miners to meet (Salman et al., 2018). Thus, even if formalisation were to be successfully implemented, benefits would not accrue evenly across the population, potentially entrenching existing inequalities and power dynamics within the sector (Verbrugge, 2014, 2016). An emerging area of debate here is the impact of formalisation on women, as they are less likely to meet the requirements for formalisation and have less voice in negotiations due to their lack of representation in mining cooperatives (Buss et al., 2019; Huggins et al., 2017). Several scholars working on Latin America have also pointed to a general lack of trust between miners and national and regional authorities that hinders successful formalisation (de Theije et al., 2014; Heemskerk et al., 2015; Salman & de Theije, 2017; Smith et al., 2017).

## 2.4. Migration and mining settlements

Successful ASM policy reflects local realities and requires an understanding of the communities that are being targeted (Hentschel et al., 2002; Hilson et al., 2007; Hilson, 2005; Saldarriaga-Isaza et al, 2013; Spiegal, 2009). This includes an appreciation of the role migration plays in ASM livelihoods, especially as the miners’ mobility impacts on both formalisation (Dondeyne et al., 2009) and the environment (Siegel & Veiga, 2009). Increasing numbers of individuals are migrating to work in ASM, highlighting how households utilise spatial mobility strategies in their livelihood (Hilson, 2005; Jønsson & Bryceson, 2009). In the Amazon, many small-scale miners are migrants. Evidence shows that local populations in countries such as Colombia and Suriname are increasingly having to compete with miners from elsewhere within the country and further afield (Cremers & de Theije, 2013; De Theije & Bal, 2010; Kolen et al., 2013). This is partly due to the improved infrastructure that has substantially reduced the difficulties associated with travelling to mining sites. In Suriname for example, Brazilian miners now arrive by air rather than crossing a land border (De Theije & Heemskerk, 2009). However, these migrants add an important dimension to the conflicts that often emerge between artisanal miners and local communities, the state, large companies, and/or environmental activist (Salman et al., 2018). This section will give an overview of the nexus between migration and ASM to illustrate what is known about how migratory practices impact on ASM communities and the people within them.

### 2.4.1. Migration and ASM

For many poor households, ASM represents a diversification strategy that supports agricultural income (Hirons, 2014; Teschner, 2014). However, the impact of ASM on traditional rural livelihoods is unclear, with some writers suggesting that ASM is replacing agriculture as the main source of income in rural communities (Cartier & Bürge, 2011; Hoffman & Grigera, 2013; Lahiri-Dutt et al., 2014). However, in many places, individuals may only engage in the sector on a seasonal basis. For example, Bolivian miners continue to practice other livelihood activities, such as agriculture or nut gathering, for much of the year (Salman, Carillo, & Soruco, 2013). While Bryceson and Jønsson (2010) have emphasised the emergence of career miners, it has also been argued that the opportunities for capital accumulation may lead to further diversification or even reinvestment into agriculture (Hilson & McQuilken, 2014; Maconachie & Binns, 2007; Verbrugge, 2016). Whilst there is a lack of consensus within the literature, two things are clear. Firstly, migration plays an important role in ASM livelihoods and secondly, the divergence of livelihood trajectories and the spatial mobility strategies used by different households over time remains poorly understood.

The benefits of migration strategies for poverty-stricken households are well documented (Tacoli, 2011) and even seasonal engagement in ASM can have a huge impact on household income (Fisher et al., 2009; Nyame & Grant, 2014). Furthermore, remittances that are invested in local communities can facilitate economic development (De Boeck, 1998). However, migration is not without risks (Bebbington & Bury, 2009), and migrant miners may suffer from livelihood failure, family separation, accidents, physical attack, disease and destitution (Jønsson & Bryceson, 2009). High levels of migration are also linked to increased drug use, alcohol abuse, prostitution, communicable diseases and school dropouts (Carson et al., 2005). Thus, although ASM carries the promise of wealth, migrant workers can easily find themselves in poverty traps, often accompanied with mounting debts (De Theije & Heemskerk, 2009; Hilson, 2012). Furthermore, the high mobility of ASM livelihoods is heavily associated with the sector’s environmental costs (Dondeyne et al., 2009; Nyame & Grant, 2014). This is because transitory miners do not own the deposits they exploit and have no particular interest in protecting the area they work, similar to problems regularly associated with common-pool resources (Ostrom, 2008).

Whilst there is not much clarity in the literature on the exact migration patterns that households adopt, it is clear that many engage in ASM on a short-term or seasonal basis. In doing so they create circular migration between communities of origin and mining sites (Barrett et al, 2001; Dell, 2013; Maconachie & Binns, 2007) which, along with patterns of trade, consumption and investment, results in multiple connections between locations (Fisher, 2008). It also means that the majority of miners do not normally live with their families (Kuramoto, 2001), although it has been noted that during gold rushes, entire families may move together (Hilson, 2005). Despite the acknowledgement of these broad trends, there is no existing analysis within the ASM literature that considers mining communities on a multi-sited basis, choosing instead to focus on the community of origin or of destination. In the following sections I will illustrate why this represents a gap in knowledge regarding ASM communities and the livelihoods that are incorporated within them.

### 2.4.2. The formation of ASM communities

ASM often invokes images of gold rushes and boomtowns, and it is clear that the high mobility of ASM livelihoods shapes mining communities (Grätz, 2013). Unsurprisingly, the literature is full of descriptions of the ASM communities that emerge as a result of in-migration. Sites in Ghana, for example, are described as ‘teeming with people of diverse identities in terms of nationality, ethnicity, age and gender who possess differing skills, capital and interests’ (Nyame & Grant, 2014, p.79). Similarly, work in Suriname highlights the rapid social change in Amazonian mine sites as a result of migration (De Theije & Heemskerk, 2009). When conceptualising mining settlements, it is useful to consider Grätz’s (2013) distinction between primary and secondary frontiers. The first are boomtowns that have only recently had an influx of miners (Ibid.), and they are recognised as specific mineral-rich locations that experience massive influxes of miners as a result of an increase in international commodity prices (Bryceson & Geenen, 2016). In the latter, termed as secondary frontiers, there is instead a longer tradition of mining in which both local people and local authorities are involved (Grätz, 2013). For example, when Hilson et al (2007) describe the Ghanaian town of Prestea it is clear that the non-native inhabitants have been living there so long that they have become firmly rooted in the community. Similar observations have been made of the Brazilian miners who put down roots in Suriname, deciding to stay and integrate into mining communities that lack the violence of their hometowns (De Theije & Heemskerk, 2009). However, while secondary frontiers may offer relative stability, they are still subject to influxes of miners during rush periods, which is likely to have an impact on social cohesion.

Grätz’s typology is useful to keep in mind, being particularly pertinent for two of the locations studied during fieldwork. However, while frontier studies such as his consider the impact of in-migration into new areas (Grätz, 2013; Kopytoff, 1987), they do so from a very spatially bound viewpoint. Grätz (2013) conducted ethnography into life on mining frontiers, observing both the economic and cultural transformation that occurs there, but he was still focused on the social field as it occurs within the spatially-bound mining site. Thus while he acknowledges that there are many patterns of communication, perception and social affiliation brought to destination communities that exist alongside novel, innovative features (Ibid.), he does not consider a broadened social field that incorporates origin communities. This is important as it may have implications for the extent to which a given individual embeds themselves in the community. Similarly, there has been extensive work on the impact of Brazilian miners working in Suriname, but this has predominantly focused on the relationships within camps in Suriname rather than any enduring connections with home, despite the acknowledgment that many do intend to eventually return to Brazil (De Theije & Heemskerk, 2009; Heemskerk & de Theije, 2010). In her work on Burkina Faso, Werthmann (2010) recognises ASM communities as being inherently translocal, with residents often having met in previous camps. However, her analysis only focuses on the destination mining camp in relation to other mining camps (Ibid.).

There has been relatively little discussion in the literature about the various livelihood trajectories that coexist in mining sites. As articles tend to focus on one specific feature of ASM, they can often inadvertently present miners as a homogenous group. For example, while Bryceson and Jønsson (2010) noted that ‘career miners’ tend to move between mining sites frequently, they did not elaborate on this in relation to more rooted miners and residents. Divergent livelihood trajectories have however been discussed in relation to Suriname, as the local Maroon population tend to work in ASM only temporarily, but the Brazilian migrants are often miners for life (De Theije & Bal, 2010). There are also differences within the Brazilian migrant population. While some remain flexible and ready to move wherever there is work (Ibid.), others may eventually settle in the area, perhaps buying a house and starting a family with a Surinamese woman or man (De Theije & Heemskerk, 2009; Heemskerk & Duijves, 2013). An important point to note here is that the insecurity of life in some camps may discourage some miners from putting down roots or making long-term investments (Cremers & de Theije, 2013; Seccatore & de Theije, 2016), which ensures that the transient nature of the community is maintained.

Differences regarding the time of people’s arrival in mining sites have been explored extensively by Walsh (2015) with reference to a sapphire mining town in Madagascar. Walsh (2015) showed that while residents who arrived before the rush intended to establish themselves and stay long-term, new arrivals had little interest in rooting themselves in the community or within a system of mutual reciprocity or responsibility. Similarities were drawn with young migrants in urban areas who have been shown to view the prospect of anchoring in one place as risky, reducing their ability to make a speedy departure to a new location in the future (Simone, 2004). Walsh noted that this meant that rooted miners were eventually likely to find themselves ‘left behind’ by their more transient neighbours (Walsh, 2015, p.30). Damonte’s (2016; 2018) work in Peru has also distinguished between ‘new’ and ‘old’ miners and highlighted the animosity that can emerge between migrants that arrived in the mining areas of Madre de Dios at different times. However, neither Walsh nor Damonte draw links between community dynamics and place identity, either at an individual or community level.

### 2.4.3. Life in mining communities

Whilst mining communities themselves are still under-researched, with the focus usually being on the causes and consequences of mining activity and related policies, there are some aspects of life in mining sites that have been well studied. Firstly, it is generally agreed that the high mobility of ASM results in communities that are inherently unstable and full of social dilemmas (Cremers & de Theije, 2013; Saldarriaga-Isaza et al., 2013). Mining communities are therefore seen as characterised by weak social ties, which can lead to depression, domestic violence and alcoholism (Seeling, 2002). Although this can lead to conflict within the communities, many researchers have pointed to the emergence of some form of mining ‘culture’ (de Theije & Heemskerk, 2009; Werthmann, 2010), albeit with different interpretations. Secondly, many researchers have investigated the professional implications of weak social support networks, particularly in terms of getting access to the sector (Jønsson & Bryceson, 2009; Nyame & Grant, 2014). Thirdly, and partly related to the building of professional networks, there has been a focus on the spending habits and social lifestyles of men within mining sites. I will briefly highlight the main arguments of each in the next few paragraphs

The difficulties of leaving behind homes and family and adapt to a new life is well understood in the migration literature and is acknowledged in the context of ASM (De Theije & Heemskerk, 2009). However, de Theije and Bal (2010) have argued that the absence of a close-knit community, the lack of attachment to local surroundings provides miners with a certain level of freedom that opens up new possibilities. The Brazilian migrant miners in their study maintained an adaptable nature, and whilst they were not rooted in their location and lacked a sense of belonging, they could move on whenever necessary. This is closely related to Walsh’s observations of the transient miners in his study on Madagascar. In his study of a sapphire mining town, Walsh (2012) showed how newly-arrived young miners disregarded local taboos and the forms of authority established by settled migrant miners. Walsh viewed the apparent freedom and autonomy of the transient miner as being explicitly opposed to the inflexible institutions and hierarchical relationships that are usually required for long-term social reproduction (Day et al, 1999; Walsh, 2003). This apparent rejection of local societal norms led to a certain level of animosity within the community. However, while Grätz (2009) noted that some miners might be inclined to earn more at the expense of others, through theft or betrayal for example, he found stronger evidence of the development of norms of reciprocity, moral obligations and solidarity within the mining communities.

Although one might expect ASM communities to be inherently violent and dangerous, examples from Latin America show that they are far from anarchic (De Theije, 2014). Aside from introducing new food, customs, technological methods and ways of working, Brazilian migrant miners in Suriname also constantly challenge the limits of legality, resulting in a common ‘mining law’ based on customary land claims, formal land titles, practical considerations, and practical experience brought by the Brazilians (de Theije & Heemskerk, 2009). De Theije and Heemskerk (2009) argue that mutual dependency forces both parties to overcome prejudices and other obstacles between them in the formation of the local mining culture. Further, within these mining settlements, a mining culture develops, with a code of conduct very different from that in mainstream society, such as carrying a gun or visiting sex workers. While de Theije and Heemskerk (2009) argue that the specific culture is unique to each mine site, they acknowledge that a sense of solidarity forms between them due to shared hardships, including labour accidents, occasional violence, tropical diseases malaria and the lack of a stable home environment. This is similar to observations of mining camps in Burkina Faso, where the mining population behave in ways far outside the norms of dominant society (Werthmann, 2010).

Although the knowledge of women in mining communities is relatively low, it is argued that their presence has a calming effect in these unstable mining areas (Hinton et al., 2003). Women play a crucial role in creating and maintaining social capital in low-income communities (Jenkins, 2014; Mayer & Rankin, 2002; Molyneux, 2002), and within mining settlements they are increasingly seen as the lynchpins of the community (Eftimie et al., 2012). Through their roles as spouses of miners, cooks, shopkeepers and other service providers, women play a pivotal role in the health and wellbeing of households, as well as the wider ASM community (Hinton et al., 2003). Furthermore, Hinton et al (2003) argued that within ASM communities, women are critical to community stability, cohesiveness and morale, acting as primary agents in facilitating change. This is particularly true during the resource depletion phase of mining boomtowns and is seen as critical to the development of more stable, resilient communities in the face of rapid change (Ibid.). However, the same analysis has not been applied to the translocal ASM community, although it would seem logical to assume that women’s roles in origin communities follow a similar pattern. For example, Perks (2011) noted that women constitute a bridge between two very different development contexts, rural development and ASM, suggesting that using a translocal approach to ASM livelihoods analysis will allow this to be emphasised.

Many researchers have written about the role of social networks for securing work and achieving success in ASM (Jønsson & Bryceson, 2009; Werthmann, 2010). These social networks may be composed of kinship ties or professional relationships made ‘on the job’ elsewhere (Verbrugge, 2016). While Name and Grant (2014) showed that newcomers needed to negotiate land access with local people and integrate into their new place of work by establishing strong bonds and adapting to local norms and practices, Walsh (2012) has shown that others actively avoid strong work-based relationships, wishing to remain free from obligations. However, for miners wanting to integrate, it is generally thought that both trust (Nyame & Grant, 2014) and belonging (Bolay, 2014) can take time to grow. Drawing on his observations in Benin, Grätz (2009) illustrated that through both working together and sharing leisure time, new miners become friends and can often build strong ties due to the intensive working relationship. He highlighted the use of nicknames and the notable lack of miners attempting to maximise their own income at the expense of others as key indicators of these strong relationships (Grätz, 2004a, 2004b).

An important area of study linked to my research has been on the excessive consumption habits of male miners in mining communities. Rather than investing in their new community or saving money, young miners are generally believed to spend their earnings in extravagant ways (de Theije & Bal, 2010; Grätz, 2004a, 2013; Walsh, 2003). Such spending has the potential to lead to friction within the community. Whereas investing in a local area may contribute to the formation of an enduring, locality-based moral order, spending it all on extravagant consumption or sending it in the form of remittances to distant locales prevents this (Walsh, 2003). However, evidence from Burkina Faso (Werthmann, 2009) and Suriname (de Theije & Heemskerk, 2009) shows that women and girls tend to be less interested in excessive consumption. Walsh (2003) argues that the conspicuous consumption of these young men reflects an unwillingness amongst to be rooted in place. This is interesting as it links consumption and investment to the development of the community. However, the spatial boundaries of the study are exceptionally narrow and do not consider flows of remittances between locations, despite the fact that this is known to be a key reason why people engage in ASM. Amongst other things, this masks the understanding of the role women play in ASM livelihood strategies.

In general, there has been little research on the miners’ communities of origin, other than the economic impact of remittances on household income and agricultural activities (Hilson & Garforth, 2013; Maconachie & Binns, 2007). While Dell (2013) has drawn on the migration literature to show that migrants change communities of origin when they migrate, he explored their relationships with the political elite and large-scale mining companies, rather than with each other. This lack of focus of communities of origin is part of the reason that women have tended to be under-represented in the ASM literature. People who remain in origin communities are often thought of as constituting ‘left-behind’ communities, but Jønsson (2014) argued that this term implies they are incapable of movement when we know that actually many women do engage in ASM, even if little is known about them. Outside of the ASM literature, Mondain and Daigne (2013) suggested that the term ‘household strategy’ in relation to livelihoods and migration is something of a misnomer, as it supposes the existence of a consensus within households. Thus, women may not necessarily agree with their household’s livelihood strategy and this may partly be due to the effects that strategy has on their own experience of autonomy. For example, while male migration may increase a woman’s autonomy, at least during their husband’s absence, other women suffer from increasing ties of material dependency (Ibid.). They have also commented on the impact of outmigration on other non-migrating community members, showing that they often view migration as robbing the community of its life force (Ibid.). Such dynamics have not been considered directly in terms of ASM, which is due to the lack of focus on the wider social field of translocal ASM communities. As noted earlier, Werthmann (2010) has acknowledged that the fluidity of ASM builds a translocal mining community, but she limits this understanding to the interconnections between various mining sites and does not consider communities of origin. Dell (2013) has however argued that a multi-sited analysis of mining migrants should provide an understanding of how those who are ‘left behind’ contribute to the success of migrant livelihoods and also how that migration changes the community (Mondain & Daigne, 2013).

## 2.5. Mining and identity

The focus on ASM as purely transitory and poverty driven obscures those who do not see their involvement in the sector as temporary. It also rather ignores the fact that ASM can offer wealth creation and the chance of social mobility, resulting in the sector being socially segmented (Verbrugge, 2016). This section will introduce the discussions on identity in the ASM literature, which have primarily centered on the development of a professional identity. It shows however that the literature has rarely considered the illegal nature of the mining profession when exploring issues concerning identity. The last section highlights some existing evidence on how both migration and the views of dominant society may affect identity. Both are shown to be as yet, relatively under researched.

There are plenty of miners across the world who view ASM as a profession or vocation (Seeling, 2002; Tschakert, 2009; de Theije and Heemskerk, 2009), and have social mobility aspirations (Jønsson & Bryceson, 2009). Banchirigah (2008), has noted that many miners in Ghana insist that they enjoy their work, despite the documented hardship. The strong mining identity means that policies to discourage working in the ASM sector through offering alternative livelihoods ultimately fail as the reasons for involvement in ASM are far more complex than simply poverty alleviation (Banchirigah, 2008; Hilson & Banchirigah, 2009; Tschakert, 2009; Wilson et al., 2015). Similar problems can be faced when trying to formalise miners, as formalisation inevitably disrupts and breaks existing habits and practices (Salo et al., 2016) which is resisted due to the connections with identity and memory in particular (Salman et al, 2015). There is again very little understanding of women’s identity development as a result of ASM. While Fisher (2007) has noted that gender differentiated migration plays an important role in identity formation and inclusion in mining in Tanzania, she has mainly focused on how a shared mining identity can replace the men’s traditional farming identity that was lost through rural transformation. There is some evidence to suggest women’s commitment to an ASM identity is somewhat weaker, as Seeling (2002) found women to be more eager to leave mining settlements for engagement in alternative, less strenuous, livelihood activities elsewhere.

Several researchers have discussed the collective identity characteristics that develop between ASM operatives due to their shared occupation (Bryceson & Geenen, 2016; Jønsson & Bryceson, 2009). Werthmann (2010) noted that in Burkina Faso this is inherently different from the identity that forms in diaspora communities and highlights how within mining camps, ethnic and regional origin is often downplayed. Gratz (2004a) also highlighted this in his observation that nicknames within mining sites in Benin rarely relate to ethnic identity, indicating that youths are judged according to their behaviour and ability at the mining site, rather than their origins. It has been argued that this collective identity is able to develop despite the illegality of the profession in question due to the weakness of the central state in the mining communities (Bryceson & Geenen, 2016). However, what has not been explore here is the possibility that the very fact that mining is illegal, and thus the operatives criminalised, may reinforce that collective identity. This has been hinted at by Werthmann (2010) in her work on Burkina Faso, as she suggested that the collective awareness of being despised by the social mainstream leads to a ‘stigma’ management that contributed to some level of collective identity, although did not explore this in more detail. She did note that the miners were linked by relationships that extended beyond one particular locality (Werthmann, 2010), although she did not incorporate the residents of origin communities in her analysis.

Constant migration can also affect how people define themselves and how they are perceived (Bolay, 2014), although this has been relatively underexplored in the literature in terms of how it may shape miners’ identity. It is however thought that high mobility may influence an individual’s traditional attachments to their place of origin and self-definitions, which Jønsson and Bryceson (2009) have argued is reflected in the way miners become judged by their qualifications rather than their origin or ethnic affiliations. However, while the inherent contradiction between local attachment and forms of migration is often seen as an inevitability within ASM (Bolay, 2014), there is little understanding of how this shapes broader community dynamics, particularly across the multi-sited ASM community. Furthermore, miners within a given mine site are not a homogenous group (Walsh, 2003, 2012) and Bolay (2014) has identified the need for a better understanding of the processes of identification among the various categories of residents and mobile, transient and long-term and ‘newbies’ and experienced gold diggers. He showed that while a gold-mining town in Guinea had received several waves of ‘transitory migrants’, migration narratives still play an important role in shaping the identities of the local populations through reference to the ‘first settlers’ (Bolay, 2014).

Shared mining identities are useful for mobilising social capital, not least through shared consumption practices, friendship ties, and rules for behaviour as illustrated by Grätz (2009) in Mali and Benin. De Boeck (1999) highlighted how the relationships built through excessive consumption with fellow miners allowed miners to `fix' the non-steady state of selfhood, in flux through the act of migration, and therefore of one's own identity. De Boeck (1999) also hinted that this might help bridge the gap between increasingly diffuse socio-cultural situations, allowing them to partake in modernity while remaining outside of it. Interestingly this begins to acknowledge identity as a multi-sited affair, hinting at the impact of migration on community identity, rather than simply focusing on an identity that stems from one’s mining profession. Werthmann (2010) suggests that the miners’ understanding of how the dominant society perceives them enhances the differences from non-miners and provides a sense of belonging. However, there is also much evidence to suggest that miners face exclusion from wider society, including access to resources, governance and decision-making (Fisher, 2007). Werthmann (2010) for example has shown that in Burkina Faso, people who live and work in mining camps are considered to have a bad reputation by outsiders. Given that mining is socially segmented (Verbrugge, 2014, 2016), it is poorer miners or those who are adversely incorporated into the sector that face the worst exclusion (Fisher, 2007). Highly mobile miners may find themselves the most excluded from wider society, but also may actively exclude themselves in the hope of transgressing boundaries and acquiring wealth through illicit trade (Ibid.). De Boeck (1999), for example, clearly illustrated this with the case of diamond mining in DRC as smuggling can promote social status despite often being criticised by others in the wider community. Fisher (2007) draws on these observations to suggest that it is the ambivalence and marginality associated with artisanal mining that can enable wealth and power to be accrued.

## 2.6. Criminalisation, resistance and identity

Whilst many academics and practitioners now advocate for the formalisation of miners in order to eradicate some of the conflict, violence and other social issues associated with ASM (Bloch & Owusu, 2012; Hilson & Gatsinzi, 2014; Siegel & Veiga, 2009), governments are still rarely supportive of ASM and miners remain in the informal sector. Several researchers have in fact criticised existing formalisation policies for pushing informal gold miners into the realm of illegality, due to the difficulties with miners being able to meet the criteria for formalisation, resulting in policy failure and disillusionment (Geenen, 2012; Salo et al., 2016). In some countries informal ASM is tolerated (Siegel & Veiga, 2009), but in most states ASM miners are dealt with in an antagonistic way. This includes the arrest and eviction of miners and the blowing up of mining equipment, which only adds to their marginalisation (Fisher, 2008; Hilson & Osei, 2014; Hirons, 2014). This section will first present existing evidence on how regulation has not only led to the criminalisation of miners in many countries, but how public discourse has also reflected this criminalisation in an increasingly negative portrayal of ASM operatives. This thesis will then go on to illustrate the impacts of this on insecurity within mining sites. The second sub-section will link this criminalisation to forms of conflict seen in the ASM sector, but also showing that despite the insecurity, miners are often able to negotiate conflict to avoid outbreaks of violence. The third section will focus on how the continuation of mining activity represents a form of resistance that often relies on strong organisation. I will conclude this chapter by suggesting that a key gap in the literature has been the failure of academics to link this active resistance with the emergence of a collective identity.

### 2.6.1. Criminalisation

It has been observed that the regulation of any natural resource tends to occur in the form of ‘criminalisation’ (Tschakert & Singha, 2007). There is evidence of this from a wide variety of countries. In South Africa for example, ASM miners are automatically illegal as only registered industrial mines can obtain permits and process mined material (Thornton, 2014), while in Colombia, legal reforms that required ASM operatives to complete the same technical and environmental studies as large-scale gold mining projects resulted in the criminalisation of thousands of people (Tubb, 2015). Some academics have argued that the failure of host governments and donors to provide artisanal miners with a fair opportunity to formalise amounts to a deliberate criminalisation of the sector and the people who work within it (Siegal, 2013; Hilson & Osei, 2014; Tschakert & Singha, 2007). Moreover, the effectiveness of such policies is negligible in places such as Brazil, where miners have neither the capacity nor the motivation to abide by these new rules (Sousa et al., 2011). This was also noted in Colombia, which is rich in mining law but weak in authority and thus legality does not necessarily imply legitimacy (Vélez-Torres, 2016).

The literature provides well-documented evidence of the way ASM operatives are portrayed in public discourse, highlighting a tendency for them to be referred to as criminals that harm themselves and their environment (Hilson et al., 2007; Nyame & Grant, 2014; Tschakert, 2009). For example, in Ghana miners are often explicitly referred to as a ‘headache’, ‘challenge’, ‘problem’, ‘menace’, and ‘threat’, who are the ‘villains’ that the Government ‘heroes’ have to deal with (Tschakert & Singha, 2007), while in South Africa, miners are presented as an ‘ignorant rabble’ who steal gold both from legitimate mines and the nation (Thornton, 2014). Moreover, local indigenous communities and small-scale farmers are portrayed as vulnerable victims of these criminal miners (Tschakert & Singha, 2007). As a result, ASM is perceived as being steeped in illegality and delinquency (Seeling, 2002), and artisanal miners as being uncontrollable people who disregard national laws and state authority (Fisher, 2008; Hilson & Potter, 2005). Highly mobile miners tend to be particularly vilified, often being portrayed as ‘indigent groups that roam the country with vaguely venal intentions’ (Nyame & Grant, 2014, p.81).

Such discourse feeds back into policy. If one believes that miners are all greedy criminals, this tends to hinder investment and formalisation. In Ghana for example, many people believe that illegal companies control ASM, and therefore formalising or developing the sector in any way would simply lead to those people getting richer (Tschakert, 2009). Some commentators insist that miners deliberately evade the law (Banchirigah, 2008), which means there is little incentive to embark on formalisation processes. Several authors have also pointed out that the criminalisation and institutionalised disrespect of ASM operators excludes them from decision-making processes and is not conducive to collaborative or long-term action (Fisher, 2007; Hilson et al., 2007; Tschakert, 2009; Tschakert & Singha, 2007; Urkidi & Walter, 2011; Wilson et al., 2015). This seems counterproductive if state governments are serious about finding solutions to the social problems they associate with ASM (Heemskerk & Oliveira, 2004; Tschakert, 2009; Tschakert & Singha, 2007).

Criminalisation is associated with a lack of human rights, poor institutional support, and systematic marginalisation and repression (Cremers & de Theije, 2013; Fisher et al., 2009; Tschakert & Singha, 2007). The state has little incentive to protect informal miners from crime and violence (Nyame & Grant, 2014) and in some cases large-scale construction companies have been shown to use narratives of criminality to absolve themselves of responsibility when ASM workers are killed in shaft collapses (Bolay, 2014). As a result, ASM operators exist in constant insecurity, perpetually at risk of losing their possessions and future gains (Cremers & de Theije, 2013; Seeling, 2002). This disincentivises investment in environmentally friendly technology or other long-term investments in the gold fields (Cremers & de Theije, 2013) and encourages both mobility (Wilson et al., 2015) and the over-exploitation of mining sites (Grätz, 2003). Furthermore, the illegal nature of ASM is associated with an increase in crime, violence, prostitution, disease and narcotics consumption in mine sites (Heemskerk & Oliveira, 2004; Hentschel et al., 2002; Hilson & McQuilken, 2014; Hilson & Osei, 2014; Wilson et al., 2015). Due to their informality, ASM operatives and other residents are vulnerable to corruption and rent-seeking of police and government representatives (Seeling, 2002; Thornton, 2014), as well as from armed groups and criminal gangs that may establish themselves in mining areas (Grätz, 2009; Maconachie, 2014; Thornton, 2014). In the Philippines, for example, Verbrugge (2014) has documented the control of various armed outfits in mining areas, who often claim money from miners for ‘protection’ services, while in Ghana, armed robberies have led to miners forming self-defence groups (Nyame & Grant, 2014). A similar level of livelihood insecurity has also been shown to exist in the cannabis trade (Laudati, 2016), reinforcing the links with informality and illicit livelihoods.

### 2.6.2. Conflict

There has been extensive research on the violence and conflict that emerges within the ASM sector. This is often linked to the understanding of miners as criminals, with violence in ASM sites in Latin America in particular often being associated with the sector’s perceived connections with narcotrafficking and the funding of guerrilla groups (Sarmiento et al., 2013). Elsewhere, a large body of literature focuses on the tensions that arise between artisanal miners and large-scale mining companies (see for example Aubynn, 2009; Patel et al., 2016; Verbrugge, 2017). While foreign companies frequently use the presence of artisanal miners as a good indication of where to initiate exploration work, they then often rely on armed security guards to restrict access to the most productive mining land (Luning, 2012). Where ASM continues, it can become disruptive to large-scale mining companies, who then pressure the national government and make it difficult for them to support the livelihoods of ASM miners. This leads to conflicts between small-scale miners and large-scale miners and/or the government (Verbrugge, 2017).

There is another set of conflicts that emerge between migrant miners and indigenous communities, the latter of whom may or may not be involved in mining activity. Such conflicts have been particularly well illustrated in reference to Latin America, with issues identified around land use and struggles for access to mine sites (Salman, Carillo, & Soruco, 2013; Salman & de Theije, 2017), as well as cultural clashes and the disruption of traditional practices (Sarmiento et al., 2013). In Suriname for example, Brazilian migrants were blamed for the increasing violence in the local communities (de Theije & Heemskerk, 2009), while in Colombia, local communities complained that newly-arrived miners ignored the local rules that had been established to govern mining activities (Sarmiento et al., 2013). However, Hoogbergen and Kruijt (2004) showed that although newly arrived Brazilian miners in Suriname carried guns and seemed to care little for local environment, they were able to work in relative harmony with the local population. Tubb (2015) has also illustrated that local mining communities may choose to work with newly arrived migrants if they think it will improve their access to gold. As such, he shows that these partnerships are not always characterized by animosity, coercion or intimidation. Conflicts may of course also emerge between different groups of migrant miners, such as between mine owners and labourers, especially in cases where working conditions are dangerous, or if new arrivals encroach on land (Salman & de Theije, 2017).

What is interesting to note however, is that despite the conflicts that exist over land and resources, many mining settlements are able to refrain from descending into violent chaos. Heemskerk and Duijves (2013) have illustrated this well in the case of Suriname, showing how most conflicts are managed through negotiation. Salman and de Theije (2017) have argued that this internal coherence arises because all actors involved know that a situation of complete anarchy is unlikely to benefit them, and therefore accept some claims on power by others. They developed a multi-temporal model to illustrate how miners deal with these conflicts, emphasizing both the short-term dynamics of negotiation and the long-term, structural nature of the underlying problem. They also argue that individual histories, memories and strategies of all the actors are of crucial importance, especially when forming a collective response to conflict (Salman & de Theije, 2017; Salman et al., 2018). This is an interesting model, as it focuses on the coming together of various life trajectories in a bid to understand conflict, yet at the same time it fails to incorporate future trajectories and expectations. This seems like an oversight, as we have seen above that miners who have little long-term interest in an area are likely to behave in very different ways to those that have settled.

### 2.6.3. Resistance

As highlighted above, the literature is not short on descriptive accounts of the implications of criminality for ASM livelihoods and life in mining settlements. However, as Fisher (2008) points out, it is also necessary to understand how people create spaces to make a mining livelihood even within this context of marginalisation and informality. In De Soto’s (1988) theorising on extra-legal economies, he suggested that eradication of informal activities was futile, as it would always be met by strong resistance. Such resistance is clearly observable within ASM (Siegel & Veiga, 2009), often through the act of simply continuing with illegal mining practices. Bush (2009) for example, notes how Ghanaian ASM operatives are able to resist arrest by remaining mobile. By continuing mining activities on the margins of state control through creating or ‘capturing’ space, everyday mining practices can contribute to the continual re-establishment of law and order (Das & Poole, 2004; Fisher, 2008). However, acts of resistance can also include confrontations with police, which in some countries are becoming increasingly violent (Nyame & Grant, 2014). Grätz (2013) argued that such tensions do not derive from a conflict between national laws and miner interests per se, but due to rapidly changing, contradictory und unpredictable state policies that the miners have difficulties adapting to**.**

Academics have often focused on the need to make a living and provide for their families (Tschakert & Singha, 2007) as a key reason for continuing with an illicit livelihood. This could be argued as constituting resistance against processes of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003). Some researchers also point to the strong sense of injustice felt by ASM miners, due to both their treatment and the uneven way in which benefits accrue between large-scale formal mining and ASM (Maconachie, 2014; Tschakert & Singha, 2007). In many places in Latin America there has been a strong emphasis on the breakdown of trust between miners and policy makers, which fuels tensions (Heemskerk et al., 2015). This is because the state is generally considered to favour the interest of large-scale mining companies, and allegations of corruption result in scepticism of new government initiatives to improve the sector (Heemskerk et al., 2015; Sarmiento et al., 2013). There is also much literature focusing on how weak government institutions in combination with the availability of resource rents can radicalise miners’ demands and increase social conflict (Arellano-Yanguas, 2011; Haslam & Tanimoune, 2016; Spiegel, 2012; Verbrugge, 2015).

In reference to large-scale mining conflicts, the role of local organisations in keeping momentum up behind resistance and shaping discourse has been widely acknowledged (Bebbington et al., 2008). Similarly, in ASM, collective forms of resistance often rely on organisations and cooperatives, although this has been relatively less explored in the literature. However, there are very detailed accounts of collective organisation in Bolivia, where the majority of miners are employed by cooperatives which enables them to have a strong influence over the government (Salman, 2016; Salman et al., 2015). Salman (2016) argues that this has been created by memories of historical struggles but notes that Bolivia is a special case, given that it has a generally strong and active civil society. There are few interrogations of collective resistance on the part of artisanal miners elsewhere in the literature. Some work in Suriname suggests that collective action here tends to occur more along traditional lines, with cultural bonds, family ties and traditional leadership having forged a common identity against the state and the company (Salman & de Theije, 2017; Salman et al., 2018). However, it is still a shared experience of negative interactions with the state that has made the miners acutely aware of their vulnerability as individuals, and thus realise the power of collective organisation (Salman & de Theije, 2017).

The work by Salman and de Theije (2017) has started to link collective resistance with a shared history and identity, which has otherwise been ignored in the ASM literature. However, in the example of Suriname, these connections are traditional and based on a strong, shared history, which is often not present in the majority of migrant communities. Furthermore, their multi-temporal model focuses more on how this history shapes conflict resolution and negotiation, rather than how criminalisation, marginalisation and future aspiration may create a shared identity. Preservation of identity and a way of life has been implicated numerous times in community resistance against large-scale extraction development. For example, Bebbington et al (2008) drew on the work of Habermas (1987) to highlight how rural communities might resist large-scale developments and modernisation because they threaten their domains of everyday, meaningful practice, as well as the local environment. Similarly, Walter and Urkidi (2017) have shown that protestors in the Tambogrande mine in Peru claimed to be fighting to protect their agriculturalist identity rather than just their farming livelihood. Although it seems likely that the strong cultural aspects of ASM livelihoods means that informal ASM miners are also fighting to protect their identity as well as their income when they resistant government attempts to shut down their operations, this is yet to be explored in detail in the literature.

The formation of such identities in large-scale mining conflicts has also been linked to public discourse (Bebbington, 2013; Crossley, 2002), but there is limited exploration of the impact of negative public discourse on identity in ASM. Dell (2013) has however shown the importance of discourses when challenging government and corporate power. In his example of the Southern Kayes in Mali, Dell showed how local protestors challenged their ‘local’ identity as agrarian and uneducated, by claiming the right to work at the industrial mine that displaced their homes and livelihoods, yet also used their ‘localness’ to justify their priority in the mine’s hiring processes (Ibid.). Werthmann (2010) has also observed how the way that men and women who live in mining sites are perceived can create a deviant identity. As a result, mine sites become ‘heterotopias’, where the rigid social norms of the dominant society can be contradicted and alternative modes of being, which would ordinarily not be considered respectable, are possible (Ibid.). She does not however link this identity to a resistance against the state, but more to a continuation of behaviour, such as excessive alcohol consumption, which may go against the norms of the dominant society.

2.8. Summary

In recent years, researchers have started to emphasise the heterogeneity of miners and in particular the tendency for some to successfully pursue capital interests and accumulate wealth through their engagement in the sector (Cortés-McPherson, 2019; Verbrugge, 2014). However, while this exploration of differentiation within the mining community feels long overdue, this chapter has pointed to several gaps in our understanding of the diverse nature of these communities and the impact this has on community dynamics. This is important, because several academics have argued that understanding communities and including them in the debate is critical for the successful design of ASM policy. The three key gaps that I argue exist in our understanding of ASM communities relate to the translocal nature of ASM livelihoods, which incorporates both origin and host locations, the community identity and the role of women.

After providing a brief background on ASM, the chapter first discussed the emerging literature on women’s engagement in the sector and their position within mining towns and settlements. It then goes on to show that while high mobility is known to be a key characteristic of the sector, thorough explorations of the implications of this are surprisingly limited. Most significantly, there are no existing studies which focus on both origin and destination community in a holistic manner. This means that studies that have looked at the social anthropological implications of ASM have generally only done so through the consideration of a spatially bound mining town or settlement. This has obvious implications for our understanding of women’s roles in the sector. At the same time, I have also shown that there is little knowledge of divergences in livelihood trajectories and the temporality of engagement in ASM. Certainly, the information that does exist makes no attempt to link it to other literature that discusses the emergence of miner identities. The chapter then used evidence from several countries to illustrate the problems associated with criminalisation, but also how mining operatives have been able to continue mining. While this is interesting, I point to the fact that there has as yet been no exploration of what criminalisation may imply for the mining identity.

# 3. The Peruvian context

## 3.1. Introduction

Peru is a geographically complex country divided into three major regions: a coastal desert plain to the west, the lowland jungle of the Amazon Basin to the west, and the high and rugged Andes running down the center (Sørensen, 2002). Although large-scale mining occurs in the Andes and the coast, there is also a growing presence of ASM in the Amazonian region of Madre de Dios. It is on migration to mining towns and settlement in this region that this study focuses. Peru has strong ethnic diversity due to centuries of migration and is also extremely biodiverse. Thus, while it is also home to a wealth of mineral and gas resources, the extraction of both has massive implications for this delicate environment.

This chapter will introduce the Peruvian context in more detail, providing background and context to the research that is to be presented in the following chapters. Given the importance of the economy to any discussion on extractive industries, I start by providing a brief economic history of Peru. This highlights the centrality of trade to Peru’s economic fortunes, detailing the country’s move from policies of import substitution to liberalisation. I then take a more human focus, discussing the structural inequalities that characterise the population and how this is tied to patterns of migration. These ethnic tensions contributed to years of civil unrest perpetrated by *Sendero Luminoso,* and details of this conflict and its legacy and elaborated on in section 4. I then focus in on the mining sector in Peru, looking at the history of extractive industries, the more contemporary affects of neoliberalism and the recent growth in ASM. Finally, this chapter concludes with a focus on resistance. While collective resistance has long been a feature of Peruvian society, it has had a particularly strong resurgence in recent years in response to mineral and natural gas extraction, and is thus highly relevant to this research.

## 3.2. Economic background

Peru’s economy is highly reliant on extractive industries and the economic policies pursued by governments have had a profound impact on the rate and method through which resources are extracted. Throughout it’s history as an independent country, these policies have changed dramatically, and a brief background of these changes over time is crucial foregrounding for research on Peruvian extractives.

### 3.2.1. Trade and import substitution

Exports are a corner stone of Peruvian economic development and have ensured its integration into the world economy (Long & Roberts, 1984). Over the years, trade policy has swung between protectionism and free trade. The initially high tariffs of the pre-independence era gave way to free trade at the turn of the century (Coatsworth & Williamson, 2004) before going up again after the Great Depression. However, in the later 1960s, Peru adopted the Import Substitution (IS) policies that had been implemented around much of Latin America (Orihuela, 2012). These were designed to limit foreign trade and investment and instead build the national industrial capacity to replace reliance on foreign imports (Brain, 2017; Green, 1999, 2003).

Initially IS proved to be somewhat successful, providing new capital and enhanced national industry. However, by the start of the 1980s, like many Latin American countries, Peru was suffering from hyperinflation and poor economic growth (Bebbington & Bury, 2013). Import substitution was blamed for the falling GDP, massive annual inflation and extremely low employment rates (Elias, 1991; Glewwe & de Tray, 1991; Tanski, 1994), as well as the weakened state and growing violence (Gonzales de Olarte & Sammame, 1991; Paredes & Sachs, 1991; Paus, 1991; Sheahan, 1997). However, there were several other contributing factors, including declining terms of trade, low or non-existent growth in aggregate investment and low productivity in the agricultural sector (Glewwe & de Tray, 1991). Peru’s high debt burden also meant it was very sensitive to high international interest rates, and by 1988, debt as a percentage of GNP was 47.3% (Tanski, 1994).

In response to the global debt crisis, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank prescribed Structural Adjustment policies (SAPs) aimed at imposing institutional and economic reform in order to promote economic efficiency and stable growth. This was primarily achieved through removing price and other distortions, such as barriers to trade, and promoting the private sector while reducing government expenditure (Glewwe & de Tray, 1991). In essence, these were austerity measures that required state governments open themselves up to FDI in the hope that they might eventually use it to pay off their debt (Brain, 2017; Perreault & Martin, 2005). Although there were expected to be numerous long-term benefits of this reform, there were more immediate effects on households, and these were not generally positive. These included increased prices of consumables, loss of employment or wages and changes in the provision of public services (Glewwe & de Tray, 1991). In the years that followed, the devastating impact that the SAPs had on the world’s global poor became clear and received widespread criticism.

Peru had initially tried to resist the SAPs, and instead President García Perez had implemented a range of heterodox adjustment policies as an alternative to those advocated by the IMF, which claimed to offer stabilisation, redistribution and restructuring (Paus, 1991). The set of policies included placing an upper limit of 10% on the amount of export earnings to be used for debt repayments and a moderate devaluation of the currency (Glewwe & Hall, 1992; Glewwe & de Tray, 1991; Hays-Mitchell, 2002). There was also an emphasis on protectionism through increasing import barriers and subsidising local agricultural inputs (Glewwe & de Tray, 1991). Initially Garcia’s approach had a positive impact, with GDP growing by 8.5% in 1986. However, the policies and related changes were unsustainable, largely because Peru became ostracised from the international financial community from deviating from the IMF-prescribed restructuring policies (Hays-Mitchell, 2002). By 1987, the government were facing a fiscal deficit of 5.5% of GDP and an external deficit of 2% (Glewwe & de Tray, 1991). The crisis was having a devastating impact on the poor, reflected in the falling level of GDP per capita and in the contrast between the value of a basic food basket and the average income of the workers (Tanski, 1994). Large numbers of previously non-poor households found themselves forced into poverty. Indeed, the percentage of households defined as ‘poor’ in metropolitan Lima went from 16.9% in 1985-86 to 44.3% in 1990 (Instituto Cuanto, 1991). By 1990, Peru had experienced one of the ‘most rapid and severe peace-time deteriorations of living standards ever recorded’ (Glewwe & Hall, 1992, p.7).

### 3.2.2. Alberto Fujimore and the neo-liberal agenda

By the time Alberto Fujimori took office in July 1990, the country was in deep economic crisis. Despite campaigning on a promise to not implement IMF-style SAPs, the new president quickly set about doing just that with sudden reforms that became known as ‘Fujishock’ (Hays-Mitchell, 2002). Fujimore’s stabilisation measures included the elimination of food subsidies and the upward adjustment of controlled prices. This was followed by structural adjustment measures which included, but were not limited to; the liberalisation of exchange rates; the elimination of FDI restrictions; the elimination of import restrictions and a reduction of import tariffs; the privatisation of state firms and a reduction of state expenditure on education, health and infrastructure; and the relaxation of minimum wage laws (Tanski, 1994).

Fujishock undoubtedly delivered radical change and with immediate effect. Overnight the prices soared and inflation rose by 400% in August alone, while real wages declined by more than 50% (Hays-Mitchell, 2002; Webb & Fernández-Baca, 1993). High interest rates and a capital inflow made the currency appreciate, and this, combined with the continued violence of *Sendero Luminoso*, meant that output continued to fall (Sheahan, 1997). However, over the next few years Peru’s economy began to recover and by 1994, it was the most rapidly growing economy in the world (Hays-Mitchell, 2002). While one may be tempted to attribute this solely to Fujimore’s neoliberal reforms, Sheahan (1997) argues that there were two important events in 1992 that contributed greatly to the change in fortune. The first was Fujimore’s decision to close down congress in order to prevent any opposition to both his liberalisation programme and the army’s numerous reported human rights violations. The second was the capture of the head of *Sendero Luminoso* and several of his associates. Both were extremely popular with the public and investors, and there was a steep increase in FDI that contributed to an increase in output (Ibid.).

As was the case in other countries that experienced SAPs, there were devastating social impacts. In the first four months after the policies were introduced, the number of people living in poverty increased from 8 million to 12 million and consumption levels fell by 32.7% (Elias, 1991; Tanski, 1994). Employment also fell, particularly as national companies faced higher levels of competition and were forced to cut staffing costs (Sheahan, 1997). An accompanying price increase meant that real wages and salaries fell by 50% (Elias, 1991). This had huge implications for informality, and by 1994 51.5% of the labour force of Lima was employed in the informal sector (Infante, 1995). In an attempt to alleviate some of these social issues, the government designed a social programme intended to target areas of extreme poverty (Palmer, 2017). The programme was slow to get off the ground as spending was far below budget (Sheahan, 1997) and the majority of the assistance initially went to people living in Lima rather than the impoverished rural areas (Tanski, 1994). Eventually however, the President decided to orientate funds towards rural areas where his support against *Sendero Luminoso* was weak (Sheahan, 1997). By 1998, the extreme poverty rate had fallen from 31% of the population to 15% (Palmer, 2017). This progress won Fujimore public support in the rural areas (Ibid.), but it has been argued that the debilitating effects the reforms were offset more by the collective survival strategies of poor communities themselves than any of the government’s actions (Hays-Mitchell, 2002).

By the mid-1990s, the Peruvian economy was in a state of expansion and political violence had diminished dramatically. However, reductions in trade barriers continued throughout the 1990s, with important reductions happening in 1997 and 2001 (Field & Field, 2010). In 2000, Fujimore suddenly resigned, yet the legacy of neo-liberalism lived on. During the 2000s many countries in Latin America experienced a ‘Turn to the Left’, which became heavily associated with a deepening of extractive activity, particularly in countries such as Venezuala (Arsel, Hogenboom, & Pellegrini, 2016). However, in Peru Fujimore’s successor, Alejandro Toledo, continued the neoliberal economic model and this generated a high growth rate (Cameron, 2011). When he was replaced in 2006, the in-coming President Garcia had apparently learnt from his first time in office, during which he had governed very much from the left. Whilst he remained ideologically in the centre of the political spectrum, he continued with the neo-liberal policies he thought would not only allow him to become the default leader of the right, but also build a strong governing coalition (Ibid.). As a result, Peru continued to promote foreign investment in the primary export sector (McClintock, 2019). This has made the country reliant on exports, and it has proven to be vulnerable in the face of the recent deterioration in the terms of trade and the downturn in exports to China (Herrera, 2017).

## 3.3. The human population

Peru is an exceptionally heterogeneous society and has a long history of international migration. However, the ethnic divides introduced during the colonial period have held an enduring legacy and continue to result in strong divides between groups of the population. Inequality is stark and in 2016 the population living in poverty was still estimated to be 21% (The Economist, 2018). This section will highlight how Peru’s economic growth has not been pro-poor and has instead resulted in enduring levels of inequality that reinforce ethnic divides. It will then go on to discuss the patterns of migration that have come to characterise life in Peru, with many people having relied on it for livelihood opportunities. This provides an important background when exploring migration in relation to ASM.

### 3.3.1. Economic inequality

The vast majority of Peru’s inhabitants live in the coastal region, particularly in the capital city of Lima, which is home to roughly a third of Peru’s total population (Orihuela, 2012). Meanwhile, the Andean and Amazon regions are sparsely populated, with many communities being extremely remote (Hoffman & Grigera, 2013). Peru’s export-linked economic sectors are based primarily in Lima and other coastal cities, even though it relies heavily on production in the other zones (Orihuela, 2012). This has created massive income disparities when compared with the rural population who engaged in subsistence agriculture (Long & Roberts, 1984). The Andes and the Amazon have far higher levels of poverty than the coastal region, poorer infrastructure and basic services, and fewer formal employment opportunities (Hoffman & Grigera, 2013; Orihuela, 2012).

Livelihoods, particularly in the Andes, remain largely reliant on small hold subsistence agriculture and have to endure extreme altitudes, a fragile ecology and a short growing season (Becker, 1983). Such livelihoods are also increasingly threatened by climate change and water scarcity (Hoffman & Grigera, 2013). There has been high population growth over the last few decades, which has increased the labour force at a rate that cannot be absorbed by these agricultural activities (Menton & Cronkleton, 2019). Meanwhile, the Amazon has historically been unpopulated apart from small indigenous tribes (Becker, 1983) and remains largely undeveloped. It has only been relatively recently that the population in the Amazon has increased, as successive governments have attempted to “colonise” the area (Menton & Cronkleton, 2019). This has caused numerous problems for indigenous people, who have found their traditional ways of life being threatened by development and industry in the region (Orta-Martínez & Finer, 2010).

### 3.3.2. Ethnic divides and structural racism

As Paerregaard (1997) noted, the tense and contentious links and interactions between the different ethnic and linguistic groups that make up the Peruvian nation is a crucial aspect of society. The population has been divided, with people of European descent being distinct from ‘*Indios*’ and ‘*Mestizos[[2]](#footnote-2)*’, which has strongly contributed to the creation of group identities (Orihuela, 2012). Much of this group identity is related to linguistic background, as while Spanish is the most widely spoken language, the majority of indigenous Peruvians speak Quechua or Aymara as their first language (Rousseau and Dargent, 2019)[[3]](#footnote-3). Over the years, there have been numerous widespread conflicts between, and amongst, Peru’s differeng ethnic groups. This started with the violent encounters between indigenous communities and the Spanish and European settlers in the 1500’s, which continue to fuel antagonism and underscore rhetoric (Paerregaard, 1997). Orihuela (2012) also discusses the land conflicts that broke out after independence that proclaimed the end of the collective ownership of land by indigenous people and effectively led to the expansion of estates. This expansion, along with the efforts of the state to raise taxation and set up schemes of forced labour for public infrastructure, led to social conflict. Such issues emphasised and deepened inter-group disparities between Indians and Whites (Ibid.).

As will be discussed in the following section, numerous immigrants travelled from the Andes to the coast in search of new opportunities. Those Andean people who migrated to the coast became known as *Cholos,* a term for anybody who had a perceived indigenous heritage, and the term *Indio* became reserved for ‘backward’ communities who remained in the Andes and Amazon and had not benefited from education or economic development (Orihuela, 2012). This terminology became intertwined with a pervasive notion that Andean culture is an obstacle to economic development and national integration, and this is often used to justify discrimination of Andean people and to excuse socially inequality (Paerregaard, 1997). This has made the issue of linguistic background particularly salient, as the Spanish language is so closely associated with ‘civilised’ Peru and a higher social status (Rousseau and Dargent, 2019). Thus *Cholo* also become a slur for those Quechua-speakers who have access to Spanish only as a second language, even when they become more or less fluent (Huayhua, 2019). As a result, the Andean world remains social and cultural distinct and disassociated from that of the coast, which is clearly reflected in political discourses (Paerregaard, 1997). However, while the *Cholos* may have attempted to integrate into life in the coastal area, they continue to be subjected to everyday forms of exclusion, particularly in the labour market (Figueroa, 2008; Galarza, Kogan, & Tamada, 2011; Kogan, Fuchs, & Lay, 2011). Furthermore, the entrepreneurial class was predominantly made up of Creole and European immigrant families based on the Coast and not indigenous people (Orihuela, 2012). However, some descendants of earlier Andean arrivals have risen to membership in the nation’s political and economic elite (Becker, 1983).

### 3.3.3. Labour migrations

Migration in Peru can be seen as ‘institutionalised’ and has created new community dynamics through the movement of people to new areas (Smith, 1989). Livelihood diversification and seasonal migration has historically been crucial for Andean households (Smith, 1989; Sørensen, 2002), and became particularly attractive options after the SAPs and decades of neoliberal policy further undermined rural livelihoods (Takenaka et al., 2010; Takenaka & Pren, 2010). The history of migration in Peru has been well documented by writer such as Smith (1989) and Long and Roberts (1984). Smith’s (1989) description of Andean migrants making a living for themselves in the slums and shantytowns of Lima by selling fruit on a permanent basis highlights the poverty-driven nature of such endeavours. Whereas the Andean migrants who went to Lima in the first half of the twentieth century were often well educated (Long & Roberts, 1984), a second wave of migrants in the 1980s were more likely to be low-educated, Quechua-speakers who often struggled to find work once they had arrived (Hays-Mitchell, 2002).

While the Incas had strict controls on mobility, under Spanish-rule subjects were free to move to new locations and would often not return to their community of origin (Vincent, 2012a). However, patterns of migration in Peru are far more complex than a simple, permanent movement from A to B. Smith (1989) for example discussed the fact that many rural people travel to Lima and other cities only in the agricultural low-season, creating cyclical patterns of migration. In Vincent’s (2012a) work on a community in Allpachicho, she discusses the lives of several households who operate translocally, although does not use this term to describe them. She argues that as migrants maintain their status in the villages and frequently return home, it would be impossible to understand life for the people in those communities if research was limited to the village alone (Vincent, 2012a). Paerregaard (1997) has also noted the tendency for scholars to focus on discrete rural communities in their research, and in doing so, ignoring the links with the wider national framework of society.

Migration from the Andes in particular is extremely high. Until the 1940s, approximately 65% of the population lived in the mostly rural Andes, but by the turn of the century only 30% of the population in the entire country was rural (Sørensen, 2002). This is partly due to the structural inequalities that exist in Peru that both discriminate against indigenous peoples and have kept the Andean region poor, meaning that the people that live there lack viable alternatives (Damonte, 2016; Kuramoto, 2001; Toledo Orozco & Veiga, 2018). They therefore migrate to coastal cities and the mining centres in other parts of the Andes in search of jobs and opportunities (Becker, 1983). Unfortunately, systematic racial discrimination in Peru means that for Andean people, rural-urban migration can often result in urban poverty (Hays-Mitchell, 2002; Steel & Zoomers, 2009; Takenaka et al., 2010).

There is also significant migration from the Andes to the Amazon, with many people maintaining cyclical patterns of migration between the two areas (Menton & Cronkleton, 2019). In the 1970s and 1980s, the Government actively encouraged migration to Madre de Dios due to a desire to increase the population of Amazon and control the frontier. Although there was an indigenous and non-native population in the region before that, the numbers were relatively small, totalling around 14,890 in 1961 (INEI, 2018). With no presence in the jungle, the Peruvian government had no way to benefit from the Amazon’s natural resources and needed to protect the borderlands from Brazil and Bolivia. As Damonte (2016) asserts, the Government viewed the Amazon as a frontier to be exploited, and encouraged its’ occupation for this reason rather than as a means of ensuring socio-economic development.

## 3.4. Sendero Luminoso

One of the most important and devastating events in Peru’s history was the civil war that dominated life in the 1980s and early 1990s. This was launched by *Sendero Luminoso*, a communist insurgency movement, and took the form of brutal violence through guerilla warfare. The conflict is important background for any research on Peru, but is particularly important to a study on migration as the violence in rural areas led to widespread migration away from the most affected areas. This section will provide a brief background on the conflict, documenting the historical and political roots of the movement, as well as the trajectory the conflict took before the capture of the group’s leaders. I will then focus more in depth on the impact the conflict had on every day life and how it led to mass migration away from rural areas.

### 3.4.1. Background to the conflict

Along with economic crisis, Peruvians have had to cope with a civil was that started in 1984 and turned excessively violent into the 1990s. This was initiated by radical Maoist ideology that eventually encompassed a significant proportion of the countryside as well as encroaching into urban areas and, eventually, Lima itself. The ideology-driven conflict can be directly traced back to an impoverished town in the south-central highlands, which then spread across the majority of the country. At the time, the majority of the population in the Southern highlands were illiterate and living standards were significantly lower than on the coast or in the northern or central highlands (McClintock, 1984). Although conditions there have always made agricultural livelihoods difficult, they had become poorer through the 1970s and in 1983 were further devastated by drought caused by the El Niño (Ibid.). The radical land reform introduced by the Velasco government that had brought about the end of the haciendas had also failed to benefit farming families as much as had been anticipated (McClintock, 1984; Shadle, 2013). It is these conditions that are widely thought to have enabled *Sendero* *Luminoso* to attract strong support in rural areas (McClintock, 1984; Shadle, 2013).

Palmer (2017) argues that despite the economic crisis, Peru in the 1980s did not bear the hallmarks of a country under threat of insurgency. This is because it had a functioning democracy and could not be classified as authoritarian or repressive. Furthermore, poor and illiterate people were able to vote and there seemed to be sufficient political space within the system for the resolution of grievances, however profound (Ibid.). The recent election of a more reformist administration had in fact generated a more open political climate and an expansion in party activity, especially on the left. This was buoyed by international politics at the time, most notably the Cold War. While the Soviet Union made important contributions to the Communist Party, the US policy toward Latin America was dominated by national security issues and growing hostility. The Cuban Revolution also inspired sympathy throughout Latin America with many buying into the anti-American and anti-capitalist message, furthering the ambitions of the left, particularly within universities (Ibid.).

Despite the high levels of extreme poverty at the time in rural areas, it was not the impoverished populations that initiated the insurgency (Palmer, 2017). Instead *Sendero Luminoso* had its beginning in the Education Faculty at the Universidad Nacional San Cristobal de Huamanga in Ayacucho (Kent, 1993). Abimael Guzmán Reynoso was a lecturer here in the mid-1960s, and already an active member of the breakaway Maoist party, Red Flag (Palmer, 2017). Energised into action by the poverty and suffering he saw in the local area, Guzman borrowed from Maoist teaching to form *Sendero Luminoso*. He spent 15-20 years recruiting a dedicated cadre and forming a revolutionary party and a guerrilla army, laying the foundations for the subsequent long-term struggle (Manwaring, 1995). His position in the University provided an avenue through which to indoctrinate and recruit members of the student body, many of whom were Quechua-speaking natives from the region. Once they had finished their studies, the students mostly returned home to work in their local communities, where many of them became teachers, enabling *Sendero*’s vision and message to be passed through rural areas and build a network of supporters and sympathisers (Kent, 1993; Palmer, 2017).

After years of preparation, *Sendero Luminoso* initiated war in mid-1980, with the burning of a ballot box in Ayacucho the night before a national election (Galdo, 2013; Palmer, 2017; Shadle, 2013). Their main aim was to bring about the generalization of political violence and the gradual encirclement of the cities, leading to the eventual collapse of the government and the establishment of a ‘New Democracy’ (Palmer, 2017). They aimed to liberate the countryside through revolution, end market-orientated agricultural production and displace the capitalist marketing system (Kent, 1993). While they initially hoped to win support in rural areas, they eventually intended to bring down the Peruvian government through creating chaos in urban centres (Kent, 1993; McClintock, 1984). *Sendero Luminoso* never had large numbers in their ranks, and when civil war was declared it is estimated that they only had about 150-200 militants, but their support base was much wider (Palmer, 2017).

Given its small number of militants, *Sendero Luminoso* relied on strategic finesse and recruitment of new militants and supporters, whilst taking advantage of the government’s inability to respond appropriately and effectively. Evidence from the late 1980s suggests that at that time, there was strong support for *Sendero* among large majorities of Ayacucho citizens (McClintock, 1993). This helped *Sendero*’s success as it carried out armed attacks on police stations as well as threats and assassinations of government representatives (Kent, 1993). Eventually this led many officials to retreat from the countryside and *Sendero Luminoso* set up its own governance structures in their place. It would however be misleading to suggest that *Sendero*’s actions were universally supported in these rural areas. Some small communities came under complete territorial domination, with locals finding themselves banned from travelling in and out or from holding community meetings. In these areas, farmers were often told to reduce their agricultural output, meaning that food became scarce. Such actions began to alienate local communities and many counter-rebellions formed, although in many cases these ended with executions (Kent, 1993).

Fortunately for *Sendero Luminoso*, the Government proved completely incapable of dealing with the insurgency. In 1982, President Fernando Belaúnde declared a state of emergency and effectively handed power to the military in order for them to fight the insurgency. Instead of using strategic force, they were accused of targeting both civilians and insurgents indiscriminately (Galdo, 2013; Palmer, 2017). The brutal force used against rural indigenous communities only served to reinforce deep racial divides, as whites and mestizos in Lima and other urban centres turned a blind eye towards their plight (Palmer, 2017). At the same time, economic crisis had wiped out the fiscal capacity of the government, rendering them almost incapable of taking more appropriate action (McClintock, 1984; Palmer, 2017). Thus, while local people had strong reason to turn against the insurgency, the national security forces did little to win them over (McClintock, 1984).

When Fujimori won the 1990 election, it was widely seen as an act of popular desperation (Palmer, 2017). However, shortly after he took the power the military began to engage in civic action, including lending support to local groups that had formed in opposition to *Sendero*. Such groups had been provoked by an increasing number of violent terror attacks, which required them to form groups of local defence. The Government’s anti-poverty programs had also won the support of previously marginalised communities and encouraged them to participate in resistance against *Sendero* (Palmer, 2017). However, to achieve this turn-around, Fujimori had instigated a self-coup and assumed authoritarian powers with the justification of fighting the insurgency (Shadle, 2013). This allowed him to commit human rights abuses without the risk of being held accountable for his actions. Eventually, the war was won in 1995, when Guzman was captured by police (Galdo, 2013). *Sendero’s* political and war machine collapsed abruptly, although intermittent violence did continue for some years (Ibid.).

### 3.4.2. Communities and migration during the civil war

The conflict had a devastating impact on the everyday life of Peruvians across the country. At the end of the 1980s, half the population lived under a state of emergency (Shadle, 2013) and by 1995 almost 75% of Peruvian provinces had experienced war violence (Galdo, 2013). Upper estimates suggest that 69,000 Peruvians lost their lives, the majority being poor civilians rather than combatants (Palmer, 2017; Shadle, 2013). The militants were responsible for much of this violence. By the early 1990s, they had become more ruthless and started targeting peasants in order to reduce agricultural production (McClintock, 1993), making day-to-day life in rural areas extremely challenging. However, there were also brutal and often indiscriminate attacks by the Peruvian military and police (Shadle, 2013). Support for *Sendero Luminoso* became far more dangerous once the counterinsurgency was in full force, and villages that were considered sympathetic to their cause were raided and even bombed (McClintock, 1984). The *Sendero* militants proved incapable of protecting their allies from the violent counterinsurgency, and in some cases left the inhabitants to fend for themselves (McClintock, 1993). The military did eventually move away from indiscriminate violence, but Fujimore later imposed draconian terrorism laws which further reduced the rights of anyone suspected of being a terrorist or a terrorist sympathiser (Shadle, 2013).

For those living in the worst affected areas of the countryside, the obvious solution was to leave (Palmer, 2017). It is estimated that around six hundred thousand Peruvians fled their villages and moved to the relative safety of the shantytowns of Lima and other cities (Starn, 1995). Others moved to the growing cities in the Amazon, where the jungle town of Puerto Maldonado would have offered relative peace. By the early 1990s many of the migrants could safely return home, but others either found either their villages had been abandoned as burnt ruins or were forced to live in fear that remaining *Sendero* militants would descend at night to loot and kill (Ibid.).

An important aspect of the conflict was its racial undertone, which contributed to an already deeply divided Peruvian society. These divides undoubtedly contributed to conflict in the first place, as the extreme poverty in the highlands and the clear biases in government policy that favoured coastal regions had motivated Guzman’s thinking (McClintock, 1993). He wanted to replace the foreign-dominated system with a more indigenous and popular democracy (Manwaring, 1995). Shadle (2013) argues that while Shining Path emphasised the links between Marxist doctrine and Andean cosmology, albeit in many cases distorting the latter in a way that fostered violence, the counterinsurgency was shaped by the pervasive racism of Peruvian society. He argues that the cosmopolitan elite interpreted terrorism as just one example of the backwardness of the Andean people (Ibid.). This was reflected in both the lack of sympathy from urban areas but also the brutal treatment of civilians by the counterinsurgency (Ibid.). For the indigenous communities, the fact that the counterinsurgency consisted almost entirely of whites and mestizos gave the impression of an occupying army, which inevitably failed to win widespread support. Even when *Sendero* started to threaten Lima, this did not create a sense of solidarity with their counterparts in indigenous communities, and instead facilitated a greater toleration of human rights abuses (Ibid.).

## 3.5. The political economy of Peru’s extractives

The impact that Latin America’s natural resources have had on the continent’s history cannot be overestimated. The colonial influence profoundly influenced the evolution of global extractive industries (Bebbington & Bury, 2013) as well as contributing to the enduring inequality between the Global North and South. It has also led to current spatial configuration of most modern Latin America states and the locations of major cities (Ibid.), and is reflected in the region’s many resource-dependent countries (Brain, 2017). Understanding the history of mineral extraction in Peru is therefore crucial for an understanding of contemporary artisanal and small-scale mining. This section will give a brief over view of the history of Peru’s extractive industry, stretching back to the colonial times, before exploring the more contemporary issues caused by neo-liberalism. I then go on to give more focused background on the ASM sector.

### 3.5.1. A history of extraction and exploitation

Peru has some of the world’s richest deposits of minerals and hydrocarbons (Bury, 2004), which have been an engine of growth for the national economy. Currently, Peru is Latin America’s most important gold producer (Damonte et al. 2013) and has the largest supply of silver and second largest of copper (Hoffman & Grigera, 2013). Trade in these minerals has fuelled growth, and in 2010 the mining sector accounted for 61% of total Peruvian exports (Ibid.). From 1990 to 1997, investment in mining exploration in Peru increased by 2000 percent, reflecting the expansion of the sector during this period (Bebbington & Bury, 2013). Between 1990 and 2000, this amounted to the sixth highest amount of investment in mining globally (Ibid.). Hydrocarbons are equally extensive, particularly in the country’s Amazon region, where 56.1 million hectares are reserved for oil and gas exploration. This is compared to just 15.5 million hectares of protected areas and 13.4 million hectares of legalised indigenous territory (Viale & Monge, 2012).

These trends suggest a recent increase in extractive activity in Peru, but the country’s vast minerals reserves have in fact fuelled centuries of industry and extraction, stretching back to colonial times (Brain, 2017; Bury, 2004; Orihuela, 2012). Mining activity is known to have taken place during the time of the Incas, with the population predominantly mining copper for weapons and implements and gold and silver for ornamentation (Becker, 1983). During the conquest and the fall of the Incas, many of the mines that had been established disappeared as the Spanish initially preferred to plunder existing Inca treasure (Bebbington & Bury, 2013). Vast amounts of minerals were transferred from Latin America to the rest of the world (Bebbington & Bury, 2013; Galeano, 1971), primarily to fund expansion, industrialisation, and urban development in Europe (Brain, 2017). It is estimated that from the 16th-19th century, European colonisers extracted and exported an estimated 1,685 tons of gold and 50,000 tons of mercury (Brain, 2017; Hylander & Meili, 2003; TePaske, Klein, & Brown, 1982). Thanks to the invention of mercury amalgamation technologies in 1554, the Europeans could increase the profits from mining, which ensured the expansion of the sector for several centuries (Bebbington & Bury, 2013).

After independence in 1821, there was little capital investment available for large-scale mining operations and Peru lacked the infrastructure required for processing minerals (Ibid.). Any developments of the mining economy were then halted somewhat by the War of the Pacific from 1879-1884, after which control over Peru’s minerals laid with foreign capital and the Lima-based bourgeoisie (Manrique, 1987; Vincent, 2012b). The sector revived somewhat at the end of the nineteenth century, due to the world demand for industrial metals (Becker, 1983). However, the diversification of Peru’s exports at the time meant that extractives did not dominate the economy (Long & Roberts, 1984). Like the national economy as a whole, mining was affected by the Great Depression and the two World Wars, suffering severe reductions in output and employment, as well as price freezes that reduced profitability (Long & Roberts, 1984). Production thus closely followed the boom and bust cycles of the national economy.

The introduction of import substitution in 1969 gave the sector the necessary capital to increase its mining production. With new investment came new employment opportunities, giving rise to labour unions within the sector, which had a crucial role in the revolutionary politics of the 1960s and 1970s (Long & Roberts, 1984). At the end of the century, Peru’s extractive sector was hit by the end of the Cold War, which reconfigured important trade, investment and political relationships (Bebbington & Bury, 2013). However, it was the economic crisis that had a more lasting effect, leading as it did to widespread neoliberal reform.

### 3.5.2. Large-scale mining and neo-liberalism

Since 1990, trade in minerals and hydrocarbons has been fundamental to Peru’s economic growth (Field & Field, 2010). During the period of neoliberal reform, Peru’s extractive industries came under private ownership, of both foreign and domestic investors (Bebbington & Bury, 2013). The was accompanied not just by new regulations to facilitate FDI, such as the removal of local hiring requirements and the freedom to remit profit abroad, but the abolition of pre-existing legislation that protected natural resources. Furthermore, infrastructure investment projects sought to provide access to remote areas where new hydrocarbons and mineral deposits were being discovered(Ibid.). This new legislation opened up the economy, and in the period from 1994 to 2004, exports plus imports as a share of GDP rose from 23 per cent to nearly 39 per cent (Field & Field, 2010). By 2006, the Peruvian government had privatised 220 state-owned firms in the mining and fuels industry, generating huge capital flows (Brain, 2017).

These policies have contributed to the growth of extractive industries and the sector’s internationalisation (Acuña, 2015; Bebbington & Bebbington, 2011; Bury, 2005). The sectors growth was reflected in successful mining projects such as the Yanacocha mine in the Cajamarca region of the northern Highlands, as well as the discovery of a host of new mineral and gas deposits (Bebbington & Bury, 2013). At the same time, there was an increased demand for minerals on global markets, especially from rapidly industrialising countries like Brazil, China, and India, and advances in extraction and processing technologies (Himley, 2012). Over the last decade, Peru has remained consistently neoliberal in its mining legislation policies, and the government continues to facilitate the role of private, foreign companies in extraction (Brain, 2017). For example, in the face of falling mineral prices in 2014, the Peruvian government adopted weaker environmental rules in order to attract investment (Shortell, 2014). However, some observers have highlighted an overreliance on extractives, arguing that this has dis-incentivised diversity within the economy and effectively restricted Peru to the role of a primary exporter (Sheahan, 1997).

A major issue of large-scale mining is that that mining wealth accrues almost exclusively to foreign companies and the capitalist class, and does little to address inequality (Orihuela, 2012). Extractive industries have been historically based in the Andes, due to it being the principle location for mine sites and an important supply of seasonal labour yet the region has failed to accumulate capital from mining activity (Bebbington, 2011; Long & Roberts, 1984). The local, indigenous communities in these areas rarely benefit, as there are limited employment opportunities and few spill-over effects (Arellano-Yanguas, 2008; Helwege, 2015; Orihuela, 2012). This is despite the existence of the Mining Canon, which is a scheme developed in 2002 through which the central Government transfers 50% of the taxes levied on mining companies to local governments in mining regions (Field & Field, 2010; Loayza & Rigolini, 2016).

For many Peruvians, the large-scale Andean mines only serve to reflect the injustices of colonial trade and extraction (Stark, Guillen & Brady, 2012). Large mine operations can lead to pollution of water supplies, land degradation and the loss of local resources, which is often perceived as unfair given that the benefits of the industry are felt elsewhere (Bebbington & Bury, 2009; Brain, 2017; Hoffman & Grigera, 2013). There is also evidence to suggest that the Mining Canon may have a perverse impact on inequality, due to a distributional impact that favours the better off and the risk of rents being misappropriated through corruption (Loayza & Rigolini, 2016), thus reducing the benefits that may have otherwise accrued to the poor. The expansion of mining production has therefore been accompanied by rising social tensions and conflict (Loayza & Rigolini, 2016; Walter & Urkidi, 2017). Although much of this conflict has been between the population and the state, there have also been disagreements between subnational political units about the distribution of the mining canon (Arellano-Yanguas, 2011).

### 3.5.3. Artisanal and Small-scale Mining in Peru

Despite the favourable policy environment for large-scale mining, artisanal and small-scale gold mining in Peru has continued to grow, and at a faster rate than large-scale gold extraction (Damonte, 2016). Some estimates put the proportion of Peru’s gold that comes from ASM as high as 28% (GIATOC, 2016), with between 100,000-500,000 people thought to work in the sector (De Echave, 2016). The majority of these work in the rainforest and other rural areas where the Peruvian state is weak (Toledo Orozco & Veiga, 2018). The most notorious area for ASM is the Amazonian region of Madre de Dios. The mining here is varied, because the river channels that brought gold bearing deposits from the Andes have drifted over time, creating complex sedimentological settings under the Amazonian rainforest floor (Salo et al., 2016). As a result, the environmental impact is huge, with deforestation rates in Madre de Dios higher than anywhere else in the Peruvian Amazon (Menton & Cronkleton, 2019).

Madre de Dios has no medium or large-scale mining project due to the nature of ore deposits and the environmental conditions. Although the Government has sold concessions and land titles along the *Corridor Minero* (Mining Corridor), much of the ASM activity occurs in the recently emerged mining site of La Pampa, which lies within the Tambopata National Park Buffer Zone where all mining activity is prohibited (Weisse & Naughton-Treves, 2016). The majority of miners in both areas lack concessions, title deeds or registration, even though the miners within the *Corridor Minero* work on land previously designated for mining. By no means all of the migrants in Madre de Dios engage in ASM, but the Government actively promoted ASM activity for some years, reflected in their decision to establish the *Banco Minero*. Although the bank was later closed and the policy towards ASM changed, the increase in the price of gold continued to attract miners. In part this can still be attributed to the Peruvian state, due to the country’s reliance on labour informality and the fact that there continues to be a neoliberal promotion of large-scale mining activities yet no means of addressing ASM (Salo et al., 2016). By 2011, it was estimated that while the official population of Madre de Dios had risen to around 130,000, there were at least an additional 30,000 informal miners (Brack et al, 2011).

The weakness of the state in peripheral or rural areas has undoubtedly been an influencing factor in the rise of ASM activity in Madre de Dios (Toledo Orozco & Veiga, 2018). Despite claiming that formalisation is a top priority (Ibid.), the Peruvian state continues to struggle with ASM policy (Damonte, 2016). In 2002, the General Mining Act was expanded to provide details on the process of formalisation (Ibid.), although few miners in Madre de Dios have yet been formalised (Salo et al., 2016; Toledo Orozco & Veiga, 2018). This is due to several reasons; the expensive and complicated bureaucratic process and constantly changing regulations; a lack of trust in the state and government institutions; and uncertainty over if and how formalisation will provide personal benefits (Toledo Orozco & Veiga, 2018). The sheer size of the Amazon and the weak reaches of the State are also often blamed for the failure to formalise (Arellano-Yanguas, 2011; Bebbington, 2011), as well as the local and regional government’s lack of funds, capacity and political will to enforce ASM regulations (Damonte, 2016; Weisse & Naughton-Treves, 2016). However, there is also a lack of consensus about ASM within government, particularly between the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MINEM) and the Ministry of the Environment (MINAM) (Damonte, 2016). While the former seek to halt ASM activity in Madre de Dios, the latter are advocates of formalisation, and the lack of clarity in legislation is in part due to the power struggle between the two ministries. A key issue has been that although the MINAM was introduced in 2008 to promote environmental and social sustainability, the MINEM has retained control of environmental and social impact assessments (Bebbington & Bury, 2009; Duff & Downs, 2019).

### 3.5.4. Mining and migration

Mining in Peru has always been heavily linked to migration. Contreras (1988) showed that labour intensive mining extraction provided work to temporary workers during the agricultural off-season. Similarly, some of the individuals in Vincent’s (2012b) study were involved in mining, highlighting the level of influence that extractive industries have had on life in rural areas. From the 1920s-1960s, mining was the largest and most accessible source of full-time labour for many Andean villagers, who were often not sufficiently educated to find work in Lima (Long & Roberts, 1984). Although many villagers were reluctant to go and work in the mines due to the distance they had to travel and the occupational risks, the lack of alternative options meant it was relatively easy for mining companies to recruit workers (Ibid.). Much of the work was temporary or seasonal in nature, which meant that villagers often continued with agricultural work at home for much of the year (Ibid.). Thus, migrating to work in mining has been occurring for generations in Peru. However, a new wave of gold-led migration started in the 1970s (Damonte, 2016) with numbers increasing again after 2008 due to the increased price of gold and the completion of the Trans-oceanic Highway (Salo et al., 2016). Increasingly, migrants are travelling to participate in ASM in Madre de Dios or the Andean mines such as La Rinconada. Now, almost all ASM workers in Madre de Dios are migrants, with the majority coming from the Andes (Damonte, 2016).

In recent years improvements in transport and road networks have made migration faster and easier (Nyame & Grant, 2014). In Peru the Trans-oceanic Highway means that workers from the Andes are able to travel to the mining areas of Madre de Dios to find work with relative ease. The highway opened in 2011 and connects Peru and Brazil, passing Puerto Maldonado, Laberinto and a number of informal mining settlements in La Pampa on the way to the border. Although people have migrated to the mining areas seeking work for generations, the creation of the highway has meant the journey now takes hours rather than days. While this road has facilitated the influx of miners in Madre de Dios (Salo et al., 2016) it has also had a profound impact on life in these Andean villages. At the same time, improvements in telecommunications enable miners to gain and respond to information about new deposits and average earnings in other locations, whilst also making it easier to maintain links with their families at home (Nyame & Grant, 2014).

Numerous towns in Peru have boomed in recent years due to the presence of the mining industry and many open mines nearby which draw migrants from all over the country (Adams, 2012). Adams suggests that these mining boomtowns may lack the sustainability of rural communities, which are hardened to change because they have survived multiple socio-economic upheavals (Ibid.). The limited knowledge that exists on mining communities suggests that migrants in Madre de Dios are a diverse group, including formal and informal rights holders, invited guests exploiting holdings in exchange for a royalty payment, paid workers, and individual independent miners (Damonte, 2016; Salo et al., 2016). Damonte (2016) suggested that the practical knowledge that these miners have provides them with an understanding of place and a sense of belonging, although he does not elaborate on this. Similar to Walsh’s observations in Madagascar, while the majority of miners are Andean immigrants, Damonte (2016) noted there exists some important distinctions between ‘new’ settlers and ‘old’ mining groups who have lived in the area for many years.

## 3.6. Resistance

Forms of resistance, ranging from the every-day to extreme violence, feature strongly throughout Peru’s history. This stretches back to colonial times, where the Inca’s sought to resist the conquest of the European settlers. This resistance was on the part of indigenous communities who had borne the brunt of war, disease and religious imperialism forced on them by the Spanish conquestors (Vincent, 2012b). However, resistance has also been a defining feature of modern history and economic development, most notably during the decades of land conflict that resulted in the removal of the haciendas (Becker, 1983). This has been well documented by Smith (1989) in his description of the political resistance and violence instigated by rural peasants as they attempted to claim back their land. These actions provoked a change in government, widespread land reform and the introduction of development policy and planning (Ibid.). Women have also had an important role in Peru’s struggles, which is reflected in the proliferation of women’s collective organisations (Hays-Mitchell, 2002).

In recent years however the most prevalent forms of social unrest and conflict have been in response to the growth in extractive industries. This section will provide a background of this in relation to large-scale extractives, which has led to unrest due to the perceived inequalities. Not only do economic benefits accrue in uneven ways, but also the social and environmental costs are not shared equally. I then focus in on ASM, where forms of resistance and most notably carried out by the miners than by local affected communities. Here I provide some background details of the increasingly violent conflict between the miners and the government, which is particularly important for contextualising later findings.

### 3.6.1. Extractive Industries and Social Conflict

Bebbington (2011) claims that natural resource abundance generates so many distortions that it ultimately hinders any potential development gains. In Peru, as in many resource-rich countries, the distortions caused by a growth in large-scale mining and extractive industries have led to a rise in social conflict. This conflict normally takes the form of local resistance against planned oil or mining projects. In recent years, the National Confederation of Peruvian Communities Affected by Mining (CONACAMI) emerged, led by activists from the most affected Central Andes (Orihuela, 2012). The strength of this form of collective resistance is reflected in the successful delay or abandonment of several high profiles mining developments. This includes the $4.8 billion Conga mine faced repeated delays due to ongoing and deadly protests by local communities, which risked the entire project as the capital may have been diverted elsewhere (Hoffman & Grigera, 2013). Similarly, in 2009 a series of violent clashes that led to the deaths of 24 police officers and 10 civilians earned the repeal of two decrees that would have opened much of the Amazon to development (Ibid.).

A major factor behind these violent protests is that while poor Andean and Amazon communities suffer from the expansion of extractive industries, they rarely benefit. These environmental concerns often centre around the consumption and pollution of important land and water resources required for agriculture (Gustafsson, 2015; Orihuela, 2012) and deforestation and forests (Walter & Urkidi, 2017). This reinforces historical grievances that stem from the links between extractive industries and the abuse of indigenous people, ranging from slavery in rubber plantations and exploitative employment conditions in mines (Orihuela, 2012). One of the underlying factors behind this sense of injustice is the issue of land rights. This has been a particular problem in Peru and other Latin American countries because land rights were not well defined, which meant that individual communities could often be legally displaced in the name of the greater public good (Orihuela, 2012). The Peruvian Ombudsman found that it is this perception of continued injustice that has led to a majority of the recorded social conflicts within the country (Walter & Urkidi, 2017).

Due to the location of most planned mining development, it is usually indigenous communities that are most engaged in violent protests. However, McNeish has pointed out that ‘indigenous people are not inherently environmentalist, and rather their relationship with extractives and the environment are shaped through different relational processes’ (2012, p.43). Moreover, some observers have also, perhaps rather cynically, suggested that protests are also an attempt by the communities to gain access to corporate resource flows, rather than to stop the development altogether (Crabtree & Crabtree-Condor, 2012; Gustafsson, 2015). What is also interesting is the rhetoric the state uses about such protests. President Alan Garcia famously likened the Amazonian tribes that resisted the oil development as criminals, questioning their authority to tell ‘Peruvians’ that they could not go to the Amazon to extract resources (Bebbington, 2011; Boelens, 2015). On the other hand, the authorities attempt to paint modern extractive industry as a clean and socially responsible process that can bring only benefits to the Peruvian economy (Orihuela, 2012).

### 3.6.2. Resistance in the ASM sector

Given the rise in ASM activity in recent years, it is perhaps unsurprising that there has been an accompanying increase in levels of social conflict within the sector. Unlike large-scale mining however, this conflict tends to happen between ASM operators and the Government. The government has developed formalisation plans but these have been met with demonstrations and general strikes on the part of the miners because they do not agree with the terms on offer. In response, the state passed a regulation that effectively criminalises miners who are not formalised, and initiated a series of police and military interventions to clear out miners (GIATOC, 2016; Toledo Orozco & Veiga, 2018). Salo et al (2016) argued that this is a clear example of how a mainstream formalisation process can be portrayed alternatively as a means to reform an economic activity and empower marginalised miners or as a way to control and punish them, sentencing many to illegality in the face of regulations impossible to comply with.

The public discourse is broadly supportive of the government, and reports ASM in Madre de Dios as being environmentally destructive and migrant miners as being violent criminals (Bebbington, 2011; Damonte et al., 2013; Orihuela, 2012; Salo et al., 2016). However, this somewhat masks the fact that the Peruvian state has long pursued systematic colonisation and extractive exploitation in the Amazon, with little sympathy for indigenous communities (Damonte et al., 2013). As noted above, the state government uses similar language around criminality when discussing actors involved in large-scale mining conflicts. For example, in Peru during consultations for the controversial Tambogrande Mine, the state launched a campaign to effectively criminalise the local activists who opposed the development of the mine, declaring the referendum to be ‘illegal, communist and politically manipulated by international NGOs that intended to delay the country’s development’ (Walter & Urkidi, 2017, p.303). This suggests that the Government’s claim to be opposed to ASM due to the environmental consequences is perhaps not entirely accurate, with some suggesting it may have more to do with the effort of some actors to improve their political leverage and gain access to mining rents (Ibid.).

The conflict has becoming increasingly tense, with protests sometimes resulting in injuries and death (Taylor, 2011), and the situation is complicated further due to the competing interests of the Peruvian central government and the regional government of Madre de Dios, environmental NGOs, miners’ associations and indigenous organisations (Damonte et al., 2013; Salo et al., 2016). As of mid-2019, there had been no noticeable reduction in ASM activity as a result of the new regulations. The State in general is weak in Madre de Dios, and there are no large-scale extractive corporations or regional elites with which to form political alliances. Furthermore, until recently the ASM sector received from the Regional Governor of Madre de Dios, who was previously a miner and has led miner protests against the actions of the national government (Weisse & Naughton-Treves, 2016). Verité (2016) has found evidence of high-levels of corruption that are facilitating the continued operation of illegal mines and gold laundering despite official government crackdowns.

It has previously been observed that the extraction of minerals and hydrocarbons seems to contribute to the formation and radicalisation of identities, not least through the shared experience of working in a hazardous environment (Bebbington & Bury, 2013). In Peru, the formation of strong labour identities and organisations in the mining sector have been well documented by Long and Roberts (1984). However, very little is known about these communities. Although ASM is dehumanised in the media and public discourse and the sector frequently condemned, it is not really clear whom the miners are (Toledo Orozco & Veiga, 2018). Damonte (2016) has noted that there has been no effort to collect social information on the miners and there is no data on mining organisations and miners’ power relations, which continue to represent black holes for state authorities and policy makers.

## 3.7. Summary

This chapter has provided a brief history of Peru in order to contexualise the findings of this research that will be presented over the following chapters. It starts by exploring Peru’s economic history, showing how economy policy historically moved between periods of protectionism and free trade, before the reforms implemented by Fujimore ushered in an era of neoliberalism that successive governments have continued. This has had profound implications for the extractive industries and has, on the surface, improved acted as stimulus for the Peruvian economy. However, despite recent growth, inequality has deepened, with life in the Andes continuing to be charactierised by poverty. In section 3.3 I highlight how this has exacerbated racial divides within Peru and contributed to continual flows of migration out of the Andean region. This leads on to a discussion of *Sendero Luminoso* and the conflict affected almost the entire country in the 1980s and 1990s, which was primarily motivated by this pervasive inequality. I then move on to focus more specifically on extractive industries, providing details of Peru’s rich history of mining and how this has bee linked to migration. Finally, I reflect on the forms of resistance than have developed against large-scale mining and more recently within the ASM sector.

# 4. A Bourdieusian Perspective of Translocal ASM Livelihoods

## 4.1. Introduction

Understanding mining communities is essential to inform the design of ASM policy (Hentschel et al., 2002; Hilson et al., 2007; Hilson & Potter, 2005; Saldarriaga-Isaza et al., 2013; Spiegal, 2009). However, as chapter two has highlighted, there are significant gaps in the literature regarding the nature of ASM communities. This is related to two key issues; a lack of understanding of ASM communities in terms of the heterogeneity of livelihood trajectories and long-term migration patterns, and a tendency to focus on either location or destination communities, rather than taking a holistic view of migrant mining communities. There is also often a tendency for the ASM literature to concentrate on *descriptive* accounts of lives and livelihoods in order to understand the sector, with few researchers developing theoretical arguments for their analysis.

In order to understand migrant mining communities, I draw on the translocal livelihoods literature and bring this together with Bourdieusian theory in order to flesh out the nature of the community that is formed through these various patterns of migration. This is depicted in a model of the translocal social field, which adapts Carling’s (2008) conceptualisation of transnationalism. However, translocal livelihoods analysis, and indeed transnational models such as Carling’s, has often tended to overlook temporality. I argue that to understand how translocal livelihoods affect places on the crossroads of mobility (Etzold, 2017), our conceptualisation of translocality may need to be extended. My intention in this thesis is to use this adapted model of the translocal social field to analyse ASM in Peru, before drawing on ideas of place, identity and criminality to show what it might imply in the context of a precarious informal livelihood.

This chapter starts by introducing livelihoods as a social practice (Bourdieu, 1985) and explaining how the notion of a social field may apply. It then moves on to explain why traditional linear models of migration do not adequately account for the realities of migrant life, particularly within the ASM sector. I focus on how linear models of migration, or even analysis that sees destination and origin communities as discrete places, runs the risk of obscuring those ‘left behind’ in origin communities from the analysis. This limits our understanding of the realities of ASM livelihoods and is a major weakness in much of the existing literature on ASM. I attempt to overcome this limitation in my analysis by focusing on the translocal nature of livelihoods and the translocal communities that emerge from them. I briefly explain both of these concepts in section 4.3, and then reflect on Carling’s (2008) model of the transnational social field, before proposing an adapted version that is suitable for framing the translocal community as a social field. I then point to two areas that can be improved in the existing literature on translocality; firstly, the tendency to continue to focus on migration between rural and urban locations and secondly, the lack of differentiation between migrants, particularly in terms of the temporality of migration.

In section 4, I emphasise how place continues to be important, even though the meaning ascribed to it are affected by translocality. I acknowledge that while the boundaries of place are in some ways dissolved by migration, the various locations that are connected through translocality remain important. This highlights the need for a multi-sited focus to the analysis. The importance of place for the movement of women and marginalised groups is also briefly discussed, as an understanding of the gendering of both translocality and place is important for this study. The latter part of section 4 then considers how translocality may affect place-attachment and place-identity, given the movement between different locations. It explains that rather than seeing the emergence of a translocal identity, here translocality is seen as indicating embeddedness in multiple locations. The importance of this will be revealed in section 5, which introduces literature on deviance in order to consider the implications of translocality as a function of the social field of ASM. I highlight how the norms and rules within the social field are often shaped by elites and highly contested, but that the state also has a strong influence, particularly through legislation and discourse that criminalise and demonise miners. This perceived injustice and the associated threat to lives and livelihoods, contributes to the development of a collective identity that seeks to resist domination from external forces. I conclude the chapter by suggesting that the temporality of translocal ASM livelihoods may undermine this collective identity, primarily through its affect on place attachment.

## 4.2. Livelihoods, migration and the problem with single-sited research

The overarching aim of this study is to provide a theoretical understanding of how migratory livelihoods such as ASM shape and are shaped by the communities that practice them. Given the highly mobile nature of ASM, as discussed in the previous chapter, an exclusive focus on either the spatially bound origin or destination community masks the relationships between them, as well as the connections they have with other places. Understanding these relationships is crucial, as they are necessary for both the success of the livelihood and for the reproduction of the local communities in both locations. This section will first explain Bourdieu’s theory of social practice, highlighting how various theorists have applied this conceptualisation to livelihoods in recent years. Using this notion of livelihoods, I will then go on to introduce migration as a key component of ASM livelihoods, illustrating how traditional models have failed to account for the divergent patterns of migration within the social field. These have particularly tended to obscure the origin communities through following a single-sited approach. This means that those ‘left-behind’ populations, who are often women in ASM livelihoods as it is a traditionally male-dominated sector, are not considered in the analysis. Overall, this section provides a background justification for adopting a translocal livelihoods approach to my analysis of ASM communities.

### 4.2.1. A Bourdieusian analysis of livelihoods

In order to answer questions relating to the artisanal and small-scale mining community and uncover the interactions between them, it is useful to draw on Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice. Numerous authors have applied the theory to livelihoods research and have conceptualised livelihood activities as social practices (De Haan & Zoomers, 2005; Etzold, 2011; Obrist et al, 2010; Sakdapolrak, 2014; Thieme, 2008; van Dijk, 2011). Bourdieu (1977, 1985) posited that social practices were an outcome of habitus (how an individual acts within the social structures that confine them), relative endowments of capital (including cultural, economic, social and symbolic) and the social field within which they occurred. Following Bourdieu’s theory, I conceptualise ASM livelihood activity as a social practice, while the social ‘setting’ within which ASM occurs is seen as the social field. Some theorists that have produced work on translocal livelihoods have used Pries’ (1999) conceptualisation of social space as a foundation for their research (see for example Steinbrink, 2007). However, Bourdieu’s conceptualisation seems more appropriate as a base for understanding ASM given his explicit references to contestation within the social field and his desire to understand relationships of power.

Social fields are defined as semi-autonomous domains of unified social action that are organised around capital, within which agents struggle over the rights to appropriate particular resources whilst obeying the unique rules and logic of that particular field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). These struggles are central to Bourdieusian theory, with the social field frequently compared to a ‘game’ or a ‘battlefield’ in Bourdieu’s writing (Shammus & Sandberg, 2016). In modern society, human activity is highly differentiated and Bourdieu saw the various social fields that make up the social world as being dedicated to a specific activity, such as academia for example (Hilgers & Manguez, 2015), or indeed mining. Thus, it is not only socio-economic status that determines inclusion into a social field but also agents’ affiliation to occupational groups (Bourdieu, 1985), such as ‘being’ an artisanal miner. The importance of occupational characteristics speaks to the existence of a miner identity, as has been proposed in the ASM literature by academics such as Bryceson and Jønsson (2010). However, the agents inhabit more or less advantageous positions, relative to each other (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Within each field, the activities that occur within it respond and are shaped by the rules and norms of that field. Over time, practices and behaviour become evaluated according to internally constructed criteria (Hilgers & Manguez, 2015), which seems highly relevant to the ASM sector. It is important to note however that the rules and norms are constantly reinterpreted, especially through interactions with external powers, which means that social fields become characterised by social conflict and political contestation (Bourdieu, 1985; Etzold, 2017).

Over time, agents within a social field develop dispositions of seeing, acting and thinking, which Bourdieu (1977) referred to as their habitus. Habitus is a crucial element of social identity and enables an understanding of how socially embedded livelihood practices have come about (De Haan & Zoomers, 2005; Etzold, 2017; Sakdapolrak, 2014). For example, De Haan and Zoomers (2005) have used Bourdieu’s ideas of habitus in their suggestion that livelihood trajectories and styles are composed of shared experience, knowledge, insights, interests, prospects and interpretations of the context; an integrated set of practices and artifacts. Again, this seems to have particular relevance to the emergence of a miner identity. However, an individual’s habitus is determined by their relative position within the social field, which has an inherently hierarchical structure. Within any given social field, agents hold different positions and these relative positions are determined by their individual endowments of capital and power as well as by their relationship to other positions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). These relationships imply both elements of subordination and domination, which determines access to profits and resources. Within social fields therefore, agents struggle to occupy a particular position (Ibid.). In ASM for example, we find that miners struggle over access to gold deposits (economic capital) and are often dependent on social networks (social capital). There are also clear hierarchies of power in relation to the ownership of concessions. Over time, an individual’s habitus adapts to reflect new unstable conditions (De Bruijn & van Dijk, 2003) and life trajectories can result in actors changing social position (De Haan & Zoomers, 2005). For example, as noted in the previous chapter, Fisher (2008) has shown how ASM operatives may gain wealth through illicit means by choosing to subvert social norms. In chapter 6 I will elaborate further on divergent ASM livelihood trajectories, and then in chapter 8 show how variations in habitus can also lead to tensions.

To summarise, a Bourdieusian understanding of livelihoods has two key features that make it useful for analysing ASM. Firstly, it allows for an understanding that livelihood practices always reflect the position of the agent within the hierarchical social field (Etzold, 2017), which provides scope for considering how ASM livelihood practices are shaped by the elite and/or local and regional government. Effectively, politics and power is not seen merely as context, but as ‘a focus of analysis in and of itself’ (Scoones, 2009, p.185). Secondly, it draws attention to the fragmented nature of social and spatial livelihood trajectories (De Haan & Zoomers, 2005; Etzold, 2017). This is important, as ASM livelihoods are not homogenous and yet the literature thus far has little to say about how their trajectories are divergent. As these are both key questions arising from gaps in the literature, a conceptualisation of livelihood as a social practice that occurs within a social field provides the necessary grounding for a thorough analysis. Before discussing this in detail in the following sections I will explain how traditional approaches to understanding migration are not applicable to the ASM sector.

### 4.2.2. Migration as a livelihood strategy

For many years livelihoods were treated as if they were localised, partly as a result of a focus on the household as a spatially bounded entity (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005; Steinbrink, 2009). In recent years, there has been much literature that has focused on the role of migration in livelihood strategies. Many researchers have looked into the various push and pull factors that lead to migration (Glick Schiller et al, 1992; Olwig & Sorensen, 2002). Thus, migration has been viewed as a coping mechanism through which to deal with poverty, shocks and vulnerability (Adger, 2006; Henry, Boyle & Lambin, 2003; Islam & Herbeck, 2013; Schöfberger, 2017; Tacoli, 2011; Warner et al., 2009) or as an accumulation strategy that provides opportunity to diversify (Islam & Herbeck, 2013). What is known is that mobile populations are the norm in human history, not the exception, but also that it is often not the truly poor that migrate (Ellis, 2003; Islam & Herbeck, 2013; Sørensen, 2002; Takenaka & Pren, 2010). This is particularly interesting when applied to ASM, as previously the entire sector was often considered to be poverty driven (Banchirigah, 2008; Fisher et al, 2009; Hentschel et al., 2002; Hilson & McQuilken, 2014; Siegel & Veiga, 2009; Tschakert, 2009; Tschakert & Singha, 2007; Wilson et al, 2015).

Migration theories have traditionally focused on linear rural-urban patterns of migration, resulting in mass urbanisation and a Western-style industrial modernity (Delgado-Wise, 2014; Ferguson, 1999; Germani, 1969), but these failed to grasp the complexities of migration patterns. Even when theorists have viewed rural-urban migration as a symptom of a global system of exploitation (Potter & Unwin, 1989), this still generated an understanding of migration as linear, even if the results for the poor migrants were not likely to be positive. Such theories struggle to acknowledge that rural migrants do not constitute the majority of the urban poor (Montgomery et al, 2004), and neither are they the only residents of low-income informal settlements (Tacoli et al, 2008). A key problem in the weakness of such models is that they rely on the dualistic spatial classifications of rural v urban when the reality is far more complex (Brickell & Datta, 2011; Dame, 2018; Ferguson, 1999; Islam & Herbeck, 2013). The realities of seasonal, temporary and circular patterns of migration are not considered (Ellis, 2003; Steinbrink, 2009), despite their implications for household and community relationships and place-attachment.

In Peru, contemporary rural communities are situated within regional, national or global contexts that effectively blur the conventional dichotomies of rural-urban, traditional-modern or peasant-non-peasant on which earlier studies of migration have built (Sorensen, 2002). Seasonal migration has always been a common livelihood diversification and risk management strategy in the Andes (Mallon, 1983), with temporary migration to the coast, the jungle, the mines and elsewhere providing the extra-agricultural income with which to maintain life in the village (Favre, 1977). Furthermore, discrimination in urban centres often means that migrants from the Andes are not able to exploit opportunities fully (Skeldon, 1977; Sørensen, 2002; Takenaka & Pren, 2010), meaning many are forced to return home. This is very different from the idea of one-way rural-urban migration following a modernisation paradigm. In terms of ASM in particular, is not only clear that rural-urban migration is an unhelpful conceptualisation, but also the majority of the inhabitants in the migrant destination of Madre de Dios are migrants. I will return to this point later, but it suggests that any impact of migration on the destination community is likely to be far higher than the rural-urban model allows.

### 4.2.3. Women and communities ‘left behind’

Within a social field, the relative position of certain agents may render them unable to migrate (Theime, 2008). Linear models of migration not only fail to explore the politics of this immobility in any meaningful way, but also give the impression that the migrant almost abandons the people that remain in the household and origin community. Feminist geographers have pointed out that while emphasising the circular nature of migration as a livelihood strategy has challenged this image to some extent, men have remained the focus of attention (Pessar, 1999; Silvey, 1996). This is due to the gendered nature of mobility, as studies that focus on the experience of the migrant continue to mask the experience of women who remain in the origin community (Silvey, 1996). This is perhaps unsurprising, given that that socioeconomic research on women is often limited to stereotypically female roles in the family and biological reproduction (Nash, 1986, p.3), and not in traditionally male pursuits such as migration. Even in cases where the household has been taken as the unit of analysis, which took decisions and acted in a unified manner, the contributions and experiences of women in migration processes risk being overlooked due to the power relations that guide such decisions (Lawson, 1998; Silvey, 1996; Willis & Yeoh, 2002).

Ensuring that these left-behind household members and communities are included in the analysis of migration is crucial because the overwhelming majority of migrants, both temporary and permanent, keep up an active orientation towards home (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005). As migrants remain connected with the immobile populations and place-based features, such as rural family homes, livestock, tombstones and ancestral spirits (Naumann & Greiner, 2016), there is a clear need for these to be included in a deepening understanding of migrant livelihoods. These connections are most widely understood to occur through remittances (Durand et al, 1996; Mines & de Janvry, 1982; Stark & Levhari, 1982; Taylor et al., 1996), but there are a plethora of other obstacles, antagonisms and connections that migrant families deal with (Castillo & Brereton, 2018; Clifford, 1994) which need to be better understood. In recent years, maintaining contact with home, despite the sometimes vast distance between locations, has become far easier with advancements in transportation and communication (De Theije & Bal, 2010; Gieryn, 2000). It is the continued connection with one’s homeland that enables migration to work as a livelihood strategy, yet these are poorly understood through traditional interpretations of migration. The next section will introduce the concept of translocality and highlight how it can form the basis for a theoretical understanding of ASM communities.

## 4.3. Translocality

Appadurai (1996) first coined the term translocality to refer to the embeddedness of people in more than one place and society and how the communities they inhabit become extended by their migration (Conradson & Mckay, 2007; Peth & Birtel, 2014). Initially theorists applied this term specifically to transnational migration, but more recently, the focus on the nation state as the key unit of ‘belonging’ was removed (Glick Schiller, 2007). While transnational approaches initiated the shift towards an investigation of the positioning of migrants in both their origin and their destination country and of the social networks stretching between the two, translocal studies improve on this by allowing a focus of migration within national borders and an inclusion of more than two places (Schöfberger, 2017). The concept has already been applied directly to livelihoods, and it is recognised that the migration patterns and interrelations that constitute translocality are generally created as a result of mobile livelihoods. Translocality thus provides a different lens through which to view livelihoods, but is particularly useful for ASM due to the sector’s high mobility. To my knowledge, Werthmann has been the only author to refer to the ‘poly-ethnic, multi-national, fluctuating and extremely mobile’ ASM community in terms of translocality (2010, p.129), but she has focused exclusively on connections between mine sites, rather than conceptualising the translocal space as incorporating origin communities.

In my analysis of ASM I employ a definition of translocality similar to Peth and Birtel, who referred to a ‘variety of open and non-linear processes, which produce close interrelations between different places and people’ (Peth & Birtel, 2014, p.16). The conceptualisation of translocal livelihoods builds on Bourdieu and utilises his notion of the social field as a way of understanding the translocal community that is formed through highly mobile livelihoods. Bork-Huffler (2016) and Peth et al (2018) have previously conceptualised a translocal community, i.e. that community which stretches between an origin and a host location, as an individual social field. Although social fields are multi-layered and connected, they are also distinct from each other. However, this conceptualisation seems too simplistic for use here, as the patterns of migration in ASM are not neatly arranged from A to B and all the individuals from one origin community do not consistently travel to work in the exact same destination. Instead, due to the focus on a shared livelihood, the entire ASM community is seen as a translocal social field. All actors operating within ASM’s social field are subject to the same internal logics and external pressures, even if their relative positions may produce different outcomes. For example, it has been noted that although miners are often transient, they often adopt shared norms that transcend the boundaries of single mining camps and have common knowledge about the expected regulations and cooperation (Douglass, 1998; Werthmann, 2010). Thus, as Kelly and Lusis (2006) have shown elsewhere, habitus can exist at a translocal scale and are not confined to particular places. Furthermore, Werthmann (2010) pointed out that the temporary inhabitants of any one camp have often known each other for years, as they have worked together before elsewhere, highlighting the spider web of connections that form the social field of ASM, or as Douglass (1998) termed it, a focus without a locus.

This section will first provide an overview of translocal livelihoods, highlighting how livelihood systems are not locally bound, and then go on to discuss how such livelihoods contribute to the creation of the translocal ASM community. It explains that such a translocal livelihoods approach is useful for incorporating left-behind populations and for integrating more complex patterns of migration into analysis. It also emphasises the important interconnections that exist between locations and how these interconnections are not only crucial to the success of translocal livelihood strategies but also shape the places they connect. I then go on to highlight the weaknesses of previous theoretical understandings of translocal livelihoods, explaining that there is a lack of consideration of the temporal nature of translocality and that studies thus far have still tended to focus on rural-urban migration. The latter part of section three then introduces the concept of translocal communities, discussing in more detail how locations are changed by their translocality. It introduces a definition of the translocal ASM community as a social field that incorporates multiple origin and destination communities rather than two places connected through linear A to B migration. I then go on to consider how migrants within a translocal community are embedded within different locations simultaneously and what this means for their interactions with others. The section concludes with an adaptation of Carling’s (2008) model of the transnational social field, which can be used to conceptualise the ASM community.

### 4.3.1 Translocal livelihoods

The concept of translocality has been applied to numerous phenomena, including space, communities, social capital and relations, infrastructure investment and even decision-making (Peth & Birtel, 2014). A key aspect of translocality is that the movement of people links multiple localities together and in the majority of cases, these people are migrating to work, hence necessitating a focus on translocal livelihoods. As highlighted in chapter two, ASM livelihoods in particular are highly mobile, which has two implications for analysis. Firstly, the migration patterns cannot be viewed as linear, meaning that the traditional models discussed above are not useful. Secondly, the livelihood system cannot be assumed to be locally bound, which requires a change in perspective (Steinbrink, 2007, 2009). This section will elaborate further on these two points.

Traditionally, livelihood systems have been looked at within a specific locality, partly because the analysis tends to be on spatially-determined units of analysis such as ‘household’ and ‘the community’ that are defined primarily as a product of proximity (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005; Steinbrink, 2009). However, as has been shown in chapter 2 in relation to ASM, livelihoods are not locally bound and are often multi-local, or multi-sited (Long, 2008; Thieme, 2008). Several theorists have shown that a growing proportion of the population in developing countries organises their livelihoods across a spatial divide, adopting oscillating patterns of migration (Ellis, 2003; Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005; Steinbrink, 2009). This necessitates a translocal approach to livelihoods, because focusing on either origin or destination community ignores the proportion of people who continue to be embedded in multiple contexts (Steinbrink, 2009). The concept of translocal livelihoods allows a move away from the linear, ‘modernist’ conceptualisations of migration (Islam & Herbeck, 2013) and instead enables both rural and urban to be seen as one complex system (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005).

In order for a translocal analysis to hold, an allowance for the translocalisation of households (Schöfberger, 2017) must be incorporated into an understanding of translocality. A translocal household is defined as consisting of members who coordinate their consumption, reproduction and resource-use activities on a long-term basis, yet who are not necessarily cohabiting (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005; Schöfberger, 2017; Steinbrink, 2009). This is important because, as Tan and Yeoh (2011) have pointed out, the strategies household members adopt to mediate distance and maintain household relationships are equally significant to those ‘left behind’ as well as ‘on-the-move’. Focusing on translocality within the household highlights how immobile household members still experience translocality and is likely to bring women more firmly into the analysis. This understanding of women’s roles is crucial, as successful mobility and translocal strategies depend very much upon if and how female household members participate in the maintenance of the livelihood and household (Islam & Herbeck, 2013). Referring back to Bourdieu’s notion of capital, Thieme and Siegmann (2010) noted that women’s expected contributions to a household’s social capital or their inclusion in social networks are often higher than men’s, even though they may not derive any personal benefit from these relations. A good example of this may be women’s behaviour being directly linked to their husband’s honour, such as through the maintenance of *purdah* in some cultures (Ibid.), but as I will show in chapter 7, such contributions are also of crucial importance in migratory livelihoods. To my knowledge, this is not something that has been considered in detail within the ASM literature. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of translocal livelihoods used here also extends to cover scenarios where the migrant is a woman (Pinnawala, 2008).

A key reason for using translocal livelihoods as a basis for analysing ASM in Peru is that it allows a focus on the multidirectional and overlapping networks that are created as a result of the exchange of resources, practices and ideas (Greiner, 2010). A translocal livelihoods analysis considers the role of external actors in shaping livelihood and community dynamics, recognising the importance of social interrelationships between actors who may not be situated in close proximity to one another (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005). It can therefore be linked back to Bourdieu’s theorisation of the ways in which power relations shape social practices. Much work on translocal livelihoods has focused on the coping strategies of households who find themselves operating on a translocal scale, in particular the ways they draw on social networks or support each other through remittances (Brickell & Datta, 2011; Long, 2008). Thus, there is a focus on the immaterial ‘goods’ of everyday life, such as social capital, as well as the alternative capacities for success and wellbeing held by households (Schröder & Stephen-Emmrich, 2014) and how that success may be influenced by other actors within the social field.

I argue that there are two weaknesses with translocal livelihoods literature thus far. The first weakness is that, despite acknowledging that spatial patterns of migration are more complex than linear models imply, there is still a focus on rural-urban migration (e.g. Benz, 2014; Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005; Steinbrink, 2009). For example, while Steinbrink highlights the risk of ignoring those people whose mobile livelihood results in them being embedded in multiple social contexts, he still conceptualises these contexts as being split across a rural/urban divide, with oscillating patterns of migration between rural and urban locations (Steinbrink, 2009). As this thesis will show with reference to the ASM sector, rural-rural/peri-urban ties are also important. Such links are also important outside of ASM, as de la Cadena (1998) showed that some rural Andean people use money earned from temporary rural-rural migration to establish themselves later in urban centres. The application of translocal livelihoods to the case of ASM in Madre de Dios will highlight the impacts that these migration patterns can have on rural places. This will also increase our overall understanding of translocal livelihoods and highlight the transferability of the concept to rural-rural/peri-urban migration as well as rural-urban.

The second weakness concerns the temporal nature of livelihoods and the divergence this causes in livelihood trajectories. In general, livelihoods literature has been criticised for failing to adequately recognise temporal dynamics (Sakdapolrak, 2014), yet I argue that a similar problem can be found within the literature on translocal livelihoods, even though the concept does address the spatial elements of livelihoods. Lohnert and Steinbrink (2005) have pointed out that the composition of a translocal household can be variable in both space and time, which suggests an element of temporality to these translocal livelihoods, yet this has not been adequately explored. There is for example very limited understanding of the extent to which, in the process of implementing a translocal livelihood, one becomes embedded in one location relative to the other and in particular, how this compares to the experiences of other agents within the social field. This may be because some theorists have argued that typologies that differentiate between temporary and permanent migration may obscure generational relations (Long, 2008). However, overlooking the temporal nature of translocal livelihoods has implications for our understanding of the translocal social field of ASM. Within this, is the idea that translocal livelihoods develop along a spectrum, with people unlikely to be rooted in both places to the same extent as anyone else, especially over time. They are however, all still part of the translocal social field, even if at some future date their own household livelihood loses its translocality. The next section will move on to further elaborate on these ideas.

### 4.3.2. Translocal communities

In translocal livelihoods such as ASM, people, resources and knowledge are no longer bound within a local domain and are instead embedded in multiple settings and networks (Castree, 2004; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Long, 2008). While it has long been recognised that successful livelihoods are dependent on reciprocity, social institutions such as family and community, and socially embedded practices (De Haan & Zoomers, 2005; Ellis, 2003; Sakdapolrak, 2014), a translocal analysis considers the level of mutual dependence, interrelationships and circulating exchange between localities (Dame, 2018; Greiner, 2010; Levitt, 2001; Naumann & Greiner, 2016). These exchanges are not just flows of people, income and finances, but are also made up of immaterial social remittances, consisting of social practices, ideas, knowledge, behaviours, identities and social capital (Benz, 2014; Greiner, 2010; Levitt, 2001) and political remittances, including the transfer of democratic ideas and practices (Vélez-Torres & Agergaard, 2014). Through these various flows, separate places effectively become a single community (De Theije & Bal, 2010), while at the same time the boundaries of traditional communities become spatially extended (Steinbrink, 2009).

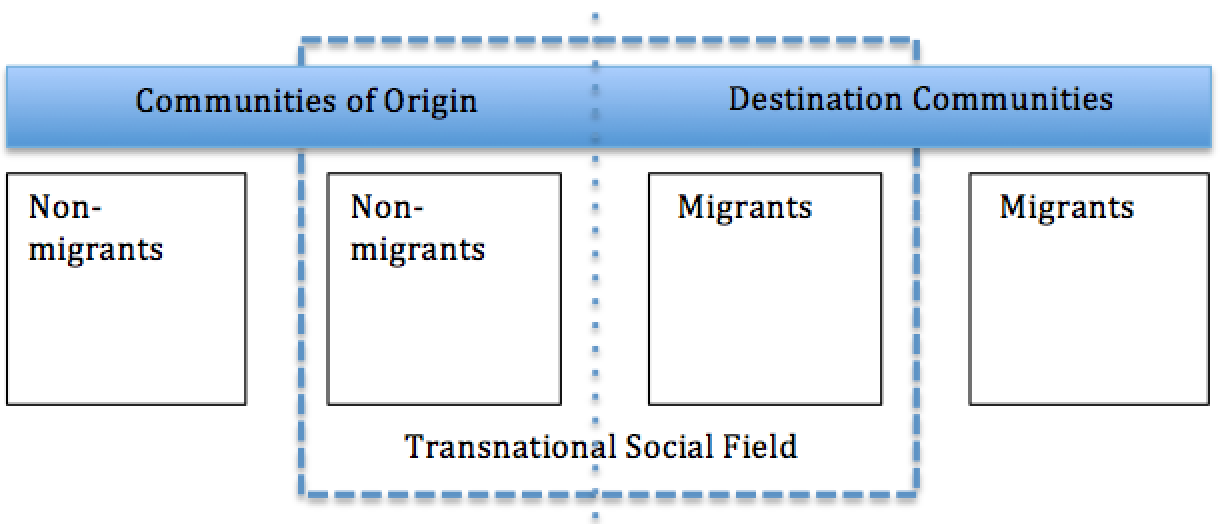
Following the definition by Elias (1974), the translocal community here is defined as a group of translocal households, whose members live in diverse locations, which are connected to each other through functional interdependencies, as well as to other people in their wider social environment. However, I deepen this understanding somewhat, by drawing on Bourdieu’s (1985) work on social fields. Bourdieu saw social fields as multidimensional, encompassing structured interactions of differing forms, depth, and breadth (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). Although the transnationalism literature often utilises the concept of a social field to denote the connections between spatially distinct locations (Glick Schiller & Fouron, 1999; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Nieswand, 2011), it can also be applied to *transloca*l livelihood systems (of which ASM is one). What is key here is that the overarching social field of ASM consists of a criss-cross of overlapping migratory flows and interactions that connect *multiple* destination and origin communities, rather than just two locations. This conceptualisation is important, as it does not rely on an understanding that all the members of a translocal community are linked by a common origin, as was proposed by Elias (1974), nor that they share a common destination, as this would not accurately reflect the realities of ASM in Madre de Dios. I therefore refer to this broader translocal social field of ASM as the translocal community.

The usefulness of a translocal focus for understanding the social field of ASM is that it refocuses attention on non-migrants (Thieme, 2008), who are active members of the translocal community, despite their immobility. This is due to the interdependence and various interconnections that exist between locations, meaning that even those who remain immobile become saturated with transnational (or indeed, translocal) relationships (Wiesner-Hanks, 2011). As a result of their relationships, not only do mobile and immobile populations co-produce translocal communities but they also come to define each other (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013). For the purpose of this analysis then, translocal livelihoods are seen as having the power to transform the places they connect. Livelihood studies have however often focused on the immobile people *within* the household, because the relationship between household members is seen as being at the core of the translocal community (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005) but also because of the interest in the way translocal networks are utilised by the household to secure their livelihood (Steinbrink, 2009). In my analysis the focus is instead on the whole community, including those segments of the population that are considered immobile (Brickell & Datta, 2011; Ellis, 2003; Parsons, 2017; Rau, 2012). This is particularly important because, as I will argue later, the temporal nature of translocality means that as some migrants become rooted in destination communities, they also become effectively immobile. In the context of ASM and mining sites, it must be recognised that while some people are permanently settled and thus have less translocal livelihoods, they continue to constitute important actors in the translocal social field.

A critical aspect of my conceptualisation of the social field of ASM is the understanding that migrants maintain their connections with their home communities while also forging new kinds of individual or collective ties in destination communities (Long, 2008). Both translocality and transnationalism have been used to describe the myriad ways that migrants are ‘simultaneously incorporated both in their society of origin and in that of their destination’ (Schröder & Stephen-Emmrich, 2014, p.423). Bourdieu argued that the boundaries of the social field are fluid and are thus created by the agents inside it, who are joined in struggle for a social position (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). This reference to a struggle for a relative social position suggests that not all actors within the social field, or the livelihood trajectories they follow, are identical. This is interesting because migrants, rather like ASM operatives, are often perceived as being one collective group, which projects an almost idealised image of community as a cohesive entity (Thieme, 2008). Moreover, it implies that we must seek to understand the types of positions within the field, their relationships to each other and the temporal dimension of movement between them, as well as considering how external fields may attempt to control them (Shammus & Sandberg, 2016). As this thesis is primarily concerned with the heterogeneity of mining communities and the individuals within them, these divergent positions are of particular interest.

Interestingly, in reference to transnational social fields, Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) acknowledge that people, organisations and networks may be embedded in them in different ways, which, in turn, produces different iterations of transnational involvement. Similarly, Carling (2008) acknowledges a difference between those groups, both migrants and non-migrants, who are *actively* involved in transnational practices, such as transnational livelihoods, compared with those who do not engage in them. Figure 1 below shows Carling’s (2008) depiction of the transnational social field, which incorporates both migrants and non-migrants engaged in transnational practices.

**Fig 1: Carling’s (2008) schematic representation of the transnational social field and its boundaries**



Both Carling (2008) and Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) argue that while some individuals may maintain lower levels of contact with origin communities than others, they remain connected to the transnational social field. Carling (2008) alluded to the ‘intrinsic asymmetries’ which occur between migrants and non-migrants, which he argues are due to their different transnational moralities, an unequal access to information within the transnational social field and an unequal distribution of different forms of resources (Carling, 2008; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007), which can occur both in origin and destination communities. Similarly, other theorists have highlighted the need to focus on non-migrants and sedentary populations in receiving areas (Brickell & Datta, 2011; Tan & Yeoh, 2011; Thieme, 2008; Velayutham & Wise, 2005). Although some of these arguments primarily refer to transnational migration, the notion of differentiation between individuals within a social field is important for the conceptualisation of translocality that will be used in this analysis.

Carling’s depiction of the transnational social field as shown above in figure 1 has clear relevance when thinking about translocal communities. However, when drawing on it to represent the translocal social field of ASM, some slight modifications are required.

**Fig 2: Conceptualisation of the Translocal Social Field**

Migrants

Non-Migrants

Communities of origin

Destination Communities

Settled Migrants

Translocal Households

Non-migrants

Translocal Social Field

The first adaption is that in Carling’s (2008) digram, the dotted blue square in the middle represents the transntional community, which he views as all those people actively engaged in transnational practices. In my conceptualisation, the dotted blue square represents translocal households. Note that not all of these households are based in the same community of origin, as there are a plurality of locations represented here. While members of these households are actively managing their livelihoods translocally, I see their non-migrant neighbors as also being important members of the translocal community. Hence, the second adaption from Carling’s diagram is that what constitutes the translocal social field is much broader than Carling’s transational social field. A third difference is that Carling refers to countries of origin and destination, whereas here the focus is on communities, giving it a much more ‘zoomed-in’ focus. This is important, as the non-migrants in either groups of location are more likely to be affected by the number of people leaving or arriving in their locality, even if they are not personally part of a translocal household. The final difference is that in the destination community, I have made reference to ‘settled migrants’ rather than ‘non-migrants’. This is because, as I will show in the following chapter, artisanal gold mining settlements in Peru are populated almost exclusively by migrants. The difference is that some have settled, while others remain translocal.

In this section, I have started to discuss how people within the translocal ASM community, are not homogenous. The patterns of migration can vary spatially (moving between more locations and/or with different frequency) but also temporally (not for the same duration of time overall). To my mind, these aspects of translocality have been under-theorised in the literature. This is important because the divergent livelihood trajectories and the varying temporality of individual translocality are likely to have an influence over one’s relative position within the social field. There also appears to be little attempt to understand how households pursuing different livelihood strategies may interact in the social fields within which they exist. Taking the diagram in figure 2 as a model for the translocal social field of ASM, the next section will begin to consider what these varying temporalities mean for relative embeddedness and place attachment.

## 4.4. The significance of place

The focus on translocality is not meant to lose sight of the importance of place, particularly in terms of identity and attachment. As Friedland and Boden (1994) point out, in spite of increasing human mobility, place persists as a constituent element of social life and historical change. Place is important to this study for several reasons. The first is that Peru, and particularly the regions in the Andes and Amazon, exists on the periphery of the global capitalist economy and development has thus been hindered by colonial processes of accumulation and primary resource extraction (Bebbington, 2011; Galeano, 1971; Wallerstein, 1974). Secondly, the Andes and Amazon both exist on the periphery of the Peruvian state’s development, which has long been dominated by the coastal region (Bebbington, 2011). This has been associated with growing inequality along geographical divides (Kellett, 2011; Paz & Urrutia, 2015). The province of Tambopata can be thought of as a zone of expansion (Rivero & Seisdedos, 2010), an area that the Government were previously keen to colonise in order to extend the reaches of state power (Scott, 2009), yet the sheer size of it along with the lack of infrastructure makes it difficult to govern (Salo et al., 2016). Thus, place is not merely a setting within which ASM occurs, but an influential player in the game (Werlen, 1993). If we consider here again the notion of ASM as a social field, we implicitly acknowledge that the field has its own rules (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). In this case, the position of Andean miners and the contestations that occur, particularly between the miners and the regional and national Government, are clearly influenced by the geographical locations of the places in question.

This section will firstly consider the impact that translocality has on place, explaining that translocality should be seen as being pluri- or multi-local. Thus, the multiple places in which migrants find themselves embedded continue to be significant and are assigned specific meanings. The section then goes on to explain that these meanings often have a gendered dimension, with power dynamics within the social field resulting in some places being deemed inappropriate for women to enter. After highlighting the importance of meanings to the creation of place, the latter part of the section then considers how translocality might affect these meanings and the implications of mobility for place-attachment. This is important as it highlights the need for translocality to be extended to consider temporality.

### 4.4.1. Place in a translocal analysis

The impact of translocality on place has been contested. Some have argued that by having a multi-sited approach, a translocal analysis effectively dissolves spatial boundaries (Islam & Herbeck, 2013). Others have argued that instead of being constituted by discrete places, the translocal community should be considered as the hybrid result of different relevant places (Schöfberger, 2017). However, my analysis intends to focus attention on these individual localities due to their important role as sources of meaning and identity for mobile subjects (Conradson & Mckay, 2007). While social boundaries have always been unclear, migration is making them increasingly blurred (Peth et al., 2018). However, even the largest scale ‘global phenomena’ and widest global migrant networks are dealt with by people in specific, local places (Brickell & Datta, 2011; Greiner, 2011; Schröder & Stephen-Emmrich, 2014; Smith, 2011). Thus, actions continue to sit in places, even when those places are multi-sited (Schöfberger, 2017). Although within the translocal community some actors are to some extent disconnected from their place of residence (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005), the community continues to exist in relation to various places that remain intact.

Places can also be affected by migration in a variety of ways. Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) argue that it is the material or ideational flows that converge on particular locations that make them into places. Similarly, Etzold (2017) noted that places only exist in relation to other places and can thus only be understood by analysing the interconnections. For Gieryn (2000), while both geographical location and material form (both natural and man-made) are crucial features of ‘place’, the meaning and value that are assigned to that place are of crucial importance. This is because places are loaded with meaning (Etzold, 2017) and constantly interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood and imagined (Gieryn, 2000; Soja, 1996). ‘A spot in the universe only becomes a place when it ensconces history or utopia, danger or security, identity or memory’ but this meaning is ‘flexible in the hands of different people or cultures, malleable over time and inevitably contested’ (Gieryn, 2000, p.465). Acknowledging this last factor is extremely important, because whilst translocality may not affect the geographical location or material form of a place, its impact on meaning is huge. Several theorists have pointed to the need to understand how the places within the translocal community acquire meaning, both on at the individual and the community-level (Brickell & Datta, 2011; Etzold, 2017).

What is also important to note is that the meanings ascribed to certain places can have implications for women and other marginalised groups within the hierarchical social field. Women may for example find their mobility within a place, or outside of it, to be restricted, on the grounds that it is unsafe, physically threatening or inappropriate (Gieryn, 2000; McDowell, 1999; Spain, 1992), and finding oneself ‘out of place’ can result in societal consequences (Creswell, 1996). An appreciation of this is important for two reasons. Firstly, it implies that women’s inclusion into the translocal community is restricted through a shared understanding of which places they are permitted to be in. Secondly, for those women that do engage in migration and ASM, there may be consequences to finding themselves out of place. Therefore, when considering ASM community through the lens of translocality it is important to recognise that translocality as being inherently gendered. This will be explored further in chapter 7.

### 4.4.2. Translocality and (place) identity

As places are shaped by lived experiences and loaded with meaning, they are an essential component of identity (Conradson & Mckay, 2007; Cresswell, 2004; Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Etzold, 2017; Gieryn, 2000; Hoey, 2010; Tan & Yeoh, 2011). In a translocal community though, migrants are embedded multi-locally. This will most certainly affect place identity and place attachment, just as it affects communities. Geographical mobility inevitably changes the relations people have with both people and events in origin communities, while at the same time bringing them into contact with new places (Conradson & Mckay, 2007). For example, Sørensen (2002) has argued that living and working between two distinct locations creates ambivalent relationship between rural points of origin and current urban development areas.

One could easily assume that mobility and translocality have the power to undermine an individual’s ‘rootedness’ in a specific location. This is particularly true as place-identity and place-attachment are both so dependent on long-term residence, given that it takes time to build sentimental attachments and develop social ties (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). However, the translocality literature frequently highlights how migrants retain a sense of place in their hometown, with origin communities remaining a space of belonging and identity for most migrants (Brickell & Datta, 2011). This has been illustrated empirically in migrants’ direction of activities, aspirations and investments (Greiner, 2010) as well as political mobilisations (Vélez-Torres & Agergaard, 2014). It has been suggested that it is because a successful spatial diversification of livelihoods relies so heavily on social and kinship networks, that migration can be seen to almost reinforce these relationships (Olwig & Sørensen, 2002). Conradson and McKay (2007) refer to the commitment that most migrants continue to feel towards family, friends and community in particular locations as translocal subjectivities. However, at the same time, many migrants do develop some sense of belonging within their destination community. Thus, members of the translocal household will often attribute different meanings to the places composing their shared translocal space (Schöfberger, 2017).

Some theorists have argued for the existence of a translocal identity that embraces the particularities of different localities and allows the migrants to adapt flexibly to lifestyles in multiple locations (Greiner, 2010). This seems to be supported by evidence from Peru and elsewhere which suggests that the act of migration itself creates new links and communities which contribute to the formation of a new identity (Robson, 2010; Sørensen, 2002), thereby apparently challenging the notion that identity and community are tied to a discrete place (Vélez-Torres & Agergaard, 2014). Similarly, Appadurai (1996) and Hannerz (1998) have used the concept of translocalities to refer to a sense of fluid identities thought to characterise a world of growing economic and cultural globalisation (Smith, 2011).

Within this analysis, translocality will refer to Smith’s (2011) definition of multiple emplacements, both here and there, with all the various places constituting the translocal community representing situated sites of identity. This finds support in the transnational literature, where it is argued that international migrants become simultaneously embedded in the multiple sites and layers of the transnational social fields in which they live (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). One can think of translocality as representing a dialectical process between mobility and place making, in which migrants express such simultaneous belonging to both their locations of origin and destination (Schröder & Stephen-Emmrich, 2014). Thus, although spatial identities become increasingly complicated as a result of mobility, these identities can still remain place-based (Brickell & Datta, 2011; Oakes & Schein, 2006). An important point to note here is that collective place-based identity have continued to be seen as important in the translocal literature, as a potentially unifying feature (Etzold, 2017). For example, Faist (2000) has noted how shared ideas, beliefs evaluations and symbols can lead to the expression of a collective identity, ‘we-feeling’ or ‘we-consciousness’, and refers to a social unit of action. However, thus far this has only really been explored in terms of a shared identity from the origin community, particular in relation to diaspora communities.

To add to this conceptualisation, I borrow from the transnationalism literature the understanding that total assimilation into a new place and enduring attachment to home are not binary opposites (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). This is important, as it allows us to understand that while migrants become embedded in two social contexts, they tend to pivot between the two. Furthermore, that movement and attachment is not linear and changes over time (Ibid.). Thus, it follows that people do not hold the same position within the translocal social fields, highlighting a differences that exist *between* migrants. This allows for a consideration of the ways that migrants, embedded as they are in in the various multi-sites within the translocal communities to different degrees, interact and what this means for the collective meaning that is attributed to those places. The various pathways to integration have been identified as an important area of research within the translocality literature (Schröder & Stephen-Emmrich, 2014).

This brings the discussion back to the issue of temporality, which I argue is a crucial dimension of translocality that has hitherto been overlooked. Migrants are known to not all have the same long-term outlook, with many seeing migration as a means to an end (Smith, 2011) and having no desire to integrate permanently. This is likely to have implications for place identity and social embeddedness. If a migrant proposes to move away permanently, their personal commitment to the new location becomes more important than it will be for the migrant who plans to return home at some point (Hamilton, 1985). At the same time, even migrants who stay at their destination for long time may never completely ‘settle’, and this provides a strong motivation to maintain close relations to their places of origin (Peth et al., 2018). As a result, imagined futures of migrants who become settled, return home or remain translocal are likely to vary considerably. I will highlight the implications of this in chapters 8 and 9.

In the transnational literature, Faist (2000) has argued that variations in spatial extension and temporal stability produce different topographies that affect both the extent to which migrants are embedded in origin and destination countries and the durability of the ties they make. Very recently, Peth et al (2018) have drawn attention to the gap in knowledge and started to conceptualise what this temporality may mean for translocal spaces. They have argued that the varying temporality of engagement in translocal spaces may eventually have an impact on the places within it, such as through ‘a loosening or decay of mobility and connectivity’, which is dependent on the subjective representations and practices of migrants and non-migrants (Peth et al., 2018). Furthermore, while migrants transform the various locations they connect (Appadurai, 1996; Etzold, 2017; Greiner, 2010; Long, 2008), it seems likely that these impacts will be bigger in smaller communities in which the residents are largely familiar with each other. However, as discussed earlier, the majority of translocality research focuses on migratory networks that bridge a rural-urban divide. Because of this, there is limited attention on the impact of non-permanent migration on destination communities, as researchers instead focus on the various ways immigrants create spaces of ‘belonging’ in their receiving communities (Hou, 2013; Main & Sandoval, 2015). In small, almost emergent, rural and peri-urban places, such as those on resource frontiers, its impact is largely under researched.

## 4.5. Criminality, collective identity and translocal livelihoods

The linking of place and translocal livelihoods highlights how the meaning ascribed to a particular place and the corresponding strength of place identity risks being undermined by the translocal nature of ASM livelihoods. This shows how a useful model of translocality must incorporate temporal dimensions as well as spatial ones. This thesis intends to apply this understanding of translocality to the context of ASM, in order to examine the impact of varying temporality on community dynamics. Drawing on a Bourdieusian understanding of social fields allows for a consideration of the contestations that emerge between miners occupying different social positions, as a result of the field’s internal power dynamics and hierarchies. However, the field is heavily influenced by the power of regional and national-level government, although they remain external to it (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Hilgers & Manguez, 2015). An important aspect to note here is that ASM is an illicit livelihood. Therefore, unlike struggles between miners, the contestations with the state primarily relate to definitions of ilegality, as these may change depending on position of the actors in question and their perception of place.

This section starts by discussing ASM livelihoods as constituting a social field and the power dynamics that are at play within the sector. Given the context of ASM as an illicit, informal and highly precarious livelihood, understanding the contestations within the social field require drawing on other importance ideas from sociology. I first present the concept of labelling, which is used as way of thinking about how the state has criminalised miners in a bid to control activity within the field. I then go on to discuss the process of neutralisation, which is means through which miners engage in the discourses and narratives that surround ASM in Peru, along with other active forms of resistance that allow them to continue mining. Finally, I bring these concepts together with those of place making and place identity to illustrate how understanding shared collective identities is important for analysing the contestations within the the ASM sector.

### 4.5.1. Illicit livelihoods on the frontier

Conceptualising the translocal ASM community as a social field acknowledges that it is constituted by power-laden relationships (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The internal rules of social fields provide scope for the relatively marginalised to gain capital and bolster their position by going against mainstream norms (Sandberg, 2008), but the access to space, resources and power is highly contested (Etzold et al., 2012). Relationships and norms are heavily influenced by powerful actors, policies and discourses (Etzold et al., 2012; Hilgers & Manguez, 2015; Sakdapolrak, 2014), but this elite dominance can generate resistance (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). As a result, the rules of the field are reinterpreted constantly, as each actor reassesses the changing situation with regard to their own personal capital and habitus (Etzold et al., 2012). Livelihood practices may therefore deviate from the norms of the social field, as actors struggle to adapt to changes within the field or anticipate them ahead of time (Bourdieu, 1990; Hilgers & Manguez, 2015). In particular, newcomers have an incentive to implement strategies that subvert the current order rather than recognising the legitimacy of an order that is unfavourable to them (Hilgers & Manguez, 2015). For example, ASM operatives without concessions may choose to move further into illegality, even if this is against the accepted norms of the field. The result is a divergence in practices within the field, which highlights how Bourdieu’s theory effectively accounts for changes in social practice over time (Ibid.).

ASM often occurs at the margins of legitimacy, away from state control (Damonte, 2016; Fisher, 2007). However, while this implies the imposition of internal norms and sanctions, social fields can never be completely autonomous. Bourdieu suggested the existence of a ‘field of power’, referring to the agents and institutions that were dominant within their individual social fields (Bourdieu, 1985, 1996; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), but also on occasion, explicitly to the ‘state’ (Bourdieu, 1999; Schmitz et al, 2017). The latter is often achieved through the imposition of criminal legislation (Shammus & Sandberg, 2016). Interestingly, in the context of ASM, the ambiguity of who might be incorporated into the field of power seems fitting; the widespread corruption in the sector often makes it difficult to ascertain who holds sufficient power to exert influence over the field. These external forces do not just include local and regional government, but also the way in which the sector is embedded in public discourse, particularly concerning the issue of conservation (Schmitz et al, 2017). Thus, struggles over the definition of legitimacy within the field (Hilgers & Manguez, 2015) incorporate these external forces just as much as the agents within it.

The power-dynamics theorised by Bourdieu are clearly observable within ASM livelihoods. Arguably, the most important is the imposed regulation by the state, which often seeks to reduce or eliminate informal mining activity. As discussed in Chapter 2, in Peru this has taken the form of increased regulation and violent interdictions, which has effectively criminalised ASM operatives. The Government’s labelling of those who engage in ASM activity as criminal is an example of controlling the agents within the field by attempting to restrict their ability to engage in other legal activities. This was theorised by Cohen (1965) as one of the main ways states attempt to engage with deviant behaviour. This is important for the analysis, because it implies some degree of discourse around the illegality of ASM and the people who carry out ASM activities. What constitutes a deviant activity is generally defined by the dominant society, usually the state. As Becker pointed out, ‘social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders’ (1963, p.9), or in the case of ASM, criminals.

Although these regulations are clearly linked to livelihood and therefore the social practices that occur within the specific social field, they can also be linked to place in three key ways. Firstly, the labelling of both behaviours and people as deviant depends upon where certain actions take place (Gieryn, 2000). For example, homosexuality is illegal in some countries and not others, while drinking alcohol may be illegal on the street but not inside a house or a pub. Similarly in Peru, ASM is permitted in some areas and not in others, as the Government allocates some mining concessions in the mining corridor, but has banned all mining activity in the national parks or in the park’s buffer zones. To some extent therefore, mining activities within these areas can be considered an ‘out of place’ practice (Creswell, 1996), which some argue constitutes an act of resistance (de Certeau, 1984; Pile & Keith, 1997). Secondly, the characteristics of certain places lend themselves to illicit livelihoods. For example, ASM flourishes on the frontier and in peripheral and remote places far from urban centres. It is claimed that this is because the existence of lucrative low-barrier resources converges with the insufficient institutional leadership and capacity that is characteristic of frontier zones (Rettberg & Ortiz-Riomalo, 2016). Thirdly, deviance can also come to define place. For example, mass murder, terrorist violence and other atrocities can become associated with a place in the national psyche (Foote, 1997; Gieryn, 2000; Gregory & Lewis, 1988). In Madre de Dios the violence in certain areas has come to define the whole province and the miners who work within it.

### 4.5.2. Contesting criminality

As we have seen, while social fields have their own rules and logic, which constrain the social practices of the agents acting within them, these logics can be contested (Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Sakdapolrak, 2014). Furthermore, while the state’s position in the field of power allows it to set the rules of the social field, these are also open to reinterpretation and contestation and are often only selectively enforced (Etzold et al., 2012). A Bourdieusian perspective focuses on the rationalities of social practices (Sakdapolrak, 2014). This is particular interesting with regard to ASM because it is an illicit livelihood. The rules of the field are heavily influenced by the Government and powerful gangs, which means these social practices occur within an extremely insecure context, yet the practices continue. The continuation of this ‘deviant’ ASM livelihood activity, along with the associated police corruption, is very similar to the conceptualisation of ‘gray space’ in urban areas, where populations are indefinitely positioned between the ‘lightness’ of legality, safety and full membership, and the ‘darkness’ of eviction, destruction and death (Yiftachel, 2010). As Van Bockstael illustrates:

‘While only a small minority of miners deliberately mine illegally, most still lack the necessary legal paperwork and are therefore classified as illegal. In reality, however, we find that many miners operate in the gray zone between legal and illegal status, a space where miners, customary authorities, and government representatives are engaged in a constant negotiation over governance of the artisanal mining activities’ (Van Bockstael, 2014).

The notion that informality in ASM continues simply because miners are unwilling to comply with legal requirements has been rightly questioned (Van Bockstael, 2014; Verbrugge, 2015). Campbell’s (2015) study of property rights in the Brazilian Amazon has highlighted the importance of understanding the influence local people can have over the state if one is to give a holistic analysis of the trajectory of governance and policy on the frontier. This is particularly important for ASM livelihoods, because if formalisation processes are to be successful they must incorporate the competing viewpoints, ideologies and values of the miners, the state and other stakeholders (Salo et al., 2016; Spiegel, 2012).

While the meaning the dominant society has attributed to Madre de Dios and the livelihoods and other social practices within it, has become one of deviance, this does not necessarily mean that those within the social field share this view. Van Dijk (2011) has argued that while habitus informs how we see the world and act in it, it also crucially determines what seems fair to us. Furthermore, the basis of any given actor or institution’s authority depends on other actors within the field judging them as legitimate (Etzold et al., 2012). For example, Etzold (2011) has used the example of informal street food vendors in Bangladesh to show how within a social field, formal rules may not be considered legitimate and thus often ignored by the actors operating within it. A key point of contestation within the ASM social field is then defining what, and who, is legal and what is not. Such definitions are often contested, particularly in places such as borderlands, mines and gold trade points (Titeca & de Herdt, 2010). While social rules may define behaviour that goes against social norms as ‘wrong’ or ‘deviant’, those who find themselves labelled as such may see the situation quite differently (Becker, 1963). Similarly, with reference to ASM, Geenen (2011) has pointed out that activities that often qualify as ‘illegal’ can be considered to be very legitimate in the eyes of the people involved, particularly when they are livelihood activities framed as a legitimate source of survival (Titeca & de Herdt, 2010). In such cases, the deviant, either an individual or a group, often rejects the rule by which they are being judged and, in some cases, may even regard those who have made these judgements as being either incompetent or not legitimately entitled to do so (H. S. Becker, 1963). This results in the competing discourses of illegality that are observed in relation to ASM in Madre de Dios and numerous other countries where ASM is a viable livelihood option (see for example Thornton, 2014).

Focusing on the competing discourses of illegality that may arise from these contestations requires an understanding of Sykes and Matza’s (1957) theory of neutralisation, as it shows how deviants and criminals make justifications for their own behaviour that are designed to protect themselves from self-blame and the blame of others. In doing so, disapproval from both internalised norms and the norms of the dominant society are neutralised, turned back, or deflected in advance. Sykes and Matza (1957) identified five major types of neutralisation; the denial of responsibility; the denial of injury; the denial of the victim; the condemnation of the condemners and; the appeal to higher loyalties. For example, in order to neutralise their own deviant behaviour, contraband vendors in a study by Cross and Hernandez (2011) used techniques of denying both victim and injury, claiming the corporations were so rich it didn’t matter and that their actions were providing music and films to those who could otherwise not afford it. Hall et al (2011) has drawn attention to situations where local livelihoods have been effectively criminalised through the creation of conservation areas and the resulting counter-movements have stressed the social function of the land for the same group of people (see also Polanyi, 1957). Similarly, Campbell (2015) argued that recent migrants in the Brazilian Amazon strategically co-opted the dominant narratives of conservation and environmental protection to shore up private property rights and legitimise their behaviour. While I draw on the idea of neutralisation in its analysis of miners’ narratives, I acknowledge that language and narratives are also influenced by habitus and existence within a social field and thus are also closely linked to identity and belonging (Fleetwood, 2016).

### 4.5.3. Collective identity and translocality

Given the different position of actors within the social field, it follows that they have different capacities to influence rule-making processes (Etzold et al., 2012). However, rather than simply focusing on individual contestations, I am interested in the importance of group acts as these have been particularly important in the political conflict that surrounds ASM in Madre de Dios. Collective identities generally define their group existence as right and good (Cerulo, 1997), thus viewing themselves in a positive light. In Lahiri-Dutt’s (2017) analysis of coal miners in India, she points out that the moral man – as against the economic man – did not just protest, but also acted to legitimise his perspectives and actions. Collective agency can therefore been seen to be enacted in a moral space (Cerulo, 1997), particularly in situations where the group in question is considered deviant by the dominant society. While Bourdieu’s theory allows for forms of resistance and contestation, I intend to elaborate on this further by exploring the role of a shared identity within the translocal social field of ASM.

The ASM literature has often focused on how a shared professional identity may develop through close working relationships through a process of skill acquisition, economic exchange, psychological reorientation and social positioning which results in mutually respected professional norms (Bryceson & Geenen, 2016). However, what is missing is an understanding of how concepts of deviance linked to the practice of illicit livelihoods may shape the formation of this identity, particularly at the community level. Furthermore, if the place that one identifies with carries different meanings in the dominant society, this can also lead to contestation (Etzold, 2017). This chapter has already discussed how place is central to an individual’s identity, yet local populations often develop a strong shared identity. This is particularly true when that identity is built around a shared deviance. Cross and Hernandez (2011) have shown how the concept of place as a social construction can evoke a communal deviant identity and an alternative set of norms as a form of resistance to the dominant society. While identity is a key aspect of many theories of deviance, Cross and Hernandez link it with social movement theory in order to analyse ‘the ways in which deviance can be legitimised as a form of resistance to what is seen locally as illegitimate dominant normative systems’ (Ibid., p.509).

Cross and Hernandez use the inner-city neighbourhood of Tepito in Mexico City to illustrate how forms of deviance can be ‘rooted in community processes of resistance against the dominant normative system’ (2011, p.504). In Bourdieu’s terminology, this dominant system would constitute the field of power but also encompass the wider society external to the ASM social field. Tepito is characterised by behaviour seen as deviant by outsiders, most notably the widespread reliance on the illicit sale of contraband as means of livelihood. Cross and Hernandez argue that, ‘the ability to claim control over a specific territory – a ‘place’- is often central to create a sense of collective identity’ (Ibid., p.519). Furthermore, the nature of market-based livelihoods in Tepito meant that residents worked closely together and were then able to act collectively to resist the constant attempts by authorities to control them, which fed into the development of a shared identity. This highlights the role of the structural form of place (Gieryn, 2000) and is also reminiscent of descriptions of life in mining towns and settlements, given the open nature of mining activity and the close working relationships that develop as a result. Cross and Hernandez (2011) further argued that the emergence of a collective identity at the community level strong enough to resist dominant norms required a unifying ideology to legitimise their alternative identity and the acts of resistance they engaged in. They argued that in the community context, this required:

‘an *ideology* that unifies the members and allows the group to believe that not only are they *different* from the dominant society due to the arbitrary features of geography, but in a meaningful social sense that somehow makes them *better* than those living elsewhere, a necessary ingredient in order to allow the group members to reject the dominant society’s negative image of the group’ (Cross & Hernández, 2011, p.522).

They suggest that this may be a shared history through which local people constructed an identity that excludes the ‘other’ and provides a sense of communal pride in their deviance from the dominant norm (Cross & Hernández, 2011). In frontier mining towns, there is of course no shared history because due to the translocality of mining livelihoods, the majority of inhabitants are migrants from different locations of origin. Instead, it may be threats to both the social practices involved in ASM and the ‘place’ in which they live and work that contributes to this collective identity. Cross and Hernandez (2011) also suggest that some form of organisational force is necessary to successfully integrate local people.

A local population’s own labelling of another out-group can bolster their in-group identity, and notions of place have been shown to be central to conceptualisations of ‘otherness’ (Cohen, 1965). This is important as it is likely to influence the ways in which miners interact with state actors in the negotiation of ASM policy, particularly as challenges with formalising ASM have been shown to be connected with issues such as pre-existing identities and memories in particular places (Salman et al., 2015; Salo et al., 2016). Within the social field of ASM, I wish to explore the notion that some actors may seek to legitimise their own behaviour, and consolidate their position, by explicitly positioning themselves against others. Damonte (2018) has observed that miners in Madre de Dios do use place-based definitions of illegality in their resistance against the Government, but he did not offer any deeper analysis as to how or why this shared identity developed or what these narratives were trying to achieve. Cross and Hernandez (2011) build on this idea of a group narrative, arguing that the local population create ‘symbolic boundaries’ between themselves and the ‘other’, heavily tied to a sense of place, as they fight a common objective. This can serve to delegitimise the norms of the dominant society (Ibid.) but also to position themselves in a favourable position against other populations considered inferior. In Campbell’s (2015) study for example, he showed how migrants in the Amazon would use environmental narratives to delegitimise another group of actors, while in Tepito the contraband sellers often emphasised that the illicit sale of pirated DVDs was not as bad as selling drugs as a means to neutralise their own actions (Cross & Hernández, 2011).

What should be clear from this discussion is that the meaning ascribed to a particular place by a group of people can have a big impact on the emergence of a collective identity. Furthermore, while that collective identity may be reinforced through contestations, it does not necessarily follow that all actors within the social field share the same identity. It is known that the interconnections that exist within the translocal community have an important transformative effect on notions of belonging and on the way migrants are perceived and received by others (De Theije & Bal, 2010; Vertovec, 2003). In the context of illicit livelihoods such as ASM, where the power-dynamics within the social field have led to feelings of marginalisation, this is likely to have an impact on the emergence of a collective identity. In chapter 6, I will highlight how one’s relative position within the social field relates to the temporality of ASM livelihoods, while in chapter 9 I go on to draw links between this temporality and the broader implications of state regulation for collective forms of resistance.

## 4.6. Summary

This chapter has outlined an understanding of Bourdieu’s notion of social fields, practice and capital, but as applied to translocal livelihoods. This enables a conceptualisation of the translocal ASM community as a social field comprising of the interconnections created by multiple, overlapping translocal livelihoods. I have presented a simplified representation of this, which adapts previous work on transnationalism. It is an important conceptualisation, as it means the people that are connected within the translocal community need not share the same origin location. My analysis sees migrants within the translocal community as being embedded within multiple localities and as ascribing individual meanings to each discrete place. Rather than dissolving spatial boundaries to the extent that place is no longer important, this emphasises the importance of individual places within the translocal community. There is also an important gender dimension, which acknowledges the gendered politics of mobility, but also the tendency for certain places to be ascribed meanings that result in them being inaccessible to women or other marginalised groups. However, the application of a translocal approach enables women to be included in the analysis to a greater extent than they may be otherwise. However, I suggest a potential extension to previous models of translocality, as the issue of temporality has not been adequately considered thus far in the literature.

Understanding translocal livelihoods as constituting social fields acknowledges the existence of power dynamics that lead to contestations within the translocal community. Such contestations are evidenced in the competing definitions of illegality within the ASM sector in Peru and several other gold-producing nations. Bringing together ideas on place-identity and deviance into an understanding of translocal social fields allows for an emphasis on the ways in which a collective place identity can emerge in certain locations, particularly through the existence of a unifying ideology that can ascribe meaning to that location. Thus, ideology may be linked to a labelling of the local population as deviant, particularly as this label is likely to be highly contested. Local people may reject the dominant society’s view of ‘illegal’, and their perceived demonisation contributes to a collective identity, particularly if it poses a threat to every day life in the locality. However, collective identity may be undermined by the temporal nature of translocality, indicating a need for an extension to our general understanding of translocality. One implication for adopting an approach that views livelihoods and communities as translocal is that it requires multi-sited research that can investigate the interconnections and contestations between the various places (Marcus, 1998; Smith, 2011), which will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

# 5. Methodology and Fieldwork Sites

## 5.1. Introduction

This section will introduce the context in which this research takes place and the overall methodology. The chapter will first introduce the research aim and the individual research questions, before explaining the interpretivist approach and why it was considered to be most useful. It will then briefly discuss the use of a case study methodology, which takes a translocal ASM community in Peru as a typical case of the wider, global phenomena of migratory ASM livelihoods. I will explain how the field sites of Ocongate and Laberinto were selected from within this broad translocal community, before elaborating further on the two locations to add some contextual depth. Once I have introduced the field sites, I will then discuss the research methods used, and the benefits and limitations of these methods, as well as explaining why certain planned methods ultimately proved to be unsuitable for data collection in this context. I follow this with a short discussion of the process of data coding and analysis, as well as considering some potential issues with the data. The final section will then present the ethical considerations of the study and any potential sources of bias and other issues.

## 5.2. Research aim and questions

This aim of this research was to understand how migratory processes and divergent livelihood trajectories within the ASM sector shape community dynamics and collective-identities

In order to achieve this aim, I developed four individual research questions. These are:

1. Why do people become involved in ASM and what do their livelihood trajectories look like?
2. What role do women play in ASM livelihoods and how do they contribute to the translocal ASM community?
3. What is the role of translocal livelihoods in shaping mining communities and to what extent do divergent livelihood trajectories lead to tension and contestations?
4. How is community identity linked to the competing discourses of legality and illegality that emerge around ASM livelihoods and to what extent is this affected by the translocal nature of the ASM community?

## 5.3. Approach and justification

A research design is the logical sequence that gets a research project from an initial set of questions, through a period of data collection and analysis, to a point where conclusions can be drawn (Yin, 2009). It is essential that the researcher selects the correct approach in order to draw conclusions that adequately answer their initial questions. This research study is concerned with social reality and human interactions, the construction of place and community identity, and the meaning these constructs carry for human beings. In order to gain the required insights to answer the above questions, it is necessary to gain access to people’s thinking and to attempt to interpret their actions and their social world from their point of view (Bryman, 2001). The research is also interested in the ways in which cultural norms constrain behaviour and interactions, particularly through the creation of narratives that attempt to legitimise and delegitimise certain behaviours. The research aims and questions are therefore firmly rooted in the social sciences, the subject matter of which is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences and requires different methods (Bryman, 2001; Gray, 2014). This section will explain how these questions stem from an approach that is both ontologically constructivist and epistemologically interpretivist and thus require qualitative methods.

This research sees the social phenomena associated with ASM and migration as being built by the perceptions and actions of the actors that operate within, and in relation to, the ASM sector. It therefore follows a constructivist ontological position, which is based on the idea that individuals constantly seek to understand the world in which they live and work and develop subjective meanings which are varied and multiple (Creswell, 2013). Social constructivists argue that social institutions precede us and that we are embedded in them. Furthermore, while social phenomena and their meanings are produced through social interactions they are also continually changing (Crotty, 1998). To paraphrase Becker (1982), because people and the culture they produce are constantly changing, it is not possible for any set of cultural understandings to provide a perfectly applicable solution to any societal problem or issue. This understanding of the world leads the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow meanings. The goal of the research is therefore to rely on the participant’s view of the situation (Creswell, 2013). This research study closely follows this approach and the values within it, assuming that all social entities are built on the perceptions and actions of social actors, but also that these are subject to change, particularly when faced with varying migratory patterns, fluctuating global commodity markets or shifts in government ASM policy.

Interpretivism is closely linked to a constructivist research paradigm (Gray, 2014) and embraces the idea of multiple realities, the meanings of which can vary between participants and across time (Creswell, 2013, p.18). This has particular relevance to this study given the variety of actors engaging in the ASM sector, both directly and indirectly. I intend to explore the reality of life in these communities by understanding the actions of people living within them and their relationships with each other, rather than focusing on the forces that are deemed to act on them (Bryman, 2001). Given that I aim to develop an understanding of the subjective meaning that ASM operatives and other community members attach to their actions and the world around them, I have adopted an interpretivist epistemology. The research questions outlined above are primarily investigating the participants’ perceptions of their own relationships and experiences, and this approach allows them to give their own accounts of community interactions, the nature of ASM activity and their feelings of belonging, while remaining aware of the subjectivity of interpretation.

For interpretivist approaches, qualitative methods are the most useful, as they enable the researcher to understand how and why observed changes are taking place. The use of qualitative methods can explore the issues of translocal ASM livelihoods, community dynamics and narratives of illegality by focusing on the respondents’ subjective experiences of the social and political aspects of ASM livelihoods. An understanding of community identity and a ‘sense of place’ is also central to this study, and research focused on this has been traditionally associated with subjectivities and non-positivist approaches (Mendoza & Moren-Alegret, 2013). The qualitative evidence gained through interviews with those engaged in translocal ASM livelihoods can also be presented through multiple quotes based on the actual words of different individuals, highlighting the different perspectives in line with the nature of interpretivism.

## 5.4. The use of a case study

The research design uses a case study approach, which involves the study of an issue or problem through one or more cases within a bounded system (Creswell, 2013). For this research study, the translocal ASM community between the Andes and Madre de Dios is the case that is being focused on, while the context is the ASM sector in Peru. The location of the research sites on a resource frontier and the global/national periphery is also of central importance. I have selected a case study approach due to the desire to understand the complex social phenomena of translocal mining communities, but also because I aim to understand the present circumstances in those communities within their real-life context (Yin, 2009). Case studies are extremely useful when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and thus the contextual conditions of that phenomena are highly pertinent to its existence (Ibid.). This seems particularly important to the translocal ASM community under investigation in this research, as there are many distinct features of the particular places within the translocal community that shape the social dynamics under investigation.

There are of course limitations with implementing a case study approach, especially given that findings may not be generalisable, gaining access to case study settings can be difficult, and they tend to focus on processes rather than outcomes (Denscombe, 2014). While the first two issues are important to reflect upon, the final critique actually highlights the relevance of a case study approach to this study, which is primarily interested in processes in the form of community dynamics. Case studies are also not practical when the research requires some element of behavioural control or manipulation (Yin, 2009), but this is not necessary for this study as I am investigating naturally occurring relationships and social processes within the translocal community. As they can provide a holistic view of the research setting and problem, this will allow an understanding of the real-life events in ASM communities, such as households’ lifecycles, small group behaviour and neighbourhood change (Denscombe, 2014; Yin, 2009) Furthermore, case studies can be explanatory, allowing for an interrogation of why aspects of the ASM have evolved, rather than just how (Denscombe, 2014; Yin, 2009).

Although researchers may take a comparative approach and therefore have multiple cases, here I have decided to use a single case study. The case in question is a translocal mining community, which is a typical case of the wider, global phenomena of migratory ASM livelihoods and the resulting translocal communities. Selecting one translocal community allows for a greater understanding of the social phenomenon surrounding ASM livelihoods by ‘reducing the inferential scope’ (Gerring, 2007) and reveals insights that may not have come to light if a large number of cases had been covered (Denscombe, 2014, p.55). However, the translocal nature of the selected case study has implications, because generally a case study must be a self-contained entity or a bounded system with distinct boundaries, so that it can be easily separated from data external to the case (Denscombe, 2014; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). As pointed out by Comaroff and Comaroff (2003), people rarely live in bounded social contexts and as a result, almost everything takes place at multiple scales, which makes traditional research methods difficult to apply. A key problem is that while stationary field studies may be able to consider mobility as a subject of observation, the methodological focus of research remains on the place itself and the people who can be found there, with the underlying assumption that settledness is the ‘normal’ case (Steinbrink, 2009). In translocal communities, spatial mobility is considered the rule just as much as sedentariness, and this necessitates an alteration to the methodological design (Ibid.).

To reflect realities in ASM communities, I have followed Hine’s (2000) suggestion and moved from a notion of field as a bounded site to a field of relations. ASM operatives, their families and other actors take action, make decisions and develop identities within social fields that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously (Faist, 1999; Glick Schiller et al, 1992; Mendoza & Moren-Alegret, 2013). This necessitates fieldwork in a bi-or multi-local context (Steinbrink, 2009). Furthermore, in the translocal ASM community that exists between the Andes and Madre de Dios, the overlapping network of migrants’ livelihoods constitutes a complex web rather than a linear connection from A to B, encompassing multiple origin and destination locations. Multi-sited ethnography, as theorised by Marcus (1998), has been seen as a tool for studying migrant spaces by looking beyond fixed, local and bounded sites (Crinis, 2012). This approach highlights the importance of studying the flows of peoples and commodities to multiple sites of observation and participation that cut across the nation and the global (Ibid.). However, multi-sited, translocal research into migration does not necessarily have to be based on ethnographic methods (Mendoza & Moren-Alegret, 2013). For example, in their study of Singaporean and British migrants in China, Willis and Yeoh (2002) followed a basic interview schedule across six cities in China with large expatriate communities, and participated in some other expat activities.

The aim of a case study is to ‘illuminate the general by looking at the particular’ (Denscombe, 2014). This is achieved by looking in-depth at one, or a few, cases of a particular phenomenon, and attempting to uncover the events, relationships, experiences or processes that occur in those particular cases in an attempt to understand the wider phenomenon (Ibid.). A case study of this particular translocal community is therefore representative of the wider phenomena of migratory ASM livelihoods, and has relevance to the many contexts of the world where ASM takes place. This makes the approach preferable to ethnography, as while the latter does allow an understanding of the workings of a particular group of people who interact over time (Creswell, 2013, p.70) it is generally context specific. As the intent in ethnography is to determine how one specific culture works (Ibid.), it is less useful for understanding the broader issue of migratory ASM livelihoods using this particular translocal community as a specific example. Furthermore, as the translocal nature of fieldwork meant being on the move a lot, this would have risked any attempt at a multi-sited ethnography lacking depth. Hage (2005) has argued that for this reason, true multi-sited ethnography is in fact not feasible. Selecting an ethnographic approach would have required judgement calls on which of the two localities to embed myself in, which would have undermined the translocal perspective I was hoping to achieve. I also felt that an over emphasis on one community would have prevented me from fully answering my research questions, particularly regarding competing definitions of illegality, which necessitated speaking to people at multiple levels and in multiple places.

As noted above, the translocal community that exists between the Andes and Madre de Dios consists of a complex web of connections and relationships between numerous origin and destination communities, rather than a simple linear connection. While the research design employed here takes the translocal community as a single case study, I primarily focus on two primary locations, whilst also emphasising the links with other interconnected places. In doing so, I am able to magnify a slice of the complex web that constitutes the broader translocal community. This approach has been advocated elsewhere in translocal research, with Steinbrink (2009) noting that the linkages between two study areas constitute only a section of the total translocal context in which the people are embedded. I have focused my research on one origin community and one destination community, which are the Andean district of Ocongate and the mining town of Laberinto respectively. However, due to the nature of the translocal community, I also discuss the connections with other places where relevant, particularly the informal mining settlement of KM108 in La Pampa, which lies within the National Park Buffer Zone. The following sections will introduce the Andean communities in Ocongate District and the town of Laberinto, and elaborates further on why they were selected.

## 5.5. Case study selection

Case studies can be selected for their intrinsic value or their instrumental value, depending on the particular problem being researched. Intrinsic case studies draw researchers toward an understanding of what is important about the case within its own world, including its own issues, contexts, and interpretations. In contrast, instrumental case study draws the researcher into illustrating how the concerns of researchers and theorists are manifest in the case (Stake, 2005). With instrumental case studies, a researcher may decide they want to select a particular case because it is extreme, or because the site represents the least likely scenario for a theory to work, and thus can be used as a test-site (Denscombe, 2014). Sites for case studies may also be selected because they represent the ‘typical case’ and the gleaned information is likely to be applicable elsewhere (Denscombe, 2014; Gerring, 2007). Denscombe (2014) also notes that while convenience may be an important factor in site selection, this should not be the main criterion and only comes into play once a range of potential typical sites have been identified. Once the case has been selected, there are subsequent choices to make about persons, places and events to observe. These can sometimes take the form of embedded cases or mini-cases (Stake, 2005).

For the purpose of this study, I selected sites based on the typical case. In general, a typical case should be representative and the results transferable. While the particular thing under investigation is unique, it is also a single example of a broader class of things (Denscombe, 2014). While it is argued that the findings drawn from instrumental case studies are more easily applicable to other scenarios, Stake (2005) warns against the tendency for researchers to become obsessed with generalisability in site selection. He argues that even intrinsic case studies, which are selected purely because the investigator wants to understand that particular case more thoroughly, can be seen as a small step towards grand generalisation. However, an overzealous commitment to theorise runs the risk of detracting attention from important aspects of the specific case that are necessary for its comprehension (Ibid.). Similarly, Denscombe (2014) argues that a case study provides a chance to analyse one particular setting and arrive at certain concepts and propositions that might explain what is happening and why.

In this translocal study, I focus on two main areas within the translocal ASM community - a community of origin and a community of destination. I felt that it was important to select a community of origin that was representative of localities with high levels of out-migration due to the mining industry. During an initial scoping visit to Peru in September-October 2016, I held a number of informal meetings with organisations and experts in order to help identify communities to work with. Through these discussions, I was able to identify criteria that the ‘typical’ origin community would have. The criteria are as follows:

* **A small town or village –** Small towns and villages are much more ‘typical’ of origin communities than are big cities, as in the majority of all Peruvian migration cities tend to be the destination communities. Furthermore, while there may be large numbers of miners who do migrate from cities such as Lima or Cusco to the mining settlements in Madre de Dios, the impact on their origin community is not as obvious.
* **Located in the Andes** – It is widely acknowledged that the majority of miners in Madre de Dios have migrated from towns and villages in the Andes. People from the Andes have been involved in mining for many years, and have travelled far to do so. They are also often thought of as being physically strong and in the past recruiters frequently visited towns in the Andes to find people to work in the mining in Madre de Dios.
* **A high incidence of families involved in the mining sector** – This is important as to see if the migration has an impact on the origin communities, there need to be many households involved in the sector. If there were only 1 or 2 families involved, there is unlikely to be much of impact.
* **Households have members who stayed in the area while others went away to work –** I am interested to see if there are changes to both household and community relationships as a result of translocality. It is essential therefore that some household members remain in the village**.**

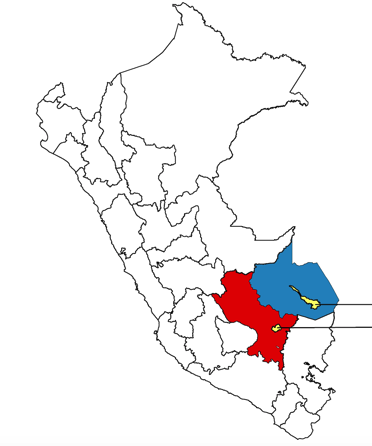
The ‘typical case’ of a community of origin embroiled in translocal ASM livelihoods is therefore a small town or village where a large number of households rely on seasonal or permanent migration of some of the family members to mining settlements. I planned to draw on the connections made in these origin communities to identify the destination community.

### 5.5.1. The origin community

In order to gain access to the field site, I had hoped to find a gatekeeper who could introduce me to the communities and facilitate interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). I identified one international Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) that reported working in communities that fitted my criteria, and after discussions with them it was decided that my research should focus on the district of Pitumarca. However, after arranging meetings with the community leaders in Pitumarca, it was discovered that the majority of mining migrants were either students, who migrated temporarily during study vacations, or very young men without families. This meant they were unfortunately not appropriate research participants, as I was interested in how households manage translocal ASM livelihoods across a spatial divide. I therefore needed to change the study location, as Pitumarca did not meet the selection criteria. Fortunately, a benefit of case studies is that they have a flexible design (Yin, 2009) and it was therefore possible to modify my case selection after this initial exploratory phase.

Through discussion with local government representatives in Pitumarca and the INGO it was discovered that communities in the nearby district of Ocongate would better fit my ‘typical case’. The district of Ocongate is in Quispicanci province, which is located in the Cusco region. In Figure 3 below, Cusco region is coloured in red, with the position of Ocongate within it highlighted in yellow. Although Quispicanci province is a poor province generally, Ocongate is one of the poorest districts within it, with an estimated poverty rate of 83.3-93.3% in 2007 (INEI, 2008). As the district is in the Andean mountain range, a high altitude of up to 6,000 meters above sea level (Municipalidad Distrital de Ocongate, 2005) contributes to the vulnerability of agricultural livelihoods in the face of climate change. According to census data, the population of the entire district was only 13,578 in 2007 (INEI, 2008) and this is spread across 33 comunidades, with the majority living in one of the three biggest population centres of Ocongate town, Tinki and Lauramarca (Municipalidad Distrital de Ocongate, 2005).

**Figure 3: Position of Cusco and Madre de Dios Regions and Ocongate and Tambopata Districts within Peru**

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Laberinto District

Ocongate District

The presence in Ocongate of miners that fit my selection criteria was confirmed after discussions with LGA representatives and community leaders in Ocongate. With assistance from these local stakeholders, two neighbouring communities were identified to focus on. These are both small villages in the district of Ocongate and are in close proximity to the interoceanic highway. There is far greater through traffic and a number of shops, restaurants and other small businesses have sprung up along the highway. While the road brings business it also brings crime, with community members frequently complaining about the increasing insecurity in their previously sleepy community. However, the road also offers opportunities for investing in alternative livelihoods within the community. This is important, as aside from agriculture, which increasingly due to climate change is only at subsistence level, the only other notable income-generating activities are linked to the Festival of Senor Quollorit’i, a large annual religious festival and pilgrimage with both an Andean and Catholic history.

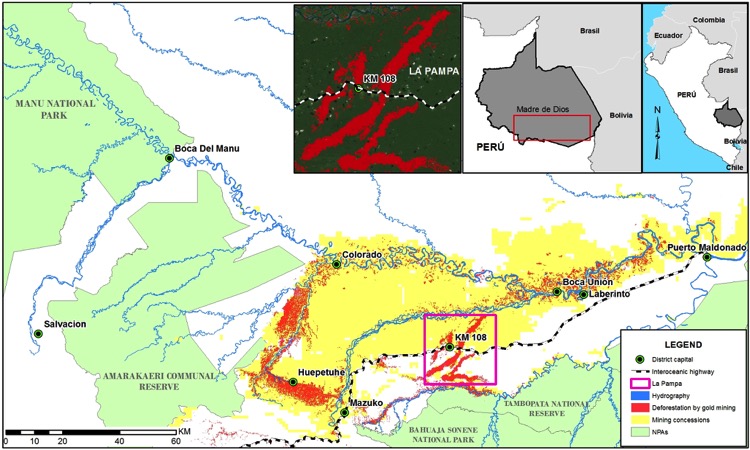
### 5.5.2. The destination community

In Figure 3 above, the region of Madre de Dios is also highlighted, showing its proximity to Cusco. In order for me to understand the translocal community, it was necessary to conduct interviews in a mining town in Madre de Dios. This allowed me to see to the extent to which miners maintained links with home whilst conducting their livelihood translocally, but also how the translocal nature of their livelihood impacted on social relationships and community dynamics in the destination community. Experiences in the destination community were particularly important for understanding both how these dynamics were influenced by the fact that ASM is an illicit livelihood and that miners and the wider community were engaged in constant resistance and negotiations with the Government.

The original intention was to select interview participants using snowball sampling directly from the interviews held in Ocongate, which would enable me to ‘follow connections which were made meaningful from that setting’ (Hine, 2000). However, there were two main problems with this approach. Firstly, many of the husbands of the interviewed women did not want to be interviewed, or in some cases the women did not even want to ask them. Secondly, many of the women’s husbands worked in La Pampa, most notably the informal settlement of KM108, which lies within the boundaries of the National Park buffer where all mining activity is prohibited. La Pampa is notorious for extremely high levels of crime and violence making it too dangerous to visit, let alone attempt to conduct fieldwork. Many local people told me that the area was far too dangerous for even them to visit, and it would have been worse for a foreigner. Staying overnight in La Pampa would also have been impossible as the majority of the hotels are extremely insecure and generally used as brothels. Fortunately, through various connections and meetings in Puerto Maldonado, it was discovered that the mining towns and settlements in the *Corridor Minero* were relatively safe in comparison with settlements in La Pampa.

There are several towns within the *Corridor Minero*, including Laberinto and Boca Colarado, that are all around the same size and much smaller settlements such as Boca Union. These can clearly be seen in Figure 4 below. Laberinto was eventually identified as the most suitable location for the interviews, due to its size and relative security, although I also conducted several interviews in Boca Union, which is a short distance away. Laberinto is a formally established town located in a district of the same name in the province of Tambopata in Madre de Dios region. The town lies on the bank of the River Madre de Dios about 34 miles away from Puerto Maldonado, along what is now the trans-oceanic highway, which is represented by the black and white line in Figure 4. The town’s name refers to the maze-like formation of the river in that area. Figure 4 also shows the location of KM108, and high levels of deforestation can be seen to the south of the highway, very close to the national parks.

**Figure 4: Map of Tambopata**



Source: CINCIA, 2017

As discussed in chapter 3, during the 1970s and 1980s, the Government actively encouraged migration to Madre de Dios due to a desire to increase the population of Amazon. Laberinto was established in the 1970’s around the mining industry and has grown extensively in recent years as ASM continues to attract more migrant labour. Originally, of three other nearby settlements, Laberinto was the smallest – consisting of a navy station and a cluster of about four houses. However, once it became clear how much gold was in the surrounding area, it was in Laberinto that the national *Banco Minero* established a branch. For its part, Boca Union has remained very small, with a handful of houses and a few shops and hotels that cater exclusively for miners that work in camps in the jungle.

Figure 4 also shows the deforestation that has resulted from the patterns of gold deposit under the Amazonian rainforest floor, which are a main cause of deforestation. However, in Laberinto ASM activity takes place in rivers with easy access provided through the local port. The nature of the gold deposits means there are very low barriers to entry, making it easy for miners with little or no previous experience or capital to find work opportunities. This was even easier in the early 1970’s when there were no concessions, as the land did not officially belong to anyone and there was no need to negotiate with the *concessionarios*. Later, when the Government started selling concessions they were still relatively easy to buy. Nowadays, one does not have to travel far by boat from the port to observe miners illegally mining gold on the river. Although there are a large number of small businesses in Laberinto, all commerce is related to the mining industry in some way. This may be through garages where mechanics fix motors, gold merchants or suppliers of oil or mining equipment, or more indirectly through selling of food and other commodities to miners and their families. Thus, while Laberinto is formally established with local government institutions and public services, unlike the informal settlements of La Pampa, the entire economy hinges on ASM.

Through the connections in Puerto Maldonado it was possible to arrange a meeting with the head of FEDAMIN, the federation of artisanal and small-scale gold miners in Madre de Dios, who then referred us to the local FEDAMIN leaders. This connection was invaluable in arranging interviews with miners, as without a respected local gatekeeper it would have been impossible to gain the trust of the miners, most of whom are operating illegally. This connection with the local leader also gave us access to an LGA representative who was happy to assist us wherever possible. During the second phase of fieldwork, connections with more temporary miners were made through affiliation with the organisation CINCIA (Centro de Innovacion Cientifica Amazonica), a research centre established to assess the extent to which ASM is contributing to deforestation and contaminated waterways in the Amazon.

## 5.6. Data collection methods

Conducting a qualitative study means trying to get as close as possible to the participants being studied, thus requiring the researcher to spend time collecting data ‘in the field’ in order to minimise distance or objective separateness (Creswell, 2013). In total I conducted nine months of fieldwork across two periods of data collection; January-June 2017 and January-March 2018. I organised research activities around the main objective and the four questions outlined at the start of the chapter, which allowed me to identify the information I needed and the respondents I needed to talk to. Following this approach also meant that when faced with an initial field site that was inappropriate and with data collection techniques that didn’t work in the context, I could be flexible.

One important aspect of case studies is that it facilitates the use of multiple methods (Denscombe, 2014), as evidence can be taken from many sources including documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation and physical artefacts (Yin, 2009). However some authors insist that multiple sources of evidence must be used when conducting case studies in order to triangulate and corroborate the gathered evidence (Ibid.). In case studies triangulation is seen as imperative for verifying data (Creswell, 2014; Gerring, 2007; Yin, 2009). As will be demonstrated in this section, although multiple data collection methods were proposed in the planning stages, some of these were not possible to conduct in the field. This section will discuss the use of in-depth interviews and briefly explain why the other proposed methods were not practical.

### 5.6.1. Interviews

This research study draws on in-depth interviews to understand translocal community dynamics, place and community identity, and the implications of the illegality of ASM livelihoods. Qualitative interviewing is useful when applying an interpretivist approach, as it allows for a better exploration of the views and perceptions of the participants, allowing a deeper understanding than would be provided by a quantitative analysis of migration trends. Through the use of interviews, I am able to explore the complex and subtle phenomena that are embedded in translocal ASM communities, such as opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences (Denscombe, 2014). Peraklya (2005) stresses that by tapping into people’s subjective experiences and attitudes in this way, interviews enable the researcher to reach areas of reality that would otherwise remain inaccessible, such as past events or faraway experiences. This enables the researcher to gain access to this knowledge in a way that other methods, such as participant observation, do not allow. Mason (2002) notes that because qualitative interviews rely on people’s contextual accounts and experiences, they are particularly useful for explaining depth and nuance in social interactions.

Rather than using completely structured questions in my interviews, I followed a semi-structured interview format. While I had a clear list of issues to be addressed, I wanted the flexibility to allow the interviewees to develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues that were most pertinent to them (Denscombe, 2014). Interviews that follow a semi-structured format are open-ended and there is more emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest, providing opportunity for the interviews to develop and change through the course of the project (Ibid.). I found this particularly useful during the course of my fieldwork, as I learnt more about the realities of translocal ASM livelihoods. Semi-structured interviews also provide scope for follow up questions and probing (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003; Bryman, 2001; Perakyla, 2005), which allowed me to investigate further into points of interest. In particular, semi-structured interviews suit a constructivist approach, because as the questions remain broad and general, there is more scope for participants to construct the meaning of a situation (Creswell, 2013). They are also generally regarded as being extremely useful for exploring migrants’ sense of place (Mendoza & Moren-Alegret, 2013).

In order to ensure a semi-structured approach to interviewing, I created topic guides for each type of stakeholder rather than lists of questions. The topic guides were based around a number of key themes, which acted as a starting point for discussions. By making the discussion flexible and open-ended in this way, it was hoped that unexpected themes would emerge (Mason, 2002). While the guides were not overly prescriptive, working on them beforehand allowed time to think about ways to interact with the participant (Mason, 2002). Themes included:

* Descriptive details about the mine and the nature of the work
* Influencing factors in the decision to start mining
* Planned livelihood trajectories into the future
* Changes with family relationships as a result of migration
* Changes within the community as a result of migration
* The working/social life of the miner
* Political and social problems associated with mining and migration

Some of these themes were only discussed with the miners themselves, such as details about their working life, while others were applicable to participants in both Laberinto and Ocongate. As I was working with interpreters, the themes were shared with the interpreters and translated into Spanish and Quechua with their assistance.

The semi-structured approach became more important than I initially expected, as my research questions changed substantially after arriving at my field sites and initiating relationships and dialogue with the local communities. Initially I had been most interested in changes in the origin community, whilst expecting some form of exclusion of in-migrants in Laberinto, this was not what I found. Furthermore, a focus on deviant narratives was not expected until I began to witness these different narratives in the field. I subsequently altered my research questions and objectives, reflecting the inductive approach I took to data collection and analysis. Fortunately, despite these changes, the use of semi-structured interviews allowed me to adapt my questions to better reflect these realities.

There is often debate over how many qualitative interviews is ‘enough’ (see for example Baker & Edwards, 2012). Positivist researchers for example argue that even dozens of interviews are not representative of all the immigrants and residents in a specific place. However, others academics, particularly in the fields of human geography, point out that this is largely irrelevant if the aim is to promote a detailed understanding of sociospatial experiences (Mendoza & Moren-Alegret, 2013). As, Mendoza and Moren-Alegret (2013) point out, it is necessary to take into account the spatial implementation of migration policies and more specifically, the embodied geographies of the nation state. Therefore, in order to understand the working of the translocal ASM community, interviews were also conducted with community leaders, government officials at the regional and national-level, and NGO representatives. This is important as Ferguson (1999) observed in his study of migrant workers in the Zambian copper-belt, away from the archetypal image of the culturally homogenous village community, all the participants in the scene are themselves a little confused and find ‘some things that are clear and others that are unintelligible or only partially intelligible’ (Ferguson, 1999, p.208). Thus, particularly in scenes where ‘different cultures, diverse social microworlds and discordant frames of meaning are all thrown together in the normal course of things’, it is important to remember that the objective becomes which aspect of the events does any given social actor ‘get’ (Ibid., p.208). Given the complexities of translocal communities and illicit ASM livelihoods, consulting a range of stakeholders is crucial. In total I conducted 68 interviews; 23 interviews with female miners or wives of miners, 28 with male miners, 8 with NGOs and civil society organisations, 4 with government representatives and 5 with community leaders and local ASM experts. The spatial breakdown is shown in the following table 4.1. I will explain how participants were recruited in both communities in turn.

**Table 4.1: Number of interviews by stakeholder and location**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Ocongate | Laberinto | Lima |
| Female miners/wives of miners | 16 | 7 | 0 |
| Male miners | 2 | 26 | 0 |
| NGOs and CSOs | 0 | 7 | 1 |
| Government Representatives | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Community leaders and local ASM experts | 2 | 2 | 1 |

Participants in the Ocongate interviewees were identified through snowball sampling and through discussions with the community. Snowball sampling is often used to draw on expertise to identify cases of interest (Creswell, 2013). I initially drew on people with knowledge of the area to identify which households were engaged in a translocal ASM livelihood, before using the participants themselves to identify others. The lack of an INGO gatekeeper made identifying participants challenging and also created difficulties with gaining trust, especially given the nature of the research. Instead, I initially met with the two local community leaders who advised on some of the households involved in ASM. I also engaged with two of the local community groups, the Guinea-Pig Association and the Artisanal Craft Association, both of which are community-based trade organisations. Attending their meetings enabled me to build familiarity with the members and they helped me identify the households that were involved in mining. I also attended the weekly women’s football practice in order to build rapport with them and went along to a weekend men’s football tournament against other Ocongate communities. However, securing interviews was still difficult, as many of the women were very shy. In total I interviewed fifteen women whose husbands worked in the informal mining sector, or had previously done so. A few of these women had experience of working in the mining areas themselves, although as cooks rather than being directly involved in ASM activity. Whilst in Ocongate I was also able to interview two miners who were back at home visiting their families, as well as two community leaders and an LGA representative*.* I also conducted a phone interview with one of the women’s husbands who were working in La Pampa at the time.

As previously mentioned, the original plan of travelling to the areas in which the women’s husbands worked and interviewing them there turned out to be impossible due to security reasons and issues of trust. This meant that miners had to be recruited through different means. Fortunately, through connections in Puerto Maldonado it was possible to meet the FEDAMIN leaders in Laberinto. From here snowball sampling was used to recruit participants. One limitation of this method was that the majority of the miners who were interviewed had migrated to Laberinto and settled there, rather than being temporary miners. It became clear that an additional period of data collection would be necessary in order to interview more recent settlers and temporary migrants. Six months later I returned to Laberinto to conduct more interviews, specifically aimed at interviewing temporary miners. For this, I used a sampling method more akin to stratified purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013), specially looking to locate these temporary miners. This was challenging as they move around more frequently and often did not want to be interviewed, perhaps because they saw less personal benefit in telling me their story. Fortunately, the links I made through my affiliation with CINCIA assisted in recruiting these more short-term miners. The second period of fieldwork also provided more time to conduct interviews with NGOs and government stakeholders, both in Lima and Puerto Maldonado.

The interviews were translated in the field by an interpreter and recorded electronically. As I spent the majority of my fieldwork in small communities, I had plenty of time to work in the evenings and at times when no one was available for interview. This provided ample opportunity to transcribe my field notes at the end of each day and to write reflections on each interview to ensure that all observations and interpretations were included and no important insights were forgotten. After each interview I debriefed with my translator to identify any problems.

### 5.6.2. Issues with other planned methods

As case studies benefit from the use of multiple sources of evidence, gleaned through a variety of methods, I did not want to rely on interviews to gather data. I had initially planned to use both FGDs and diaries in my research, but unfortunately, these methods proved inappropriate and not feasible in the context.

I thought FGDs would be particularly useful, given their generally exploratory nature, to facilitate getting to know the community members and identifying key informants. They are also generally considered to be useful for gaining information about the experiences shared by group members, as well as for triangulation with other data-gathering techniques as they enable individual accounts to be put into context (Fontana & Frey, 2005). I thought that this would be most practical in Ocongate to initiate household identification and to gain insights into existing community dynamics. However, FGDs were extremely difficult to organise without the assistance of an INGO that could draw on their strong relationship within the community to organise meetings. It took a lot of time to identify individual households through snowball sampling and to then build up enough rapport with the individuals to be able to hold interviews. This was at least partly due to the illicit nature of ASM, which made people less willing to tell me if their friends or relatives were working in the sector. Although it would have been easier to build this rapport and select individuals through holding FGDs first, there was no way of initiating these FGDs as the community leaders were unable, or perhaps unwilling, to help us bring community members together in this way. Although the community leaders assisted by providing lists of names of households involved in mining, which was very helpful, it became apparent that organising an FGD was not feasible.

Diaries were also a problem due to literacy issues. I had originally planned to ask ten of the women from the community to keep diaries for a week in which they wrote about their feelings when their husbands were away and the problems they faced on a daily basis. Diaries are considered useful within the field of human geography because they promote participation and engagement of participants in the research process, and are thought to have particular use as a feminist research method due to their collaborative nature and ability to let the respondent define the boundaries of their shared knowledge (Meth, 2003). However, of the sixteen women interviewed in Ocongate, only four felt confident enough at writing in Spanish to complete the task. Of these four, three were unable to complete the diaries due to time constraints, while the fourth said that she did not think her husband would like her to keep such a diary. There may have been additional problems here due to the illegality of ASM that meant they were less keen to participate in additional research activities. Some researchers discuss the use of financial incentives, for interviews but also for keeping diaries (Creswell, 2014; Meth, 2003), with the understanding that it can dramatically increase response rates (Edwards et al., 2002). Although I had planned to offer financial incentives for the writing of diaries, as it is a more time-consuming process than one interview, my translator, who was herself an anthropologist and a researcher, did not think it was advisable to offer financial incentives in the Andean context. This was initially unexpected, especially given that some researchers highlight how paying respondents can do something to address the unequal power relationship that exists between interviewer and interviewee (Creswell, 2014; Head, 2009). It has however been argued that monetary incentives risk compromising the key ethical principle of free and informed consent, as it can represent coercion in poor low-income environments (Head, 2009). I therefore dropped the idea of diaries, as it was clear that the women were uncomfortable with this aspect of the research and that needed to be respected.

## 5.7. Data coding and analysis

On arrival back in the UK, the transcripts were coded using nVivo and analysed accordingly. Stake (2005) argues that qualitative data is continuously interpreted, first against one issue, perspective or utility, and then against others. Yin (2009) explains that for this reason, case studies benefit from prior development of a theoretical position to guide data collection and analysis. While this is true, through the course of my fieldwork, I became aware of the importance of theory that I had not initially considered. On some occasions, this led to me re-coding the data, although I believe that this process was an important for my engagement with it. During analysis, I used thematic analysis to identify themes from within the transcripts. In order to prevent overly deductive coding, the codes used for the analysis were not identified until reading through the transcripts. This was to prevent me cherry picking certain aspects from the data that reflected prior assumptions. I started with broad categories of ‘migration processes’, ‘community’, ‘household’, ‘environment’ and ‘conflict’, because these had been the key areas of discussion during interview, and then built up nodes from there. This inductive approach to analysis was successful because I did find surprises in the data, with some unexpected points mentioned numerous times by very different actors.

Mason (2002) explains that a major challenge for interpretivist approaches is the risk of misrepresenting the research participants' perspectives and it is important to be mindful of that. Systematic coding should help avoid this as it builds an interpretation through a series of stages, avoiding the temptation of jumping to premature conclusions (Jackson, 2001). As Denscombe (2014) notes, it is important not to take everything a respondent says at face value and to always question its validity. This is best done through triangulation and identifying emerging themes across transcripts, but in some cases it may also be possible to go back over the transcript with the respondents. I took a critical approach to analysing the information provided to me by participants, particular in their account of the on-going political interactions with the Government, realising that because the situation is highly political people have extreme views.

## 5.8. Field work issues

Fontana and Frey (2005) discuss how interviews are a collaborative process, resulting in a contextually bound and mutually agreed story. However, it is also important to understand that interviewing is also ‘inextricably and unavoidably historically, politically and contextually bound’ (Ibid., p.695). Thus, the story that is arrived at through collaboration between researcher and respondent ultimately hinges on their relationship and the interpretations of each other. Yin (2009) notes that this criticism is often levelled at case study research in particular, because if the researcher fails to adopt appropriate measures this can often result in subjective judgement being used in analysis.

### 5.8.1. Interviewer effects

One key issue confronted in the field that may have distorted the responses was the interviewer effect. It is widely acknowledged that the personal characteristics of the interviewer, such as their sex, age, and ethnic origin, can often affect how much information the respondent is willing to give (Denscombe, 2014). The strength of these effects depends on the topic under investigation and is likely to increase if the topic is particularly sensitive, perhaps focusing on sexuality, abuse and illegal activity for example. In some instances, the respondents may make assumptions about what the interviewer wants to hear based on their appearance or certain characteristics and either offer or withhold certain information accordingly (Denscombe, 2014).

When planning fieldwork, I realised that being a woman could be particularly problematic. The gender of a researcher can have huge implications in many studies, thus influencing the type of data that is collected. The potential effects are so great that gender has been said to filter knowledge (Denzin, 1989), and this is more of a problem with sensitive information. The impact of a male researcher asking female participants about gender based violence, for example, may not produce good results. However, quite apart from gender filtering knowledge, it can also restrict the ability of the researcher to ‘access the setting’ (Fontana and Frey, 2005, p.707). In deeply patriarchal societies, men may find it challenging to interview women, while for women, conducting research in certain settings may put them ‘out of place’ (Creswell, 1996) causing difficulties, especially as it comes with additional security risks. Indeed, female interviewers do at times face the added burden of sexual overtures or covert sexual harrassment (Fontana and Frey, 2005). However, Warren (1988) has pointed out that there are some advantages or the researcher being female, particularly because they can often be seen as harmless or invisible.

For my research on illicit ASM livelihoods, I had to carefully consider how the community members would react to a female researcher and the ease with which I would be able to access the field. During data collection in Ocongate, being a woman was somewhat advantageous, as some of the women I was interviewing were quite timid and may have been less comfortable talking with a man. In this context, it was important that my translator was also a woman. However, in Laberinto interviewing miners was difficult. It was not possible for me to socialise with miners in bars, as it is not common for women in Peru to do this unless they are prostitutes and it may have been interpreted incorrectly. However, once male respondents were identified for interview, they seemed happy to discuss issues with me. I found my gender to be less problematic than my ethnic background. It is possible that being a woman had some benefits in the context, as the miners did not assume that I was an engineer or a miner sent from a foreign extractives company and may have done had I been a man.

The nationality or ethnicity of a researcher can obviously have an important impact. Collins (1990) for example wrote how, like gender, aspects of identity such as being black and American also filtered knowledge. There was an obvious wariness amongst the miners of revealing details of their illicit livelihood activities with a foreigner. In Laberinto and some of the smaller mining settlements in particular, I was initially assumed to be from a conservation NGO. It was only by spending time in the communities in order to make myself known by the locals that I was able to shed this image. In Sherman et al’s (2015) work on a rural Peruvian community, she notes that arranging a home-stay for the duration of her fieldwork allowed her to establish better relationships with community members. Unfortunately, I was unable to arrange a home-stay. Instead, I forged links with community groups and the local FEDAMIN organisation and was eventually able to win trust. In Laberinto, a key turning point in the data collection came when a new acquaintance announced on his local radio programme that people should not be concerned about the *gringa* and her friend as they were not conservationists and were keen to hear their stories. In Ocongate being a foreigner was also a problem, but rather than just being wary of white people, the local people were equally concerned about non-Quechua speaking Peruvians. I was careful to ensure my interpreter for this part of the fieldwork was a woman from the Andean highlands who spoke fluent Quechua. This did mean that the interpreter’s English was more limited, potentially creating some limitations in the depth of conversation due to my own limited Spanish language skills, but as the interviews were all recorded precise meanings could be gleaned after the interview. Thus, my position as a white, non-Spanish speaking foreigner has undoubtedly influenced the type of information I was able to collect. I discuss my positionality and the language barriers in detail in section 5.8.2 below.

Aside from respondents being influenced by interview effects, what is said in interviews is also heavily dependent on people’s capacity to verbalise, interact, conceptualise and remember (Mason, 2002). Furthermore, on sensitive issues in particular it may be that the respondent desires to paint themselves in a good light or put across a purposefully biased and inaccurate account. Mason (2002) argues that because of these issues, it is not possible to separate the findings and meanings uncovered in the interview from the social interaction in which it was produced. Researchers should strive to understand the complexities of the interaction and develop a sense of how context and situation work during interview. Given my investigation into an illicit livelihood activity, the associated environmental destruction and the increasingly violent encounters between miners and the Government as a result, it is unsurprising that I encountered strong positions. Once the miners had established I was not from a conservation NGO, they were very forthcoming with information regarding the Government, which allowed us to uncover a lot about social interactions in terms of collective action. This was because the men were keen to tell me the problems they were facing in their conflict with the Government, and through this I learnt a lot about the nuances of local social change. The miners’ determination to talk about the political issues they face highlighted the fact that they felt their livelihoods were being threatened and that they were being treated unfairly. However, it was still important not to take their accounts of action by the Government and NGOs, and particularly their assessment of the impact ASM had on the environment, at face value. It is also likely that many of the respondents remained wary of discussing the intricacies of their illicit mining activity or their opinions about the government with me, particularly given my ethnic background. I therefore ensured that I triangulated all my data, corroborating the information through gathering multiple perceptions (Stake, 2005, p.454), including NGO workers, representatives from multiple levels of government and non-mining community members.

### 5.8.2. Positionality

While interviewees can often hold preconceptions regarding the interviewer, Scheurich (1995) noted that the interview may also carry unavoidable conscious and unconscious motives, desires, feelings and biases so cannot therefore be considered to be neutral. Scheurich maintained that as interviewers are themselves contextually located, the positivist view ‘vastly underestimates the complexity, uniqueness and indeterminateness of each one-to-one human interaction’ (Ibid., p.241). Thus, particularly when following a constructivist approach, researchers recognise that their own background shapes interpretation and they ‘position themselves’ in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural and historical experiences (Creswell, 2013, p.21).

Before starting the research, it was important for me to reflect on my own positionality. As a woman, I am likely to have been more sympathetic to the plight of women within ASM contexts, and indeed it is my interest in feminist issues that made me aware of the lack of focus on women in ASM in literature. While uncovering the realities of life for both women and men embroiled in translocal livelihoods, I often found myself focusing on the structural constraints women face while attempting to exercise agency, while at the same time taking the agency of men within marital relationships somewhat for granted. At the same time, my ethnic identity affected my positionality in many ways. Whilst it has been argued that researchers conducting cross-cultural research can be more objective as they are not as emotionally invested in the participants or context, they are also far less likely to understand the cultural complexities of the situation (Baser & Toivanen, 2018). This was an important factor in my research, as I had to spend a lot of time trying to understand what was going on without any insider knowledge. Due to the global spotlight on the deforestation of the Amazon, I also had a preoccupation with the environmental sustainability of ASM, but also preconceived ideas about some of the people involved in the sector, as I knew of the links with human trafficking, coca production, crime and violence. Whilst it is impossible for a researcher to change their positionality, I tried to remain aware of my own subjectivities at all times.

As someone with a strong background in international development and a strong scepticism of neo-liberalism, I was inherently sympathetic to the plight of the families engaging in ASM. This viewpoint may have been quite different from someone approaching the problem from a different discipline or with different objectives. For example, a researcher from a business or economics background may highlight the consequences for large-scale extractives or focus more on the need for formalisation, while a conservationist motivated primarily by a desire to eliminate deforestation may put little weight on the background of people engaged in destructive ASM activities. The position I held was only reinforced through my study of the translocal community and the initial phase of fieldwork in Ocongate, where I was exposed to the realities of Andean life for low-income households. However, I was careful in my analysis to avoid siding with participants, or being guilty of what Creswell (2014) refers to as ‘going native’. I ensured that I collected data from a range of stakeholders, as well as diversity of opinion from within the ASM community.

### 5.8.3. Language barriers and the use of interpreters

As I was conducting cross-language qualitative research, the biggest challenge I faced during fieldwork was the language barriers. Although I made every effort to learn Spanish to an intermediate level, a translator was still essential. In the Andean communities, there was a further language barrier, as although many of the miners’ wives could communicate to a limited extent in Spanish, interviews with many of the slightly older women had to be conducted in Quechua. Fortunately, this was not a problem in the mining settlements, as everyone there spoke Spanish. There are many issues in the timing of translation in cross-language qualitative research (Santos et al, 2015), but given my grasp of the Spanish language, data collection tools were translated prior to interview. The interviews themselves were interpreted in real time. I later transcribed the translation, while my interpreter transcribed the Spanish, which allowed me the possibility of going back to check the original meaning if necessary. However, the process reduced the amount of data I was able to get from each interview, not least because of the duration of time taken for the translator to interpret. These language barriers also significantly reduced my ability to draw on Spanish or Portuguese literature.llllll

As has already been noted, I used three different translators during fieldwork. In the first phase, I used a Quechua/Spanish-speaking female interpreter in Ocongate and a Spanish-speaking male in Laberinto, while in the second phase, which took place solely in Laberinto, I used a Spanish speaking female interpreter. Using different translators was necessary due to the availability of the various translators and the fact that I needed an interpreter who spoke Quechua in Ocongate. This meant there was a lack of continuity between the various phases of fieldwork in some respects, but it did allow me to select translators with comparatively more understanding of each locational context. Furthermore, in the first phase of fieldwork the interpreters were both required to stay in the field site for a 1-4 weeks at a time, which risks the interpreters becoming bored or anxious if they miss home (Turner, 2010). I made sure that the interpreters were able to travel home whenever possible or visit the nearby city where they had some friends and family.

Interpreters play a fundamental role in the success of cross-language research, as the person often plays a role of cultural broker, mediator and gatekeeper (Caretta, 2015). This was certainly true in my research, particularly in the Andes where the ethnic identity of my interpreter proved indispensable for getting access to interview respondents as well as understanding the cultural norms associated with interviews and research. She was also a woman, which was crucial when interviewing the Andean women, who would have felt much less comfortable interacting with men. In Laberinto, I was initially accompanied by a male translator, which made me feel more comfortable security wise than travelling with another female. During the second phase of fieldwork I had opted to be based in Puerto Maldonado, where there were less issues with security. Using a male interpreter may have also made the miners more open to discussing certain topics such as prostitution and alcoholism, but there was no discernible difference in this respect when using a female interpreter in the second phase, although we were mostly focused on interviewing women and NGO/LGA representatives.

While positivist approaches may focus purely on problems associated with translation errors, a constructivist approaches calls for the consideration of the interpreter as an active producer of knowledge (Berman & Tyyskä, 2011). In some respects, travelling with an interpreter was beneficial, given my positionality as a white female. However, the positionality of the interpreter is also important to the success of the research (Caretta, 2015), as there is a ‘triple subjectivity’ to consider in cross-language research (Temple & Edwards, 2002). Given the notoriety of ASM in Peru, my interpreters had pre-existing ideas about miners and mining communities. Although this was less of an issue in Ocongate, as the community members were visibly poor, it was sometimes challenging for the interpreters not to pass judgement on the miners we interviewed in Laberinto. Fortunately, in the second round of fieldwork, the interpreter was from Puerto Maldonado and she had a better understanding of the realities of ASM communities and had previously had contact with many people that were involved in the sector. There is one advantage however, of having hired interpreters from outside of the translocal ASM community, which is that they were less likely to give a romanticised view of the community and would instead only interpret (Caretta, 2015). What was clear however was that, much like myself, the female interpreters were far more interested in feminist issues than the male interpreter was, which came through strongly in the debrief discussions we had after the interviews had ended.

### 5.8.4. Security

Given the crime and violence associated with the ASM sector in Peru, it was essential for me to consider the security implications of collecting data in certain locations. I consulted local sources before deciding on which mining settlements to focus the research. During this consultation I felt it was not safe for my translator and I to visit La Pampa. At night these areas are particularly unsafe, with gangs of thieves and armed paramilitaries patrolling the roads and pathways. Even in the day, cars are often hijacked and robbed. Within a day of my arrival in Puerto Maldonado there was news of two burnt corpses on the side of the road. The presence of a white foreigner would likely be met with significant hostility, particularly if it was felt I was there for suspicious reasons. It was for these reasons that I changed my sampling approach and based my fieldwork in Laberinto rather than La Pampa. Meanwhile, in the Andes, although the area is not so dangerous, the remoteness of the communities meant that finding secure accommodation was difficult. The practicalities of accommodation and security were carefully considered, even if it required travelling slightly further for interviews.

I avoided travelling by car on roads in other areas that were known for muggings, particularly on the way from Laberinto to Boca Union. In this case, I was advised that travel by boat would be far safer. In other cases, it was the dangers associated with road traffic that caused problems, particularly local buses as they frequently have fatal accidents. This was especially challenging when travelling between Cusco and Puerto Maldonado, as this required an overnight bus ride and only one of the many operational bus companies was reputable.

## 5.9. Ethical considerations

As Stake (2005) notes, qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world, as such, they need to display good manners and a strict code of ethics. Indeed, in any research that involves human participants it is important to consider the ethical implications to ensure that there is no harm to the participants, researcher, interpreter, or anyone else related to the research in any way. This is especially important given the illegality of the livelihoods pursued by the respondents and the relatively dangerous nature of some of the mining areas. Improper conduct in research can reflect badly on ones’ university or research institution (Creswell, 2014). When planning my data collection I familiarised myself with the ethical guidelines as set out by the University of Sheffield and applied them to my proposal and methodologies in order to gain ethical approval.

For much research, identification of the participant may result in embarrassment or a loss of standing and self-esteem, but here there was an even greater risk that it could result in their arrest, threats of violence or the loss of income and livelihood. Government officials also requested that their names not be used, particularly as sometimes their individual opinion did not reflect the views of their organisation. In order to protect the welfare of all participants, all collected data has remained confidential and will continue to do so. I have made every effort to ensure that participants cannot be identified. Although some organisations have been mentioned by name where relevant, I have kept the names of smaller NGOs and Government departments concealed to protect the identity of members and workers. Similarly, given the very small size and population of the two communities I worked with in Ocongate district, I felt it best not to refer to them by name in the Thesis. Data is retrained securely on electronic devices that are password protected and only I have access.

All participants must be made aware of the nature of the research and understand that they do not have to participate and can opt out at any time. To ensure that informed consent is given, each participant was asked to sign a form explaining this. Jackson (2001) argues that the informed consent form should indicate that participants’ contributions might be used in presentations and subsequent publications. This was therefore included on the informed consent form. It is still important to remember that participants may not be familiar with academic skills and conventions and thus informed consent will always be limited (Mason, 2002). Crucially, I avoided putting pressure on people to participate in the study or to sign consent forms. It was for this reason that I decided not to provide remuneration, as this may have been viewed as coercion.

During data collection, it is extremely important for researchers not to disrupt the site or the community (Creswell, 2014). This was particularly important in my field site, as I was investigating community dynamics that I anticipated as being under strain due to the mobile nature of ASM livelihoods. I was careful not to exacerbate tensions within the community, or put any of the participants in a compromising position. Despite the sensitive nature of the topic, there were no signs of the respondents becoming distressed during interview, although I had mitigated against this by not attempting to force people to be interviewed when it was clear they did not want to participate. In the interviews with the miners and wives of miners, I was also careful not to ask about particularly sensitive topics, such as human trafficking and prostitution, unless it was brought up by the interview participant.

## 5.10. Summary

This chapter has discussed in detail the methodological approach I took to my research, taking care to highlight how this was designed in order to best answer my research questions. Although a case study approach is the most appropriate, I have highlighted some of the points of consideration when applying this approach to a translocal, multi-sited study that is perhaps not the neat ‘bounded system’ we would traditionally expect. I have also explained that the use of in-depth interviews was considered the best way of exploring the topic, and that while other data collection methods were initially explored in the field, it became clear that these were inappropriate. I have also introduced the two key field sites that were the focus of my study, and over the next few chapters I will elaborate on the stories and narratives I created with the community members.

# 6. Migrant Livelihoods in ASM: Motivations and Trajectories

## 6.1. Introduction

Understanding the people living within the translocal ASM community is essential for achieving sustainable transformations within the sector. Damonte (2016) has noted the tendency in Peru for the sector to be dehumanised, with public discourse referring to all ASM operatives as one homogenous group, and often emphasising their activities rather than their background. Several academics have pointed out the importance of understanding the individuals and households that involve themselves in ASM, either directly or indirectly, and the community dynamics within mining settlements if successful ASM policy is to be designed and implemented (Hentschel et al., 2002; Hilson et al., 2007; Hilson, 2005; Saldarriaga-Isaza et al., 2013; Spiegal, 2009). The focus here on the translocal ASM community adds another element to this understanding.

This chapter will first look at why individuals and households decide to start working in the mining sector. The first section will look at the key reasons why people in Madre de Dios chose to migrate to work in ASM. Although the motivations of ASM operatives has been explored elsewhere in the literature, I am including it here for two reasons. Firstly, given the focus of this thesis on individual livelihood trajectories, it would seem odd not to start the story at the beginning of the journey into ASM. Secondly, during interviews and meetings in Lima it became clear that that the Peruvian elite are still questioning why people become involved in the sector. Understanding the driving force behind people’s involvement in ASM is crucial for policy makers, should they wish to reduce the numbers of people migrating to work in ASM or transform the sector in a way that can promotes economic security and environmental sustainability. The chapter will then go on to consider the various ways people secure work in ASM, highlighting how despite the low barriers to entry and high demand for labour, social networks are still important for building the trust necessary to gain entry into the ASM sector. Developing an understanding of how these networks operate is a prerequisite for examining community dynamics, given that so many relationships in ASM communities are centred on work to some degree. Furthermore, it is becoming essential to understand how these networks are evolving given the prevalence of insecurity, crime and violence and a breakdown of trust in some mining communities.

The second half of the chapter will focus on the different types of miner operating in Laberinto and La Pampa. It will discuss four broad categories of miner; permanent, temporary, floating and non-migrant, and emphasise the planned livelihood trajectories of these different types. Again, the focus on the translocal ASM community allows an incorporation of livelihood strategies across space and time, and highlights weaknesses in focusing solely on ‘career miners’ or seasonal miners. If we wish to understand community dynamics, all of the various ways in which people involve themselves in ASM need to be considered together, as this will influence the way they interact with each other.

## 6.2. Choosing to migrate

As discussed in chapter 2, although the ‘greed v need’ debate dominated ASM literature for many years, more recently this has been replaced by a more nuanced understanding of the heterogeneity of mining communities. This has particularly focused on the ability of some miners to become very wealthy, often through the exploitation of others (Verbrugge, 2014). In Peru there is undoubtedly evidence of this kind of elite capture (Cortés-McPherson, 2019) and links have been drawn with organised crime and high-level corruption (Salo et al., 2016). The majority of these very wealthy and powerful individuals do not live in towns such as Laberinto or have families in poor villages in the Andes and were not the subject of my research. There are however many rural households who continue to rely on ASM as their main source of income and, in many cases, for survival. While the participants of my research certainlty varied in the relative success they had achieved in the sector, there initial reasons for migration could be dividied within broad categories. I discuss them here in turn with reference to both Ocongate and Laberinto.

### 6.2.1. Perpetual Poverty

As was highlighted in chapter 2, ASM can act as social safety net within communities, providing a livelihood option when there are no viable alternatives. Andean villages in Peru are among the poorest areas in Latin America (Steel & Zoomers, 2009), and households are often reliant on cultivating potatoes or rearing Alpacas, which does not provide an adequate income and faces further risks from the impact of climate change (Hoffman & Grigera, 2013). For many ASM operatives in Madre de Dios, migration to the mining site has been prompted, at least in part, by a desire to escape poverty in the Andes. This is easily illustrated drawing on evidence from interviews conducted in both Ocongate and Laberinto.

Using a translocal approach to fieldwork and analysis can provide an understanding of how the economic situation in Andean communities may encourage out-migration and involvement in ASM. One local government officer in Puerto Maldonado explained that while the mining problem was manifesting itself in Madre de Dios, its causes and answers were in the Andes, where poverty is very high:

*‘Here poor people have an easy way to get money, that’s why they come here. The government needs to do poverty reduction if they want to reduce mining, to improve the lives of these miners and their families. Cusco is receiving taxes from gas and mining and tourism, but they do not distribute any of these resources to poor areas… They don’t need to be interested in the poor areas because they know they can come here and work, and the poor areas have small populations and less votes, so there is no need to care about them’* (LGA representative, Puerto Maldonado).

The comments of the LGA representative point to local populations in the Andes left to lift themselves out of poverty. These comments seem to reflect the realities of life in the two villages studied in Ocongate district, where there are very few livelihood options. Every interview respondent discussed the lack of employment opportunities and an over-reliance on agriculture, particularly potato cultivation and the rearing of livestock, which provided very little money. Some of the women continued agricultural activities alongside their husband’s ASM activities, but most could only produce enough for their own consumption. Furthermore, agriculture takes longer to provide economic benefit, and one man explained that while it may take up to four years to gain any income from rearing alpacas, payment in the mine sites was instant.While there are some construction opportunities available, these do not pay as well as ASM and may still require working away for some days at a time, albeit with more frequent visits home.

All of the respondents in Ocongate claimed to have been living in poverty before their involvement in ASM. For example, Chaska lives in Ocongate District with her husband and three-year old son. Prior to working in ASM, her husband did irregular work for other people in the community, but could only earn about 30 soles per day. This meant that they could not afford to buy land or build a house and sometimes could not even afford enough to eat. Since working in ASM, her husband’s daily earnings have more than doubled, and the family has been able to build their own house. Shirley, whose family had suffered a lot of financial hardship before her husband secured work as an *obrero*[[4]](#footnote-4)in La Pampa, told a similar story. Whereas previously they had never even considered the possibility of investing in a small business, after just a few months working in ASM her husband had saved enough to buy a motorbike with which he could provide transport services. This meant the family did not have to engage in ASM long-term, or even invest in their own mining equipment, to be able to save a sufficient amount, illustrating how ASM can provide a way out of poverty without the need to become a ‘career miner’ (Bryceson & Jønsson, 2010).

In Laberinto, all the miners mentioned the ability to secure a higher income as a factor in their decision to mine. Although the price of gold has fluctuated greatly since the first miners arrived in Laberinto in the 1970s, economic motivations have remained consistently important. Even a low gold price provides a higher income than can be made from agricultural livelihoods in the Andes – ‘*In Puerto they found gold and they know they can earn 200 or 300 soles per day, in Cusco (region) it’s just 30 soles a day*’ (Francisco, ASM miner, Laberinto). However, a desire for a higher income does not necessarily imply that the miner was previously in poverty. For example, before arriving in Laberinto in 1981, Benito had been working in a market in Lima and earning enough to get by. However, as friends had told him that the gold in Madre de Dios was ‘easy to take out of the earth with your hands’, he decided that the low investment risk coupled with the expected pay-off made the transition worthwhile. One miner also alluded to the fact that his friend who works in La Pampa did so because he enjoyed the sense of adventure and excitement that the lifestyle provided. Although none of the interview respondents explicitly mentioned this as personal motivation for engagement in the sector, other researchers have suggested that may constitute a pull factor for young men in rural areas (De Boeck, 2001; Verbrugge, 2016). It can therefore be argued that for young men without labour opportunities and income, the social field of ASM provides an arena where habitus can be transformed into social status and economic gains, similar to observations by Sandberg (2008) with regard to street gangs and culture.

While extreme poverty represents a ‘push’ factor into ASM, for others experiencing a relatively higher standard of living, the perceived wealth in ASM is more of a ‘pull factor’. There is however, a problem with relying on ASM as being poverty driven to justify it as a livelihood activity, as it requires a judgement call on what motivations constitute a livelihood ‘necessity’. For example, almost all the respondents in Ocongate and Laberinto said that providing their children with food, clothing and a good education was their biggest motivation for working in ASM. The poor standard of education available in both locations meant that most wanted to educate their children at schools in nearby cities, and there is plenty of evidence of the miners later sending their children to university. Therefore, while ASM in these cases is not relied on for survival, it is still necessary to enable a standard of living that would be considered adequate elsewhere in Peru.

It is also important to note that not all the migrants in Laberinto work directly in gold mining. ASM has been shown to stimulate the local economy through the needs and demands of miners and mining activity (Bloch & Owusu, 2012; Hilson & McQuilken, 2014; Hirons, 2014; Nyame et al., 2009), and in Laberinto there are a host of other job opportunities as miners from local camps use the town as a commercial hub. Several of the miners reflected on how these job opportunities attracted migrants:

*‘The job opportunities that are in this town make the people stay here. There are many families because there are jobs to do. There is no way that you could come here to work and not find a job - that is not possible, you will find something. It’s the good thing about this place*’ (Roberto, mechanic, Laberinto).

Roberto does not actually work in ASM directly himself, and understands from personal experience the ease of finding other types of work. There is also a wide variety of job opportunities for women, particularly selling food and other products and services. While such work may be available in La Pampa, it would be far less secure due to the levels of crime and violence. However, the local people involved in these other businesses tend to earn far less those employed directly in ASM.

### 6.2.2. Recovering from a failed rural-urban migration

Peru experiences high levels of rural-urban migration, and almost one third of the population now live in the Lima Metropolitan Area (Takenaka et al., 2010). While securing a well-paying job is more likely in Lima and other major urban centres, such as Cusco, life in the city is expensive and challenging. Racial inequalities that have been embedded from colonial times still ensure the marginalisation of indigenous communities (Moreno & Oropesa, 2012; Paredes & Thorp, 2015), and Andean migrants often find themselves occupying the lowest socio-economic positions. For low-skilled men and women failing to make ends meet in Lima or Cusco, ASM can become an attractive alternative.

There are many examples of miners and other community members in Laberinto who have arrived there after a previous migration to an urban centre has failed to provide sufficient income. In Table 6.1 below, I have listed the respondents who previously suffered a failed migration and elaborated on their individual circumstances in order to add nuance to our understanding of the process. It should however be noted that many of these people’s motivations may overlap with other categories, particularly when considering the income-related reasons for migrating that were discussed previously.

**Table 6.1. Experiences of Failed Migration Resulting in a Move to Work in ASM**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **From** | **Arrived in MDD** | **Migration Experience** |
| Diego (miner) | Arequipa | 1983 | Was tired of working in agriculture in Arequipa so went to Cusco to look for work, but failed to do so as he didn’t have the right papers |
| Benito (Miner) | Apurimac | 1981 | Moved to Lima and had managed to find a job in a market but heard he could earn more in ASM and moved his family to Laberinto |
| Roberto (ex-miner) | Apurimac | 2000 | Moved to Lima first but found it hard to get a good job as he didn’t have the right papers, so was doing low-paid work in the informal sector |
| David (miner) | Cajamarca | 1979 | Previously went to Cusco to work with cacao but couldn’t find enough work |
| Francisco (miner) | Ica | 1976 | Moved to Lima and studied there but failed to get a good job. He also didn’t like the lifestyle – ‘*I never felt comfortable in Lima, because there was a lot of movement, and drugs and bad people and my friends had bad habits...Lima was never good for me*’ |
| Yara (market stall) | Cusco province | 2016 | Had gone with her husband to try to find work in Cusco city, but it was difficult to earn enough money there especially as she was studying. She also found the big city difficult to live in. |
| Lorena (café worker) | Cusco province | 1995 | Went to Cusco city when she was 17 to find a job. When she failed to do so, she responded to an advert looking for cooks to work in Madre de Dios |
| Kiara (miner) | Urcos | 1981 | Went to Lima at age 11 to work as a house cleaner but earned very little. At aged 19 she visited home and heard about jobs available in MDD |
| Rosaria (hotel owner) | Cajatambo province | 2009 | Went to Lima and worked as a house cleaner while studying in the evening. She found it too hard and was not earning anything, so after a fight with her boyfriend she moved to La Pampa to work in her cousin’s hotel |

From the table we can see that a couple of the miners had lacked the right papers to find work, with Roberto saying that this had led him to take on low-paid work in the informal sector. Several of the others had managed to find employment, but this often did not pay well. A couple of the respondents had also mentioned that they simply did not feel comfortable in the city, which is likely to be related to the standard of living they could afford.

Migrants that choose to relocate to rural/peri-urban ASM communities after failing to find work in urban centre contradict modernisation theories of urban migration, which see urbanisation as part of linear trajectory of development towards an endpoint of Western-style industrial modernity (Delgado-Wise, 2014; Ferguson, 1999; Germani, 1969). Instead, it seems more a continuation of earlier observations of urban life, which saw the emergence of the urban poor (Potts, 1995), as poor migrants in Latin American and African countries migrated to the urban periphery where they were only able to find work in the informal economy (Delgado-Wise, 2014; González Casanova, 1963). It also reflects Ferguson’s (1999) observation that urban life may often fail to live up to migrants’ expectations – although his study was examining mining livelihoods in urban areas becoming less profitable due to economic downturns, rather than how mining could attract people away from large urban centres.

### 6.2.3. Loss of occupation

Migrant miners have usually had a different occupation or means of income generation before starting mining. While sometimes the lack of profitability of these livelihoods trigged a switch to ASM, others have left relatively well-paying jobs for other reasons. One key factor has been Peru’s economic reforms. For example, before working in KM108 as an *obrero,* Carloshad previously worked for a company in Lima that made parts for international car manufacturers. After President Fujimore’s trade liberalisation reforms, Chinese imports undercut business, resulting in a loss of profits and, ultimately, redundancies. Faced with unemployment and an economic downturn, Carlos needed a new job and heard about opportunities in KM108, one of the mining settlements in La Pampa:

‘*I had heard many stories…about KM 108…where they were working in mining and making a lot of money, so I decided to make some money here. No one at that time made more money than people made in KM 108*’ (Carlos, ex-miner, Puerto Maldonado).

While the high incomes on offer in ASM were a contributing factor in Carlos’s decision, it was only due to the economic reforms that had cost Carlos his job that he felt it necessary to switch careers. Before this, he had never had any intention to migrate to Madre de Dios.

Policy reforms have also pushed people into ASM who were previously working in other activities within Madre de Dios. For example, Alejandro was born in Laberinto to migrant parents who worked in wood and agriculture, but the introduction of logging regulations aimed at halting deforestation meant he had to do something different. Alejandro drew parallels of the logging regulations with ASM’s formalisation process – ‘*Now there are problems with mining and the government, but ten years ago or more there were the same problems between the government and wood’*. However, money was also a factor in Alejandro’s decision, as he said that wood took a long time to provide any income, whereas payment from artisanal mining payment is usually on a daily basis.

While protection of the environment in Madre de Dios has reduced alternative livelihood options, in Ocongate District, as in much of the Andes, it is environmental change causing loss of traditional livelihoods such as potato farming and alpaca rearing. Several miners and one NGO representative discussed how decreasing temperatures and strong hailstorms were affecting harvests and killing alpacas, leading people to look elsewhere for work. The NGO representative even said that the lack of employment opportunities made young people vulnerable to human trafficking and forced labour in mining sites. One man who works seasonally in ASM explained how increasing rain and hail had reduced his family’s potato yield from previous years, meaning the household was even more reliant on the income from mining.

Aside from political, economic and environmental factors, there are also individual reasons for losing or leaving a job. For example, despite being a qualified electrician who earned a lot of money working for an airline company, Xavier began working in ASM after his airline suspended him for a two-year period. Although Xavier can go back to his old job when he gets his license back, he is not sure if he is going to do so as he is making more money in ASM. Justiniano also made the choice to quit his job as a singer in a band due to the impact the lifestyle was having on his health:

*‘If you’re a singer working in a band it’s difficult because you have a lot of alcohol and…(there are)…a lot of women, you don’t sleep well, you just sleep a bit in the morning. Because of that look at me, I’m 26 but I look so much older. So that was a problem. It wasn’t good for us. The money was good, but not good enough so I started mining. Mining’s a really hard job but you can earn well’* (Justiniano, Laberinto).

The experiences of both Xavier and Justiniano show that working in ASM can still be comparatively lucrative, or just more desirable, even for skilled individuals with other well-paid options available to them.

### 6.2.4. Family/relational crisis

Due to the low barriers to entry, ASM can provide a safety net for families as it represents a relatively easy way to make money in an emergency. For example, Stefano and Christian both started working in ASM after their fathers died and they needed to support the family. Both were encouraged by their family members to go to work in ASM due to the speed with which one could earn money. Similarly, Ana, a woman in Ocongate, explained that her husband had started migrating to work in ASM from quite a young age as a result of his parent’s divorce and the need to help his mother provide for his siblings. Medical costs can also deplete household income to the point where a more profitable job is needed. Leo had been working in a shop in Madre de Dios for a few years after migrating from the Andes when he became hospitalised with malaria:

‘*I was embarrassed. It was bad for a man not to have money to take to his wife. It was bad for my reputation and my family. With what money would I go back to Sicuani? I lost everything because I was sick. So I decided to stay here and continue making money’* (Leo, Laberinto).

Although Leo had been planning to return to Sicuani and build a house there, he decided it was necessary to find a job in ASM to recoup his losses.

Several of the interview participants discussed how relationship problems had led them to work in mining. For example, one ex-miner said that he had come to work in ASM because his girlfriend had left him and come to live with her family in La Pampa. She had told him that he would have to leave Lima and come and live with her in La Pampa if he wanted them to be together. Another ex-miner, Roberto, also came to live in Laberinto due to a breakdown in his sister’s marriage which had resulted in her requesting he came to live with her for some time – *‘Although I didn’t like Lima, I was working there, so it wasn’t because of a job that I came here*’ (Roberto, ex-miner, Laberinto). It is however important to consider the interconnecting factors that may influence decisions however. For example, if Roberto had liked his job or had been able to afford a more comfortable life in Lima, he may not have been so tempted to stay in Laberinto long-term.

### 6.2.5. Family history of mining

As the majority of the miners interviewed were migrants, they had not always grown up in mining families. However, some had parents that had worked in ASM, either seasonally or full-time, or who had gained some experience of mining themselves when they were very young. In Laberinto, this tends to be those miners who grew up in Madre de Dios, but in Ocongate, the intergenerational reliance on ASM meant that some of the respondents’ fathers had also been involved in the sector. Interestingly however, none of the respondents in my sample had any family history of working in large-scale mining, which may be because of the relative difficulty of securing work in that sector. One of the community leaders explained – ‘*We have always had to work in the mines because it is the only way to provide for the family…here in the Sierra there is nothing and no other income*’ (Marcelo, Ocongate). To some extent, this will have created a mining identity within the household, making involvement in ASM more likely.

In Laberinto, there are many examples of miners having started work in ASM at a young age to help their parents. Mario’s family moved to Laberinto in 1977 when he was 12 to work in ASM. As Mario had always helped his father, who was very old, he found himself following the same career path –‘*It doesn’t matter how I felt, what could I do? I had to help my Father and I had to be where my family was’* (Mario, ASM miner, Laberinto). Four other respondents said that they too had become involved at a young age, either through a desire to help their parents or support themselves through school. Having a history of mining in the family can also be helpful if individuals need to turn to ASM in times of crisis – for example, when Stefano’s father died he found mining easy due to his family background.

### 6.2.6. Pressure/encouragement from other community members

As Laberinto has a strong gold mining identity, the majority of people working there are engaged in ASM either directly or indirectly. While the vast majority of migrants arrived in Laberinto specifically to work in ASM, others arrived looking for other work, particularly during the period when the government was encouraging migration to Madre de Dios. Some of the miners had therefore been convinced to start mining by friends they made in the area. Diego had moved to Puerto Maldonado in 1979, in response to the government’s drive for population of the Amazon, and found a job selling ice creams. He did this for two years before his friends convinced him to start working in ASM – ‘*People motivated me…I decided to start because all my friends were doing it and talking about the money*’ (Diego, ASM miner, Laberinto). While mining undoubtedly paid more than ice cream selling, it was the encouragement of his friends that led Perimigio to find work in mining and move to Laberinto.

In a place like Laberinto where mining is engrained into the social fabric and reflected in the habitus of local people, there can be a lot of pressure to work in the sector. Whereas people in Lima question why anyone would engage in illegal mining, in Laberinto the question is ‘why wouldn’t they?’ Justiniano had previously worked in a band and explained how his friends and family simply did not understand this:

‘*The other people here always said, “What are you doing? You are not earning anything or gaining money? You’re just wasting your life!” So everyone in the town told me to do mining, and eventually when enough of your friends tell you something and you talk to them about it you agree with them. So because of that I decided to do mining*’ (Justiniano, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Not only does ASM potentially enable the accumulation of different forms of ‘cultural’ and social capital, which may be translated into both self-respect and respect from others, but the experience of Justiniano highlights the same relatively low barriers to entry that have been identified in other ‘criminal’ social fields (Shammus & Sandberg, 2016). While this is in part due to the high levels of marginalisation within the locality, it is also clearly linked to the strength of the collective habitus within the local population.

While ASM offers a route out of poverty, it is widely acknowledged that the work is not easy and carries risks. However, respondents viewed households that did not engage in mining as not wanting to help themselves, and there was little sympathy for people who chose not to mine. In Ocongate in particular, there was a consensus amongst mining households that the poorer members of the community were too lazy to work in ASM or did not want to better themselves. The community leader said that the inequality in Ocongate existed because while some people worked in other places to earn money, there were others that were still poor because they refused to do so. Meanwhile, in Laberinto, some residents also suggested that their personalities were not well suited to mining. For example, one ex-miner interpreted his dislike of mining as a reflection of his character, rather than being due to the nature of mining work:

*‘I have never been a concession guy or a boss, I was just an obrero. I came here when the gold crisis was here, and so I thought “well, I’m not being THAT well paid as a worker to be carrying all this heavy stuff”…I’ve never been ambitious, I just want to learn how to do a job and learn to do it well. It wasn’t worth it to do this hard mining job’* (Roberto, ex-miner, Laberinto).

Roberto wanted to stay in Laberinto and is still employed in the sector indirectly as he works as a mechanic. However, his belief that it was his lack of ‘ambition’ that prevented him from working in mining, rather than because it is dangerous and the work is difficult, highlights the extent to which ASM is engrained in the community.

### 6.2.7. Escaping from Terrorist Violence

A key distinguishing feature of the history of ASM in Peru is the influence that terrorist violence has had over an individual’s entry into the sector. Many of the respondents in Laberinto had arrived in the 1980’s as a direct result of terrorism and the activities of Shining Path. In most of the cases, entire families had to relocate to Madre de Dios in an attempt to escape the violence that had overtaken the rural areas, particularly in the Andes. They may have contributed to Laberinto’s emergence as an established mining town, as people were looking for somewhere to live long-term, rather than simply a place to work temporarily. Many of these migrants did other jobs when they first arrived in Madre de Dios, and only moved into ASM when they found out about the profitability of the sector from friends. Once in the region, ASM is the obvious choice for unskilled workers, as it pays far better than other occupations, and thus a combination of pressure from friends and the lure of a higher income become influencing factors.

## 6.3. Establishing a mining livelihood

This section will briefly look at how miners utilise their networks and find work, which they usually do either before they arrive in the mining communities or through social networks. This is important in translocal livelihoods, because networks are crucial if households are to access and utilise opportunities in the different localities (Steinbrink, 2009). However, it is important first to explain the difference between *concessionarios, duenos* and *obreros. Concessionarios* are the individuals who own the land and have the title deeds from the government, although owning a concession no longer necessarily implies formality, as this also requires formalisation documents. All the interviewed *concessionarios* live in Laberinto and are heavily involved in the day-to-day operations on their land. However, many other *concessionarios* do not involve themselves in ASM operations or even live in the vicinity, but invite others to work on the concession with their own motors. They are usually considerably better off than the *concessionarios* based in Laberinto, potentially owning multiple concessions. However, no elite *concessionarios* were interviewed during fieldwork, as they do not usually play an active role in daily life in the community.

Although many of the migrants who arrived in Laberinto in the 1970s, 80s or 90s could easily acquire concessions, this became more difficult for later arrivals due to changes in policy and the number of concessions that had already been sold. However, the miners could still find employment directly through a *concessionario* or buy their own mining equipment and negotiate with them to gain access to work on their land. Any individuals that own their own motor and tools can be considered a *dueno*. They often manage the concession for the *concessionario* in his/her absence, but there may be more than one *dueno* working on any one concession. In other cases, the *duenos* have to pay the *concessionarios* to work on their land. The final group is the *obreros*, who do not own their own motors and are just employed as workers in a variety of different roles. The *obreros* are often not referred to as ‘miners’, particularly by the *duenos.*

Social networks are important for miners to find work, not least because they have to prove that they possess the necessary skills. One *dueno* explained that at the beginning it is impossible to tell if a new *obrero* is going to be useless or not, and so new recruits must start with simple jobs, such as clearing away mud and foliage or moving rocks, until they build their skills and experience. However, the miners that had arrived some time ago stressed the ease with which one could find work in Madre de Dios, even with no experience:

‘*At that time there was the possibility that everyone could get a job. You just had to go and ask people, or there were announcements. Just if you went and looked at a sign the miners came over and said, “hey do you want to work?” And if you say, “Yes!” then they say “Ok, great, what can you do and what do you know?” And then you say, “Nothing”, and they say, “That’s ok, doesn’t matter…come and work with us*’ (Carlos, ex-miner, Puerto Maldonado).

This account seems to fit with observations in a local mining recruitment agency in Laberinto, where positions that are announced over the market’s tannoy system are filled minutes later. However, nearly all of the interviewed miners had utilised social connections to secure work. As has been identified by Verbrugge (2016), kinship networks are particularly important, and five of the miners reported finding work through relatives already working in the area. For some, having these pre-existing relationships was a key factor in their decision to migrate. Other miners found a way into the ASM through building social connections after their arrival, either through their leisure time or through other work e.g. in hotels which housed miners. Similar to findings from Benin (Gratz, 2003, 2004, 2009) and Suriname (De Theije & Heemskerk, 2009), the respondents said that the friendships they formed outside of work, particularly through playing football and socialising in local bars, enabled them to secure future work opportunities. This highlights a key way in which the habitus that develops within the social field of ASM translate into social capital and status (Sandberg, 2008).

Professional relationships can be used to move from being an *obrero* to a *dueno,* and in doing so potentially secure financial gain. Developing such relationships generally involves working hard and proving your ability to the owner. For example, Benito said that after only eight months working in Laberinto he had been able to open his own business with the advice and support of his boss, with whom he built a good relationship:

‘*I used to recommend ways for him to improve his business. I used to help him a lot and I didn’t get money for that, but he helped me get my own business. He helped me buy my own motor which meant that I could work by myself*’ (Benito, ASM Miner, Laberinto).

A similar experience was reported by Bernardo, who said that because the miners know each other very well, they support each other to become *duenos* and not just *obreros – ‘They say, “why are you working for someone else if you are strong enough to have your own business or be independent?”’* However, these social and professional connections are also useful if miners lose a concession or have a problem with their mining equipment and can no longer work for themselves.

In Ocongate, the respondents reported entering into the ASM sector through family and neighbours with pre-existing relationships, although a couple had travelled to the mining area alone after hearing rumours about the high availability of work in ASM. After some time in the sector, the miners developed their own professional and social networks to draw on, although some still occasionally travel to the larger mining towns such as Laberinto or Mazuco to organise work through agencies. There is a strong history of seasonal migration and no reports of anyone finding it difficult to secure work. Several respondents said that the owners of mines sometimes came to the villages to try to recruit people, either to work as *obreros* or as cooks or barmaids, and there are often advertisements for these roles on local notice boards. However, such advertisements can be associated with human trafficking, and it is much safer for men and women to travel to Madre de Dios with friends and relatives or at least to work for *duenos* with whom they have some connections.

Social networks are crucially important for securing work in ASM, and the connections that these interrelationships form between the various sites in the ASM community and part of what makes it translocal. In Madre de Dios, the need for miners to form social networks is important both to find work initially and to progress within ASM, and miners usually form these connections through their work and during their social time. However, the translocality of miners and the amount of time they spend in one place is likely to have an impact on how these networks develop.

## 6.4. Types of mining migrants

During fieldwork, it became clear that while ASM migrants in Madre de Dios exist in the same translocal social field, thinking about them as one homogenous group does not make sense. Other researchers have looked at this lack of homogeneity between miners, with Verbrugge (2014) having highlighted the differentiation between the socioeconomic positions of miners and workers. Cortes-McPherson (2019) has built on this work in relation to Madre de Dios, pointing to the existence of an elite group of entreprenurs who are able to influence national resource discourse. However, there has been no translocal livelihoods analysis that focuses on differing migration patterns as a key factor in ASM identities. This is important because one of the key features of ASM livelihoods is their translocality, which has severe implications for the formation of social relationships. Crucially, the heterogeneity of those involved in the sector means that while some miners are transient, others are not. Thus, in the translocal community, while some people are fluid and actively connect different locations, others remain fixed despite their daily interactions with transient members of the community. This latter group represent another ‘immobile’ population, yet this time one based within the mining settlements. These patterns of mobility and immobility can profoundly shape the formation of a place and the community dynamics within it, as highlighted by the relative stability of the long-established mining towns of Laberinto compared with the insecurity found in more temporary, informal settlements in La Pampa. Translocality affects how the miners relate to each other, and as this thesis intends to show, has an impact not only on place attachment and community identity, but also on their perceptions of criminality in relation to ASM. While other studies have focused on the characteristics of miners, here we are interested in the mining community as a whole.

Table 6.2 below sets out the four broad types of migrants; permanent, temporary (which may be either static or seasonal), floating and non-migrant. I have broadened the definition of ASM activity to incorporate the ‘downstream’ activities that support ASM operations and make up so much of the local economy. While some of the typologies fit most obviously to those working directly in mining, particularly the ‘floating’ category, they are also applicable to those men and women who work in the sector only indirectly. This section will go on to explain these four categories in detail, and the following chapters will draw on the categories for analysis. While this chapter has already considered the various reasons individuals and households may decide to engage in the ASM sector, the typology presented in table 6.2 explores the livelihood trajectories that are initiated as a result of those decisions. In some instances, the reasons behind the decision may influence the livelihood trajectory, but in other scenarios, other circumstances have become important.

**Table 6.2: Characteristics of Migrant Typologies**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Type of Migrant | Characteristics |
| Permanent | Migrant works in mining settlement for an extended period. May bring their family with them or start a family once they have arrived. The presence of a family in the mining settlement creates more stability – although the length of time a family plans to stay are becoming more uncertain due to insecurity |
| Temporary | Static - Migrant works in a particular mining settlement for a given period of time, potentially with a family, but future plans are elsewhere and the length of stay is increasingly uncertain due to insecurity |
| Seasonal - Migration occurs back-and-forth between mining settlement and origin community. The amount of time away can vary from around 3 months a year to all year round, but with breaks every 2-3 months when the migrant returns home |
| Floating | Migration is not fixed to one location. With no social ties, the migrant is free to move between mining settlements, and has very weak social connections |
| Non-migrant | Individuals who were born in mining settlements. These individuals may share the characteristics of other migrants – they may be students, or may move around between mining settlements looking for work |

### 6.4.1. Permanent

Many of the permanent residents of Laberinto work in ASM and have similar characteristics to the career miners identified by Bryceson and Jønsson (2010). Bryceson and Jønsson use the term ‘Career Miner’ to relate to a miner’s; i) length of occupational engagement; ii) their level of concentration on mining activities; and iii) their willingness to be mobile in response to the changing availability of miners. The permanent miners in Laberinto have been engaging in ASM for a long-time and their commitment to the sector is high. This is reflected in the fact that most have made significant capital investments in ASM to bring them above the level of *obrero.* Those who arrived in Laberinto early enough tend to be *concessionarios* and the relatively new arrivals who have been unable to acquire land have tended to invest in their own machines to become *duenos.* Only one of the permanent miners had never invested in his own equipment or land*,* but he also spent time doing other jobs and is not a full-time miner.

There are however, two key points of departure between the definition of career miners as used by Bryceson and Jønsson (2010) and the permanent ASM migrants identified here. Firstly, this research is also interested in those permanent residents of Laberinto who are not necessarily directly involved in mining. Including these residents is important as they have made investments in the community and share a similar outlook to the permanent miners in that they see Laberinto as their home. It shifts the focus to community dynamics in mining settlements, and has the potential to bring women into the analysis. The experience of women will be considered in more detail in the next chapter, but for now it is important to note that women that reside permanently in Laberinto may have arrived independently or with a husband but often, though not always, settled after meeting a partner in the area. Secondly, their third criteria of mobility as a factor in career progression, does not fit in the context of Laberinto. While they may have mining camps a little out of town, the key defining feature of the permanent miners and other residents is their lack of mobility. Investing in a concession effectively fixes a miner in place, reducing his or her transience within the translocal mining community. Yet these miners are often better off than the *duenos* and *obreros* who work on the concessions on others, indicating that there is not the reliance on mobility emphasised by Bryceson and Jønsson (2010).

The permanent migrants in Laberinto can be categorised as those who see their long-term future in Laberinto and the surrounding area. In total, fifteen of those interviewed could be considered to be permanent residents and they all clearly saw the community as their home:

‘*It is calm here and that’s what motivates me to stay. I have a tranquil, quiet life, and I like it. I want to be here for the rest of my life until I die*’ (Diego, ASM miner, Laberinto).

‘*I’m going to live here with (my husband) and my children. Our plan is to stay here for a long time. He lives here and has adapted to here now, he doesn’t want to move’* (Lorena, shop assistant/wife of miner, Laberinto).

The views of these two residents, suggests a relatively stable mining community. As Laberinto is a long-established, formal town, the development of a sense of community is more important than in informal, rush-type settlements in which the population is entirely transient. Permanent residents of Laberinto are therefore more concerned with investing in community facilities, opening other small businesses or even expanding into very small-scale agriculture. This is very different to the outlook of temporary miners who anticipate that their livelihood trajectories will take them elsewhere.

However, in almost all cases, it appears that being in Laberinto long-term was not the initial intention of most of the respondents. For example, Noe described how he hated the town when he first arrived in 1990 – ‘*Initially I came here just for one year and then I returned home, because I didn’t like this place. There were no houses, just small shelters without walls. Also, the job was hard to do*’ (Noe, ASM miner, Laberinto). Similarly, David had arrived in Laberinto in the 1970’s but had taken a dislike to the area immediately on arrival – he said that it was too hot, there were too many insects and the food was awful. This is interesting as it highlights how some of the temporary miners can eventually find themselves remaining in the area. This is the same for women who arrive independently, and will be elaborated on in further detail in chapter 7.

Uncertainty for Permanent Miners and Residents

While many respondents in Laberinto desire to stay long-term, this does not necessarily align with the cycles of boom and bust common in mining settlements. In the Latin American context this is most evident in the city of Potosí, which suffered an economic collapse after the interest in silver mining waned (Galeano, 1971). Achieving a sustainable livelihood in ASM is difficult because they are somewhat reliant on the variable price of gold and finite deposits. Gold deposits near Laberinto are already starting to be depleted, and highlighted by several respondents including Yara, whose husband works in a mining camp:

‘*Now they got 4-5 grams of gold, and they work for 24 hours for 50 soles. In the past, they used to get 30-40 grams, so they were getting 1500 soles per day. In the past it was really good, my husband used to send me 3-4k soles a week, but now it’s much less*’ (Yara, market worker, Laberinto).

As Yara’s family are only interested in saving money, there is no reason for them to remain in Laberinto if ASM becomes less profitable. As the gold runs out, miners are more likely to move elsewhere to look for gold, which has already partly contributed to the influx of miners into La Pampa, where the gold reserves are much higher.

Government policy has also had implications for the profitability of ASM livelihoods. This initially occurred through increased monthly taxes and fees aimed at *concessionarios*, who stood to lose their land if they could not make the payments. Several of the miners interviewed in Laberinto had lost their concessions in this way, and one noted that the depleted gold reserves made it harder to afford payments. These miners have either continued working on the same land, which is usually possible because the government no longer reallocates the concessions to others, or take their motors and work on other people’s land. One exception was Willbert, who was still working as an *obrero* after losing his previous concession. He was having some difficulties earning enough money as he was based in Laberinto and not moving around for work – ‘*Now the situation is difficult for me. I’m working independently with no regular employer in other businesses*’ (Willbert, ASM miner, Laberinto). This highlights how although remaining fixed can be more lucrative for those that own concessions, it can hinder the ability of the *obreros* to find work.

On top of these policy changes, the government have also implemented a series of violent interdictions in an attempt to deter ASM activity, which can result in miners being arrested or having their equipment blown up. The government clampdown also affects the permanent residents of Laberinto who do not work directly in mining. For example, several of Laberinto’s market stall operators complained of a recent fall in income because the miners had less disposable income and were mining further from the town and returning less frequently, choosing instead to sleep in makeshift camps. Many of the respondents discussed the effect of this:

*‘What will the people do if there isn’t mining anymore? All these people that live here, I don’t know what they would do. The government should be with us, as we were with them before when we voted for them… From the 5,000 people that are here now, probably only 1,000 would stay, People would migrate to other places’* (Andres, ASM miner, Laberinto).

The quote above by Andres is interesting as he is a permanent miner yet acknowledges the dim long-term prospects in a town where the economy is based around such an insecure livelihood.

While there was evidence of the permanent miners beginning to acknowledge problems with remaining in ASM locally, they had less clarity about the alternative options. This appears linked to their rootedness, and the fact that many have not contemplated moving away from Madre de Dios. While a couple suggested the possibility of construction or agriculture, they noted that not only did these jobs pay considerably less, but also the government were not keen for large-scale agricultural or logging activities to occur within the jungle either. One conceded that he would probably have to move to Puerto Maldonado to work in construction, while another thought about investing in land in his ancestral home. It was also suggested, perhaps somewhat tongue in cheek, that if the government were going to leave them with no option, miners may start involving themselves in more illicit livelihood activity, such as cultivating cocaine:

‘*We cannot do anything other than mining. Maybe agriculture, but that doesn’t give us enough to live on…the people will say, “well we have nothing else to do, let’s produce some drugs’* (Alejandro, ASM miner, Laberinto).

To some extent, it may be argued that Alejandro’s comment reflects some internalisation of a deviant identity, as the miners come to identify with illicit livelihood activity. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 9. However, while miners like Alejandro were starting to consider other options, however unfeasible they may be, others explicitly stated that their lack of other skills meant they had no choice but to continue mining. One miner explained that when the problems with the government had started he had gone looking for work in Arequipa, but had been unable to find a suitable job due to a mismatch between his expectations and his transferable skills. One ex-miner explicitly linked the lack of alternative opportunities for miners to their lack of skills:

*‘My Dad doesn’t like (mining), but he doesn’t know how to do anything else. I don’t think anyone really likes mining, but if you’re a carpenter, you can’t become a lawyer. He has to do the things he knows how to do’* (Cesar, ex-miner, Puerto Maldonado).

This inability to move due to a lack of other options was clear amongst those mining households in Laberinto who were already finding it difficult to earn a living, particularly in the face of government policy changes. For example, although Jamie has struggled to earn enough money as an *obrero* since losing his concession, he has remained working in ASM. Moreover, because he sees his future in ASM, he is actively engaged in the conflict with the government in order to improve the situation for miners rather than attempting to change his livelihood. Despite the insecure long-term prospects for gold mining in Laberinto therefore, it is clear that many ASM miners and other community members desire to build their lives in the town and ideally continue mining. In some cases, this may be due to a perceived or real inability to engage with another livelihood or move to a new location. However, whatever the reason, it is clear that the permanent miners have a strong desire to protect both their livelihood and their community.

### 6.4.2. Temporary migrants – static and seasonal

In the translocal ASM community, flows of migrant labour connect various locations over an extended period. In the ASM literature, numerous studies have highlighted the existence of seasonal and circular migration to and from mining towns (Hilson, 2010; Maconachie, 2012; Nyame & Grant, 2014). While a good proportion of people in the mining towns remain fixed in place, many others manage their livelihood on a translocal basis. The links an individual miner creates with and between locations are strengthened depending on the frequency and pattern of migration. Many temporary migrants in Laberinto migrate seasonally, with their engagement in ASM representing a livelihood diversification strategy. These migrants may choose to take up ASM activity when work opportunities in origin locations are low, staying for a couple of months at a time. Others may decide to migrate for a couple of years, sometimes taking their family, but with the knowledge that they will not settle in the mining town long-term. The key feature is that they only intend to stay in the community for a fixed period, with some having calculated how much time they needed to spend working in ASM before they would have saved enough money. Women again make up a proportion of these temporary migrants, although are perhaps more likely to be static than seasonal, given the nature of the work.

In Ocongate, every household that engaged in mining did so on a temporary basis as a means to improve their life. Crucially, none of the households discussed any plans to move their family to the mining towns or to invest money there in building houses or businesses. In all cases, the husband migrated while his wife stayed at home. For five of the households, ASM was a seasonal occupation to boost income and consumption throughout the year, with the majority of yearly income coming from farming, small businesses or labouring. Meanwhile, in nine of the households, the men worked in ASM on a year-round basis, but visited home with varying frequency and for varying lengths of time. For most of these miners, visits home were relatively infrequent, often for only 1-2 weeks every 2-4 months. A couple of the miners made the duration longer (at least a month) and/or returned home more frequently (every 2-4 weeks, but for less days). All but one of sent money to their wife whilst they were away. For these households, ASM was the primary source of income, rather than a diversification strategy, but as will be shown later in this section, the savings that accrue from ASM give the potential for future livelihood diversification.

In Laberinto, the interviewed households were engaged in ASM year-round. For example, Yara had moved to Laberinto with her husband and child, but the plan had never been to stay long-term:

‘*I’m not living in a nice place here. I came here to work and I am trying to save a lot of money. I have some land in Cusco and I want to build a house there, so we are saving. My husband is going to get his specialisation and then we can move there afterwards*’ (Yara, market worker/wife of miner, Laberinto).

Yara’s example highlights how migrant households can actively refrain from adapting to life in Laberinto, as they had decided to rent cheap, poor-quality housing in order to save more money. Her story is typical of temporary miners and other residents who migrate to benefit from the gold rush, but only see both ASM and the local community for their moneymaking potential. While some *duenos* may have invested money in their own mining equipment, this does not mean they plan to stay long-term. For example, when Xavier was suspended from his job as an electrician and came to Laberinto he was able to do well quite quickly, possibly because he had a bit of money that he could immediately invest in his own mining equipment. However, although Xavier likes the income from ASM he does not intend to stay in Laberinto permanently – ‘*There is nothing here, mining is the only good thing about here and nothing else, absolutely nothing else*’ (Xavier, ASM miner, Laberinto). Thus, while these individuals can engage in ASM either seasonally or on a year-round basis, the defining characteristic is the temporary nature of their engagement.

Trajectories and Investments

One of the key features of temporary ASM livelihoods is the translocal nature of investments from mining income, which also contributes to the formation of a translocal community. These flows of remittances link locations, people and communities just as much as the flow of people, and several of the permanent miners mentioned the tendency for the temporary miners to take their money home when they went to visit their families and invest it there. In Ocongate, it was obvious that the money from ASM was being invested in various ways. The following table 6.4 shows where households in Ocongate invest money from ASM.

**Table 6.4: Investments of Mining Income**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Investment** | **Number of Households** |
| New house/land in Ocongate | 6 |
| Children’s education | 5 |
| Small shop | 4 |
| Improved current house | 3 |
| Artisanal crafts | 3 |
| Transport based business – motorbike/car | 3 |
| Livestock – alpacas and sheep | 2 |
| Future investment planned in Cusco – for school | 2 |
| Future investment planned in Cusco – land/house | 1 |
| Future investment planned in Ocongate – small business | 1 |
| Only sufficient money for food | 1 |

The table shows that while the priority for most households was their children’s education, house construction/improvements or acquiring land, they used additional savings to either diversify or strengthen a previous livelihood. The table also highlights how these business investments were intended to facilitate a livelihood trajectory that resulted in a return to Ocongate, or one that led to a new life in a new location. This section will now discuss both of these scenarios in turn.

A. Return to previous occupation/location

For many households, ASM represents an opportunity for household diversification. Farming households may for example, decide to supplement income in the low season by travelling to work in mining for a few months of the year. Examples from West Africa and the Philippines show that in some instances, if households have surplus income may reinvest a portion of it into other livelihood activities (Hilson & McQuilken, 2014; Maconachie & Binns, 2007; Verbrugge, 2016). Similar observations have been made of Brazilian miners in Suriname, who send money home when possible (De Theije & Heemskerk, 2009). Two of the interview respondents mentioned that they had bought more alpacas and sheep for this reason. However, many of the households in Ocongate were investing in new businesses, highlighting how ASM creates opportunities for further diversification. For many of these households, the long-term goal was to get into a position where it was no longer necessary to work in mining. The construction of the Transoceanic Highway has provided a great opportunity for residents of this previously isolated community to set up small businesses along the roadside if they have the necessary capital. As a result, a few of the respondents claimed that migration to work in ASM had reduced in the last couple of years, but notably most of the new businesses had been initiated with money from ASM. Four of the interviewed households had established shops (three grocery stores and one clothes shop) while three had used the money to buy motorbikes that would enable them to provide transportation services. Some of the male business owners had been able to give up mining completely, while in other households, the woman managed the business and the man continued to mine, at least for part of the year. The livelihood trajectories of these temporary miners have therefore been to invest in a business that enables them to reduce the time spent in mining or stop mining altogether.

Section 6.1 above showed that some people turn to ASM because they have lost their job and need to find a quick solution. These individuals are likely to express a desire to return to their previous occupation if possible. For example, Xavier, had lost his engineer license for a two-year period, but intended to return to his old engineering job in Lima as soon as he recovered this license. It seems likely that if the government clamp down continues, more of those working in ASM will decide to go back to their previous occupations. However, these miners do not face the same level of destitution or lack of alternative opportunity as those who continue to mine. During interview, an NGO representative neatly summarised the problem faced by these poverty-driven migrants – ‘*The kind of insecurity here, with the government and the criminals, it is nothing in the face of starvation, so they will still continue to come here*’ (NGO Chairman, Puerto Maldonado).

An important aspect to note here is that planned livelihood trajectories are subject to change. One miner in Laberinto noted that although Andean migrants returned home to invest their money, they often returned when the money ran out, highlighting the difficulties in resisting a high-paying job in ASM when there are limited alternatives. Many of the permanent miners in Laberinto initially planned to stay short-term, but decided to stay for a variety of reasons, such as earning more than anticipated or marrying someone in the community. This fluctuating livelihood trajectory also affects investments, as investing time and money in a community makes little sense up until one decides to remain there long-term. For example, when David arrived in Laberinto in the 1970’s he was offered a house with some land for 150 soles, but turned it down due to his dislike of the area and his desire to return home. Now, 45 or so years later, David says that had he known how much the town would grow, he would have invested all he could in a house. Thus, while miners may plan to invest in origin communities, sometimes circumstances change that makes them redirect their investments.

B. Investment in new business in new city

Not all the temporary migrants intend to return to their village, and instead plan to use the money saved from ASM to start a new life elsewhere. As explained earlier in the chapter, forging a new life in an unfamiliar city can be difficult for poor Andean migrants due to the discrimination faced by indigenous people, particularly within the labour market (Galarza & Yamada, 2014). Many migrants are therefore working in ASM to as a means to save the capital necessary for a successful future migration to an urban centre, rather than adopting ASM as a new life-long career.

Several respondents discussed a livelihood trajectory in which they planned to use the savings from ASM to start a new life in a new city, often after previously experiencing a migration failure. Yara and her husband initially migrated to Cusco city from a nearby province, but moved to Laberinto after struggling to make ends meet. They were both working all the time and living in a very basic room in the hope that within three years they would have saved enough to build a house in Cusco city and invest in a small business there. Similarly, Carlos and his wife, Rosaria, had failed to earn a sufficient or consistent amount after moving to Lima. After moving to La Pampa, they had earned enough money to enable them to invest in a hotel in the nearby city of Puerto Maldonado – ‘*This hotel is from the money from KM108*’ (Carlos, ex-miner, Puerto Maldonado). For these households, mining is not a life-long career but opens up future opportunities for success in previously inaccessible sectors.

There are two key differences between these migrants and the permanent miners discussed above, who tend to experience more difficulty leaving the sector. Firstly, the temporary migrants have a plan for future investment, often based on alternative livelihoods they were doing before engagement in ASM. They therefore often have a broader range of skills or at least more awareness of other options, and perhaps therefore have a capacity to aspire (Appadurai, 2004). Secondly, as they themselves are more translocal, they are not rooted to a particular place. This gives them more possibilities than the permanent residents of Laberinto, who are looking for alternative livelihoods within their mining community in the Amazon, where mining and many other livelihood activities, such as logging and agriculture, are restricted.

As highlighted at the start of the section, the key feature of temporary migrants is that these individuals only intend to stay in the community for a fixed period or on a seasonal basis, and have no long-term interest in the community itself. However, for the static migrants in particular, such long-term plans may be subject to change, and thus to some extent the typology may reflect the stage of life the migrant is at. This brings us neatly to the issue of temporality, which is an issue that has been somewhat overlooked in the translocal livelihoods literature. The existence of temporary migrants within the social field of ASM is likely to have implications for mining communities, yet as highlighted in the chapter 4, the temporal dynamics of livelihoods is rarely considered (Sakdapolrak et al., 2016). This is clearly an oversight, and in Bourdieusian analysis it is considered important to understand the temporal dimension of agents’ movements between their various positions (Shammus & Sandberg, 2016). As shown here, the translocality of ones livelihood is not necessarily permanent, and this may either be because one chooses to settle permanently in a destination community or returns back to their village. Not only does this reinforce the fact that the relative levels of embeddedness in host and origin community will vary greatly between individuals (Carling, 2008; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007), but it also highlights how this relative ‘embeddedness’ changes over time. As livelihoods diverge, this may change the relative position of actors within the social field and lead to contestations, particularly through the affect on the relationships between those actors. I will elaborate on this in more detail in chapters 8 and 9.

### 6.4.3. Floating Migrants

There is another group of miners who do not have families in the Andes, yet are also not rooted in a specific location within Madre de Dios. Despite working in ASM year-round, these miners have usually not invested in any mining equipment and are ‘free’ to move to wherever there are jobs are available. In doing so, they add an additional layer of fluidity to the translocal ASM community which connects the various mining sites. The community in Laberinto refers to them as *flotantes,* or floating miners. These miners are often young men who are unmarried and therefore have few responsibilities. Although to some extent this category may therefore represent a particular stage of life, I have included it as its own category for two reasons. Firstly, these miners exhibit distinct patterns of behaviour, and secondly, at any given time there are floating miners acting within the social field. I therefore consider the category important for an overall understanding of the translocal ASM community.

Four key features of the ASM economy encourage high levels of mobility. Firstly, ASM pays daily, which makes it unusual in a local economy where the alternatives are agriculture and logging. The feature of daily wages means that there are usually no contracts, and workers are able to come and go as they please. Not all *obreros* are *flotantes* however, and thosethat are more likely to settle are ones that have contracts with a particular *dueno* or *concessionario*, and are therefore paid monthly. Others may work at a particular mine for some days or weeks and then go somewhere else. Secondly, rates of pay are variable, and as the *obreros* are free, they are attracted to wherever is paying the highest rate per gram. With no roots, it is easier to remain mobile and claim the highest price for one’s labour. Several of the miners described the *floatantes* as being ‘free’, meaning that they could work wherever they wanted from day-to-day. Willan explained how this played out in his mine:

‘*Those who do not have a contract do not stay. If the production today has not been good enough, they will say: “Mister, I will go today”, and we pay them and they leave*’ (Willan, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Thirdly, due to the high demand for *obreros*, they know that it will be easy for them to find work with someone else – particularly if they look for work in La Pampa. One miner in particular discussed how in La Pampa there was a lot of work and therefore many options –*‘If you don’t like your boss, you can change. If you don’t like your mine, you can change’* (Alejandro, ASM miner, Laberinto). For many *obreros* then, it makes sense to remain translocal and not root oneself to any particular mine site or community. Christian, who had been working in ASM in this way for some years, explained the benefits of this approach:

‘*To become a complete miner requires being more stable, but if you stay being an obrero you are free. You get money but you can be independent. If something is wrong, you go to a different place*…(*I moved because*)…*the bosses weren’t giving us enough work or paying us enough, or because the machines were broken and we couldn’t work, or even sometimes because there wasn’t much gold in that area and so I wanted to go elsewhere’* (Christian, ASM miner, near Laberinto).

Fourthly, as the government and military were sometimes blowing up machinery close to Laberinto, this provides disincentives for investing in one’s own equipment and encourages miners to remain mobile and work deep in the jungle away from the communities. These observations are similar to arguments made by Walsh (2015) who argued that for many young sapphire miners in Madagascar, becoming rooted in a particular place was not in their self-interest, as it placed additional obligations on them which may restrict their mobility and therefore their ability to earn.

Another reason for *floatantes* to move around is that they enjoy the lifestyle. Many of these miners are very young, and do not have families or any responsibility to root them in a location. One temporary miner offered some additional insight into the reasons why one of his friends chose to maintain this floating, transient lifestyle, despite the high levels of violence in La Pampa where he often worked:

*‘I have a friend that works in La Pampa for 2-3 weeks at a time, and then comes to work here for a bit, and then returns to La Pampa. I warned him, that sometime he will not come back. He’s crazy. He goes to La Pampa, Delta 1, Huaypethue – everywhere. He lives for the moment, and spends all his money on the party and clothes and doesn’t think about having a family or building a house. He’s only 21. I don’t know where he is now, he’s all over the place and he changes his number all the time. Last time he called me he just announced he was here and invited me to go and party with him, but there is no way to localise him’* (Rodrigo, ASM miner, Laberinto)*.*

Rodrigo’s friend appears to have a quite short-sighted approach to his livelihood, which is reminiscent of the work done by Walsh (2003) and the young miners handling of ‘hot money’ and daring consumption in the African context.

However, although the *floatantes* do not have the same aspirations to leave ASM as their temporary colleagues, they may decide to do so later. This may be because they become tired of the mining lifestyle, and particularly the desire to avoid spending on the sort of extravagant consumption that exists in mining settlements (Grätz, 2004b; Walsh, 2003). For others, the choice may be linked to depletion of gold and profits, or because of increasing insecurity in the face of crime, violence and government restrictions. Others may have a change in their livelihood situation, become married and have children, which changes their outlook on life. Christian discussed his desire to stop working in ASM:

*‘I want to leave mining, hopefully this is the last year. It is not a good idea to work in mining any more, we are not earning as much as before. My wife is working in tourism in Cusco, and so my plan would be to change the activity to tourism also. I also want to move away from Puerto Maldonado’* (Christian, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Interestingly, some other individuals may decide to settle down but *within* a mining community. For example, Jorge had been working in La Pampa at various mine sites, but returned to Laberinto due to his ‘bad habits’, such as prostitution and drinking, which prevented him from saving money. In doing so, he decided to root himself in one location and switched from floating to being permanent, thereby reducing the translocality of his livelihood. However, for most miners, given the current insecurity, it is becoming increasingly common to migrate away from Madre de Dios and pursue a new livelihood, with small businesses being popular livelihood choices among the respondents. However, while many miners and *obreros* talk about the desire to eventually build a house and start a business elsewhere, there is a clear distinction between the ones that already have land and are constructing their houses, and those who have not yet saved enough to enable them to do so.

### 6.4.4. Non-migrants

The non-migrants in mining towns such as Laberinto represent an important segment of the population, and are included within the translocal social field. This is because, like the permanently settled migrants, they continue to be connected to the translocal social field through their interconnections with others migrant miners that they interact with (Carling, 2008; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). While the social field of ASM is inherently translocal, it encapsulates both mobile and non-mobile miners alike. Several of the miners I interviewed in Laberinto were children of miners who had migrated to the region in the 70s, 80s and 90s and had been living there their whole lives. One LGA representative said that for many of these young people, they did not know how to do anything else but mine, and so moving into another sector was hard. As discussed earlier, the older miners attach a lot of importance to educating their children to enable them to get a better job outside of mining, but the experiences of many of their children highlight the difficulties in escaping ASM:

*‘I went to Lima after secondary school to study electronic engineering, but then I came back here. I went for just one year and then I had to return, because due to the problems with the police my parents had less money and couldn’t afford to pay for my studies, and its expensive to live in Lima’* (Jorge, ASM miner, Laberinto).

*‘I had a problem with the ID, my father’s name was wrong and so my ID was wrong. To change that when I was 17 was a long and difficult process and it took me two years…I wanted to go to Cusco to study industrial engineering, but I couldn’t without the ID. By the time the ID process was finished I was 19 and by that time I was already working for two years and I decided not to study anymore and to stay here’* (Alejandro, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Jorge’s example clearly highlights some of the risks inherent in moving to a more expensive city, while Alejandro’s reflects bureaucratic problems that can prevent access to education. There was also the case of Justiniano who had gone to university to do mechanics, but quit to be in a band. However, due to the pressures of his lifestyle and the fact that his school friends were now all working in mining, he eventually left the band and bought his own motor in Laberinto. While women who are adult children of miners are less likely to be involved directly in ASM, they still face the same obstacles and may therefore remain in the mining town.

Although I interviewed two men who had grown up in mining towns in Madre de Dios but were now working in professional jobs outside of ASM, they both acknowledged that they had been lucky. For most of their friends from the mining community, aspirations for a ‘better life’ faded or were unobtainable, even with a degree. Well-paid jobs in Madre de Dios are hard to find, and moving to Lima or Cusco is expensive and carries risk. The ease of finding well paid work in the ASM sector, coupled with the strong miner identity in ASM communities, means that for many young men and women born in Laberinto, their dreams to leave mining can be unobtainable.

## 6.5. Summary

The main contribution of this chapter has been to demonstrate the divergent livelihood trajectories of people residing within the translocal ASM community, which begins to highlight the need for an understanding of translocality that accounts for both spatial and temporal distinctions. The first part of the chapter explored the various reasons why people engage in ASM, which provided important insights into the starting points of the resulting livelihood trajectories. In doing so, I have been able to show that livelihoods are dynamic and subject to change – while some people may intend to only engage in the sector for a few months following a crisis, circumstances can later change. However, one important observation is that some engage in ASM to recover from a previous failed migration. To my knowledge, this has not been discussed elsewhere, and is particularly important in the context of Peru, where structural inequalities mean that Andean immigrants can find life in the city particularly challenging. Another important point is that the multi-sited approach allowed for a broader understanding of the poverty in the Andes that resulted in migration to mining sites. The fact that some individuals already residing in Madre de Dios become engaged in mining due to the pressure from social norms hints at the importance of ASM to the local community’s identity.

The chapter then went on to provide evidence of the various ways in which individuals find work in mining towns and settlements in Madre de Dios, reinforcing findings elsewhere in the literature that have highlighted the importance of social networks. While this is nothing new in the global ASM context, I felt it important to emphasise the role of social networks here too, as it lays an empirical base for the discussions regarding the impact of translocality on social relationships that will come later in the thesis. The final section has introduced one of the key arguments of this thesis; that within the translocal mining community, individuals and households are following different livelihood trajectories and this has implications for their long-term interests. Most significantly, I distinguished between permanent, temporary, floating and non-migrants, but also explained that temporary miners may be either considered to be static or seasonal. What is key to recognise here is that the miners’ households and livelihoods all have different degree of translocality, yet at the same time they are all linked together within the translocal social field created by ASM.

I consider the translocality of an individual or household’s livelihood to be inherently spatial, and determined by the frequency with which the concerned parties move around between locations rather than remaining fixed in one place. This is consistent with other theories of translocality that emphasise the tendency for migrants to be embedded in multiple localities (Smith, 2011). In the narrow sense of the term translocal community, one that connects two locations through A-B migration, this indicates a strengthening of those links. At the same time however, the evidence of ASM livelihood trajectories shows that permanent migrants can become almost fully embedded in the new location and thus their actions become orientated to that new locations rather than their place of origin. In line with other theorisations on translocal livelihoods, we can conceptualise these comparatively more ‘rooted’ migrants as having *less* translocality, which has generally occurred over time. While this may indicate a weakening of their own ties with the place of origin, the overall weakening of the ties between the two locations will depend on the number of other migrants involved in migration. The now relatively immobile individual/household does however remain an important part of the translocal social field, even as their own translocality is diminished. At the same time, within the translocal social field there are also temporary migrants that only work in ASM for a fixed period. Unlike permanent migrants, these miners usually maintain an active orientation towards home (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005), and this is characterised by a greater intensity of movement between locations. This movement results in a relative strengthening of the narrow translocal community that exists between the two locations. Over time however, migrants may return to their place of origin or move on to somewhere new, at which point they de-embed themselves from Laberinto. Over the following chapters, I will argue that these temporal divergences have implications for community dynamics and can lead to specific types of contestation with the social field, which I refer to as temporal frictions.

# 7. Women in the Translocal ASM community

## 7.1. Introduction

The heterogeneity of miners within mining sites has now been illustrated, with an emphasis on the fact that there are certain populations within mining towns such as Laberinto that can be considered ‘immobile’ to some extent, as they have permanently settled. In some respects, these immobile populations may also find themselves ‘left behind’ as the gold rush ends and the temporary miners move on or return home (Walsh, 2015). This usage of the term hinges on an understanding of translocality as temporal, which has so far been under-theorised in the literature. Therefore, more often in migration studies, the left-behind populations are considered to be the immobile populations that remain in localities of origin. The application of a translocal livelihoods approach to ASM not only allows for reflections on the interactions between mobile and immobile miners, but also reaches out further, to their translocal interactions with immobile populations in places of origin. This is important because the interconnections between mobile and immobile populations create the translocal community (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013; Wiesner-Hanks, 2011). This chapter focuses on women in the creation of this community, and uncovers two key issues; that women in Peru do engage in migration and ASM, and secondly, that when women are ‘left behind’ in places of origin they still represent a crucial part of the translocal ASM community. As well as recognising the importance of women’s roles in family management and labour within mining settlements (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015), it is necessary to understand how these contributions work at the translocal level because ASM is inherently a translocal affair.

For many years, women were largely ignored in the ASM literature, but now this has started to change. Recent work by Buss et al (2017) and Huggins et al (2017) in particular has highlighted the various ways in which women participate in mining settlements, both in terms of their employment but also their relationships and household arrangements. While this work has rightly emphasised the important role that women play in ASM settlements, I believe that broadening the analysis to consider the translocal community will provide an even clearer understanding of women in ASM and the communities they are embedded in. This is because it accounts for the experience of women who may not be physically in mining settlements yet are no less part of the mining community and who continue to play a significant role in the support of translocal livelihoods. Incorprating the realities of life for these women is crucial for understanding the sector and designing effective policies. This chapter attempts to address some of these issues through the application of a translocal livelihoods approach, which follows feminist research by looking beyond the household as a unit of analysis.

The chapter will first look at the gendered ways households in both Ocongate and Laberinto engage in ASM, and particularly the gendered patterns of migration. This allows for a consideration of how migration processes can shape and are shaped by place (Silvey, 1996) and shows that they can both put women ‘out of place’ (Creswell, 1996) in mining settlements and result in them being ‘left behind’ in localities of origin. Section three then goes on to look at precisely how women are engaged in the ASM sector, and the roles they play within the translocal community. Section 4 and 5 consider the gendered implication of ASM livelihoods within both the household and the wider community respectively. Women’s roles in maintaining community relationships across the translocal space are emphasised, and this provides a broader understanding of how women utilise social networks. Despite being so crucial for left-behind communities, (Conway & Cohen, 1998; Foresight, 2011; Thieme & Muller-Boker, 2010), the ASM literatue has tended to focus on social capital within destination mining communities. For example, literature on African countries has often focused on how male miners utilise social networks to find work (Jønsson & Bryceson, 2009; Werthmann, 2010) and, more recently, how they cope with interpersonal disputes (Cuvelier, 2017). Research on women in this respect has often focused on how they negotiate sexual and conjugal relationships (Bryceson, Jonsson, & Verbrugge, 2013; Bryceson et al., 2014) although generally within the spatial boundaries of the mining camp. There are relatively few English-language publications available on women in ASM from Latin America, but De Theije and Heemskerk (2009) do touch on how young, migrant sex workers in mining camps in Suriname draw on social networks to help them adjust to their new hostile environment. However, there analysis also focuses primarily on the destination community.

The analysis considers households within which at least one adult member, either male or female, is involved in ASM, but emphasises the woman’s role in that household’s livelihood strategy. This involvement may be directly in ASM activity, indirectly within the ASM economy or through contributions to the household’s translocal livelihood strategy. To clarify terminology, the term gender is used here to refer to socially constructed, and often culturally specific, differences between men and women and the gender roles that are prescribed to them, rather than purely physical or anatomical differences (Wiesner-Hanks, 2011). Using gender in this way emphasises the interactions between men and women and the gender constructs that are tied to migration and involvement in ASM (Scott, 1986; Silvey, 1996; Wiesner-Hanks, 2011).

## 7.2. Gender and the translocality of ASM livelihoods

In the Andes, migration has important gender dimensions. In Peru, as well as in Bolivia and Ecuador, it was traditionally men that migrated to look for work (Abbots, 2012; Valdivia et al., 2013), whilst women were left behind in the locality of origin. It has been suggested that this was because women were less educated and physically weaker than their male counterparts (Valdivia et al., 2013), which made them less likely to find well-paid work. Others have argued that their reproductive work and responsibilities within the household and community made them less able to migrate (Maclin et al., 2017; Valdivia et al., 2013). More recently, these patterns seem to be changing, with young women now migrating in almost equal numbers from some areas (Paerregaard, 1997). Andean women may also migrate for family reasons, such as to follow a migrating husband (Cerrutti & Massey, 2001). In the context of ASM in particular, many of the left-behind family members are women, but there are women who migrate temporarily or permanently to work in ASM communities with or without husbands. Migration also has implications for gender, as the gendered livelihood roles that women and men carry out in rural Andean areas are broken down through migration (Paerregaard, 1997).

Because migration has often been seen as a male-dominated activity, migration studies have historically ignored the role of women (Nash, 1986; Pessar, 1999; Silvey, 1996). Feminist approaches have started to rectify this, and have unpacked the household unit to reveal the contributions and experiences of women in migration processes, as well as the power relations that are implicit in household’s migratory decisions (Lawson, 1998; Silvey, 1996; Willis & Yeoh, 2002). However, there is still a tendency for studies of out-migration to focus on the migrant themselves and rarely consider the impacts on those left behind (Ginnetti, 2009; Massey et al, 2010; Robson & Nayak, 2010). Interestingly, the literature continues to view ASM as a ‘male-dominated’ pursuit (Huesca, 2013), and so lends itself to a similar critique to that of early migratory studies, in that it masks the role of women.

The previous chapter has highlighted how different migrants follow different livelihood trajectories in ASM. Despite being connected in the translocal ASM community through the various flows of labour, resources, practices and ideas (Greiner, 2010) that link communities and different mining sites, it has been shown that these migrants have adopted various levels of translocality into their own livelihood strategy. The intention of a translocal livelihood strategy is generally to improve household income and standards of living, particularly through the use of remittances and savings invested into the local community (Islam & Herbeck, 2013), but it can often have implications for a migrant’s sense of place, feelings of belonging and community identity. Furthermore, these translocal livelihood strategies are inherently gendered, as while single men or women can migrate with few responsibilities, marital couples find themselves split between locations unless all household members migrate.

### 7.2.1. Household members’ engagement in ASM

Amongst the respondent households, it was clear that women had very different roles in their households’ livelihood strategies. In total, across both field sites, 47 households were interviewed where at least one household member was currently engaged directly in ASM activity, or had been previously. Table 7.1 below shows the distribution of households in both Ocongate and Laberinto districts adopting particular livelihood strategies. As the table shows, seven of the households consisted of unmarried male miners. There are two important things to note here. Firstly, although there are no unmarried female miners in the sample, as this chapter will show, this does not mean that there are no unmarried women in mining towns. Secondly, the men in question were not supporting an extended family, which reduces one element of translocality from their livelihood. Some of these single men were also non-migrants, further implying that they rooted in place. However, single men are likely to conduct their ASM livelihood on a floating basis, at least for some periods of time, and as such they still constitute an important part of the translocal community. Even the single, non-migrant men in Laberinto had worked for periods of time in La Pampa and in other mine sites around Madre de Dios. This is similar to Werthmann’s (2010) definition of translocal ASM livelihoods following her work in Burkina Faso, although here the conceptualisation of translocal livelihood incorporates origin communities also.

**Table 7.1. Gendered translocal livelihood strategies of households currently engaging in ASM**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Livelihood Strategy** | **Ocongate** | **Madre de Dios** |
| Single man involved in ASM | 0 | 7 |
| Single woman involved in ASM | 0 | 0 |
| Couple both live in mining town and engage directly in ASM | 0 | 2 |
| Couple both live in mining town and wife works indirectly in ASM | 0 | 18 |
| Husband engages in ASM but wife lives in a nearby city and does not engage in the ASM sector | 0 | 4 |
| Husband engages in ASM but wife lives in origin community | 13 | 0 |

As Table 7.1 shows, in about half of the 37 households *currently* engaging in the ASM sector, both husband and wife lived in the mining town together. In the majority of cases, the mining town in question was Laberinto but two of these households were based in Boca Union and two in La Pampa. In a further four households, the husband stayed in Laberinto or nearby mining sites while the wife lived in the nearby city of Puerto Maldonado. In 13 households interviewed in Ocongate, the wife currently stayed behind in the origin community and/or had stayed behind for the majority of the time her husband engaged in ASM, although in three of the households both had previously lived and worked in the mining community together. This highlights two gendered aspects of ASM in the Peru that have been alluded to elsewhere in the literature, albeit in different contexts; that within a married Andean household, women are less likely than men to migrate to work in ASM, and that within a mining community, women are less likely than men to engage directly in ASM.

Household Decision-Making Processes

In Ocongate, all of the households *currently* engaged in ASM did so through a translocal livelihood strategy that involved the husband’s migration to the mining sites whilst the wife stayed in the locality of origin. All of the interviewed women said that their household had decided to engage in ASM because there was not sufficient earning potential in Ocongate. Most had been able to use the earnings from ASM to improve their family’s situation, through purchasing sufficient food and clothing, improving their house and sending their children to school etc. This is a crucial point, as it reflects the arguments by Gutmann about how the focus on negative male characteristics such as womanising and drinking, mask the expectations on men to provide and be a ‘dependable and engaged father’ (Gutmann, 1996, p.7). However, analysing beneath the level of the household unit to reveal intra-household decision-making processes highlights an interesting point about women’s level of influence in migratory decisions, as three of the women said they had little or no input. For example, Chaska said that it was entirely her husband’s choice to engage in ASM and there was no input from her, despite the fact that she became very sad about it even when he first suggested it. Her husband had also decided that she should go and stay with him for some months in La Pampa in 2016, and for how long she should stay. This adds to evidence from the wider migration literature which point to the inaccuracies in the widely-held belief that migration is driven by collective calculations or household-wide strategies (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994), which has led some to question the very notion of the term ‘household strategy’ (Mondain & Daigne, 2013).

However, within the context of ASM, some women have had more influence over their household’s livelihood strategy. In some cases, this has been because they knew more about the dangers inherent in mining and could use that to set limits on migration periods. This is particularly true where women have personally experienced life in the mining camps, as they know more about the physical risks of mining activity as well as the levels of crime and promiscuity. Others have been able to have more of an influence because it was their family and kin networks that their husband utilised to find work. This adds to the understanding of social networks in the ASM literature, as while there is a lot of work illustrating how men build networks in camps or draw on existing ones to find work (Grätz, 2004a; Jønsson & Bryceson, 2009; Werthmann, 2010), it has rarely been acknowledged that these connections may be provided by women. This is an interesting omission, given the high importance that women's ‘supposed disposition for social capital maintenance’ has traditionally been given elsewhere (Molyneux, 2002). Another important observation here is that the extent to which women were involved in decision-making processes seems to have some bearing on the sustainability of that approach. For Illary and Chaska, the lack of influence and participation in decision-making seems to be linked to the visible breakdown in the household.

### 7.2.2. Gendered mobility

Access to migration has been shown to vary greatly depending on one’s socioeconomic, political and cultural positions, of which one’s gender is an important factor (Creswell, 2010; Winters, 2019). This is reflected in table 7.1 above, which shows that married women are less able to travel to mining sites than married men, particularly if they are unaccompanied. This is perhaps to be expected, as it is often assumed that not only are women less motivated by self-serving individualism, but also, due to their responsibilities in reproductive work, they have stronger developed family and neighbourhood ties and are thus less likely to migrate (Molyneux, 2002). These trends are even more pronounced in Latin American culture, where gendered divisions of labour are strongly reinforced by the Catholic Church and its emphasis on motherhood in women’s identity (Ibid.). Yet while Table 7.1 above points to women’s immobility, a deeper analysis is needed to uncover the realities of women’s migration to the mining sites of Madre de Dios.

As Table 7.2 below shows, in twelve of the mining households interviewed in Ocongate, the women had never lived or worked in the mining settlements and had remained in Ocongate whilst their husband was away. For these women, their mobility is limited, although they are still incorporated into a translocal livelihood. Mobility must be seen as a socialised movement, imbued with meaning and power (Creswell, 2010). Thus the immobility of these women, which roots them to a place, represents an important point of consideration within the translocal ASM community. It would appear that the mining sites are considered too dangerous for some women to live in, reflecting how in the context of artisanal mining settlements, women’s bodies ‘perform and materialise fear’, similar to travelling out at night or in other public spaces (Silvey, 1996). Thus, to some extent, movement to the mine site can make women ‘out of place’ (Creswell, 1996), in the sense that ASM is an illegal and dirty activity, not something women are supposed to associate with. This brings up interesting questions from the migration literature for future consideration, such as who determines if ASM mining settlements places are accessible to women and how does this reflect and reinforce privileges and interests of some groups over others (Silvey, 1996). However, what is also clear from table 7.2 is that many women do live and work in the mining settlements.

**Table 7.2. Migration patterns of women in all interviewed households**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Ocongate** | **Laberinto** |
| Wife stayed in origin community | 12 |  |
| Wife previously lived in mining town with friends but returned home | 1 |  |
| Wife previously lived in mining town with husband but returned home | 3 |  |
| Wife went to mining town with husband initially and still lives there |  | 3 |
| Wife went to mining town with husband after some time and still lives there |  | 8 |
| Wife went to mining town alone/with friends (or was born there?) and still lives there |  | 11 |

As Table 7.2 shows, not only are there many women residing in Laberinto and the surrounding mining sites, but also in four of the respondent households in Ocongate, the woman had previously migrated to live and/or work in the mining areas in Madre de Dios. Although one had simply gone to stay with her husband for a few months, the other three had actively become involved in ASM indirectly through working as cooks in the mining areas after hearing about available job opportunities through agents, advertisements or friends.

Identifying how these women came to be in mining towns is important for understanding how women contribute to the formation of a translocal community. Migration theorists have frequently been criticised for failing to include women in their analysis on the assumption that they simply migrate in order to accompany or to reunite with their breadwinner migrant husband (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999). However, Table 7.2 shows that women’s migration to ASM sites has not always been due to accompanying their husband to the mining areas and there is clear evidence of women migrating to ASM sites for personal benefit. Two of the women in Ocongate reported going to work in the mine areas before they were married. For example, one said that when she was younger she had travelled to KM108 intermittently with her friends to work as a cook. Interestingly however, she had stopped going as soon as she met her husband.

There is also plenty of evidence from Laberinto of women arriving in mine sites unaccompanied by a husband. In 11 of the 25 interviewed households consisting of a married couple, the woman had arrived in Madre de Dios independently of their husbands. This was either because they had migrated looking for work themselves, with their parents when they were young or had been born there. The women who had arrived independently of family members also, had generally found work through agencies in Cusco and/or travelled with female friends. As in Werthmann’s (2009) study of female miners in Burkina Faso, these women were all attracted to the mining sites due to economic opportunity. They were therefore were unlikely to engage in the type of excessive consumption that has been observed amongst young, male miners in countries such as DRC, Colombia and Suriname (Cuvelier, 2017; De Theije & Heemskerk, 2009; Tubb, 2015). Interestingly, this is also likely to have an impact on women’s social capital in mining sites and their ability to use it to gain economic advantage, as they do not usually socialise with these male groups (Molyneux, 2002).

In many instances though, women do arrive in Laberinto with their husbands or follow shortly after. Three of the women had come to the usmining settlements at the same time as their partners, in one instance this was because terrorism led to an immediate decision to permanently relocate to Madre de Dios. In another example, one couple moved to the area that is now La Pampa in order to supply goods to the very small number of miners that were working in the vicinity at that time. However, in the third example, the woman had initiated the move after migrating to La Pampa to work in her cousin’s hotel after a fight with her husband and their subsequent breakup. She decided to stay in La Pampa due to the higher income earning potential and after a few months, her husband followed her. The women in the remaining eight households had all followed their husbands to Laberinto after some time. Although this suggests that these women’s mobility was dependent on their husband, this masks the agency that some exerted in these decisions. For example, two of the women had arrived in the town unannounced after making the decision independently. In both cases, they felt this was necessary to save their marriage, as their husbands had started sending less money home and they were aware of the general level of promiscuity in the mining towns. Such cases highlight the importance of analysing the gender relationships that lead to migration decisions, even in cases that seems to reflect a traditional trend for women to simply follow their husbands (Mahler & Pessar, 2006).

Another important aspect to note is that four of the women who previously lived in the mining towns have returned home. For one woman, this was because she and her husband had been able to save enough money to invest in a business providing transport services, although her husband now still travels to the mining area intermittently. For the others, the decision to return to Ocongate was due to becoming pregnant or having a very young child, as Ocongate is a preferable location for them to grow up in. It seems therefore that women with children and indeed children themselves, are more ‘out of place’ in mining towns than single or married women without children. As noted earlier, certain places are deemed to be too dangerous for women’s bodies to enter (Silvey, 1996). This has an important time-space component meaning that, for example, certain public spaces are deemed too dangerous at night (Ibid.). Interestingly in mining sites, it may be that rather than time of day, it is the time of a woman’s life that makes certain places inaccessible. Although there are some families with children in KM108, the violent environment suggests that it is not an ideal location to bring up a family, or one in which to be pregnant given the poor availability of health services. Furthermore, a case from Nicaragua has shown that reproductive work and agricultural responsibilities are a limiting factor on women’s mobility (Winters, 2014). This has already been observed in ASM in the context of Suriname (Heemskerek, 2000). Thus, although Tomasa worked in mining sites as a cook regularly before she was married, at that time she would not have had the same agricultural responsibilities let alone childcare and other reproductive work, highlighting how women may find places to be more or less accessible at different times of life.

Unlike the women interviewed in Ocongate, the eleven women in Laberinto who had arrived unaccompanied had all decided to remain in the area. This was usually because they had made friends and then met their partners/husbands in the mining towns, often through working. According to the typology introduced in chapter 6, these women are therefore permanent migrants. However, if some mining sites are deemed too dangerous for some women, it is important to consider what this reveals about the social relationships of women who do choose to remain in mining towns. As Werthmann (2009) has pointed out with reference to Burkina Faso, as gold mining towns can often represent socio-cultural milieus they often attract people who are already marginalised in their origin communities because they do not comply with social norms. Although Werthmann (2009) is referring to mining camps, life in Laberinto is far more relaxed than Andean communities and women can be relatively free. For the women who became permanently settled, being pregnant or married with household responsibilities did not make them suddenly ‘out of place’. Interestingly, two of the interviewed women in Laberinto mentioned having poor relationships with their family at home, suggesting a dislocation from their origin community that made it far easier to relocate. This adds some weight to Werthmann’s arguments about the residents of mining towns having suffered marginalisation of some form elsewhere prior to their arrival.

As has been shown above, the focus on men in the ASM literature does not accurately portray the fluidity of translocal ASM communities, as women do move between communities. However, it is less common for married women to travel to mining sites without their husbands, highlighting how mobility into ASM sites is restricted somewhat by one’s gender, and that on occasion, gender may also restrict one’s influence over households’ livelihood strategies. Furthermore, the tendency for single migrant women to return home when they get married or become pregnant, highlights how through the politics of mobility, gender can influence multiple stages of livelihood/migrant trajectories (Winters, 2019). However, while they may be less mobile than their male counterparts, women still play an important part in the formation of the translocal ASM community, both through their own movements and by supporting the movements of others. While this section has looked exclusively at women’s mobility and the gendering of translocality, the next section will look explicitly at the nature of women’s work in ASM livelihoods.

## 7.3. Women’s role in translocal ASM livelihoods

Mobility is often marked as masculine, with women in many cultural contexts facing restrictions when moving around in public spaces or involving themselves in migratory processes (Creswell, 1999; McEvoy et al, 2012; Ye et al, 2016). ASM is also marked as a masculine pursuit (Huesca, 2013) and for some women, they may find themselves considered to be ‘out of place’ in the context of mining camps, particularly if they are partaking in certain activities. As discussed in chapter 2, due to gendered differentiation in mining activity, cultural restrictions and competing responsibilities, women are often not identified as miners in their own rights (Buss et al., 2019; Yakovleva, 2007). Huggins et al (2017) argue that the invisibilisation of women’s mining labour is compounded by the tendency to define mining solely in terms of the activities most commonly done by men, such as the extraction of gold ore from the shaft. To understand how women can, in fact, be ‘in place’ in mining towns, it is necessary to extend the analysis of the role in ASM livelihoods past the focus on sex work and debt bondage which for too long dominated the literature. Recent work in East and Central Africa has utilised this approach to start exploring how women may negotiate mining camps in order to benefit from potential economic opportunities (Bryceson et al., 2014; Buss et al., 2017). I hope to contribute to this emerging literature in the context of Latin America by broadening the definition of ASM activity to incorporate the downstream activities that support ASM operations but also by widening the scope to consider these contributions to ASM livelihoods across space. This section will explore women’s involvement in ASM in detail, first examining how women engage directly in ASM, but then also considering indirect work within mining sites. The third part then moves on to think about women’s activities outside of mining sites that nonetheless contribute to the success of ASM livelihoods.

### 7.3.1. Involvement in the ASM economy

Until relatively recentyly, the information that existed in the literature about women’s direct engagement in ASM was largely negative (Jenkins, 2014). Women were portrayed as being overworked and overburdened by ASM, as well as confined to work that is dangerous, demanding and/or only marginally profitable, criticisms that are often aimed at women’s work and most income-earning activity found in informal spaces (Eftimie et al., 2012; Hilson et al., 2018; Lahiri-Dutt, 2006). A review of the literature suggests that women relying on their husband’s engagement in ASM experience an entrenchment of male privilege and increasing economic dependence (Jenkins, 2014). However, as Lahiri-Dutt (2015) has noted, emphasising victimhood is patronising, and does not reflect the life of women in mining camps. And indeed, recent work has a more positive stance, but evidence from East and Central Africa still suggests that women’s ability to access certain roles and ascend to the top of the labour hierarchy is often restricted by family responsibilities, cultural beliefs and a lack of education (Buss et al., 2017).

As we saw in the previous section, in many of the interviewed households in Laberinto, the couple had met when they were already living in the mining settlements (either in Laberinto or nearby). The women from these households had therefore already initiated their own livelihood within the translocal ASM community. Similarly, those women who arrived with or just after their husbands had found employment in some capacity within the ASM economy, thus contributing more to the ASM livelihoods than simply reproductive labour. During fieldwork in Laberinto, several women were interviewed who lived in mining settlements. All of these women were working and contributing in some way to household income.

**Table 7.4. Women interviewed in Laberinto, including ages, occupations and length of time in settlement**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Age range** | **Occupation** | **Location** | **Time in Madre de Dios** |
| Miriam | 20-30 | Helps husband in the mine, cooking for him and his workers | Laberinto | Since 6 years old, but migrated away from age 18-24 |
| Kiara | 50-60 | Initially was a cook but now runs a small grocery store | Boca Union | Since 1981 – from Urcos |
| Yara | 20-30 | Works in a juice bar/cafe in the market | Laberinto | 6 months |
| Azucena | 40-50 | Helps husband clearing away grasses –until they moved due to violence | Laberinto, previously La Pampa | From elsewhere in MDD – but living in La Pampa for around 45 years |
| Lorena | 40-50 | Works in a juice bar/cafe on the plaza | Laberinto | 6 months in Laberinto, previously in Boca Colorado for 15 years |
| Carla | 30-40 | Works in a hotel | Laberinto | 10 years |
| Rosaria |  | Works in a hotel | Previously in La Pampa | 10 years |

As table 6.4 shows, two of the women were involved directly in ASM, three in small shops or restaurants and two in hotels. In the following section, the various roles that women play in ASM activities will be discussed, before highlighting the various other ways they support the wider ASM community through their productive labour.

Directly in ASM activities

Much of the literature that does discuss the roles of women in ASM communities fails to consider them as miners. However, two of the female respondents listed in the above table considered themselves to be miners. One of the male respondents also referred to his wife as a miner while two men mentioned female friends who were *concessionarios*. It is clear therefore that women in Laberinto can be recognised within the community as being miners, more so than the male *obreros* who do not own any mining equipment of their own. While women are not usually employed to be *obreros* they are able to hold concessions or work within a family run businesses – which may or may not involve holding a concession – their roles tend to be quite different from that of their husbands. The roles of husband and wife in a jointly run business are complementary, but some women are more involved than others, and may see their role in a different light. For example, Azucena stressed the importance of her role and discussed in detail how her and her husband worked in a partnership:

‘*When we wake up, I cook while my husband worked in the mining. Right after, I used to take the food to my husband and he would eat while I got a machete and cleaned the area, pulling all the stones and branches, leaves, everything out of the way. Women used to do all this cleaning and cutting. At 11am I went back to cook lunch, and then in the afternoon I would do the same, bring him lunch and clean the area. It’s a mining team’* (Azucena, ASM miner, Laberinto).

In contrast to Azucena, the other female miner emphasised her husband’s role in the mining partnership over her own –‘*Where your husband goes you need to go, because you are the wife’.* Her role involved cooking for her husband and the four *obreros* that worked for him when they were in the mining camps, but this direct involvement in the mines and the fact that her husband was in charge of the mine in the absence of the *concessionario* meant that she was considered to be a miner. The key difference here seems to be that Azucena and her husband embarked on the mining business together, having previously ferried groceries to people mining in the remote area that is now La Pampa. In contrast, Miriam had moved back to Laberinto to live with her parents when she met her husband, who was already mining. She only became involved because she wanted to help him but then the *obreros* got used to her coming to cook for them. The roles of these women reflect Buss et al’s (2017) assertion that the participation of women in ASM in East Africa is shaped by a combination of productive and reproductive roles, as they do reflect women’s traditional reproductive responsibilities. However, through discussions with the community in Laberinto it is clear that these supportive roles are highly valued and are often thought to constitute mining. In some ways, the gendered roles in ASM is reminiscent of rural Andean livelihoods, which were traditionally complementary despite the gender split (Paerregaard, 1997, p.78), although at the same time, the engagement of women in other activities also reflects urban life, where ‘everyone, regardless of age or sex, shares in the struggle to make a living’ (Ibid., p74).

Indirectly in ASM communities

In the majority of households interviewed in Laberinto, the women remain in the town while their husbands do mining operations in the camps. However, they are all still actively engaged in the local economy through the provision of services that support ASM activity and the transient miner population. One of the key roles for women in Laberinto is working as cooks in the mining sites. While some of these women may be based in Laberinto, often the women will have to spend at least some days a week based in the camps. It was noted above that three of the women from Ocongate had worked temporarily as cooks in the mining area. In addition to working as cooks, the vast majority of market-stalls, shops and restaurants are staffed by women, while others sell drinks or snacks on the side of the road. Such roles are not without risks for single women. One interview respondent in Ocongate said that while cooks were paid more now in La Pampa, the growing violence meant that sometimes women were killed.

Of the interviewed women, one worked in a small café on the plaza and another ran a stall in the market. These women had both found these jobs after arrival in the town and did not own the business themselves. They both said that work had been relatively easy to find, but this may be because they had both gained relevant experience doing similar work previously. Another of the women worked in a local hotel, which is a viable option for many women given the prevalence of floating miners in the community. As was noted in the previous chapter, a key challenge for all of these jobs is the insecurity of ASM activities, through finite deposits and increasing government clampdowns, which reduces both the miner’s disposable income and the amount of time they spend in the town. Furthermore, such roles do not pay as much as mining activity. Households are considerably less well off if at least one of the members does not engage directly in ASM. A couple of the interviewed households had invested in larger businesses for the women to manage, including one a *chifa[[5]](#footnote-5)* restaurant and another, a shop.

It is also important to stress that there are many women working in Madre de Dios working as prostitutes, many of whom are forced to stay there against their will. Both male and female respondents discussed the presence of prostitutes in Laberinto, La Pampa and the surrounding area, noting that it had become more prevalent in recent years. The NGOs and policy makers interview respondents all stressed that the risks posed to women as a result of the sex trade were all linked to the illegality of ASM and the failure of the state to formalise.

*‘The mining is the base of so many different crimes; robbery, murder, human trafficking, prostitution, violence, even there are even groups of people who control small areas in the jungle on the highway and kill people. These are the impacts of illegal mining in MDD; violence, death and sexual abuse*’ (Government representative, Puerto Maldonado).

*‘The illegality of (ASM) attracts other illegal activities – this happens everywhere. It happens because the majority of people that are working in mining just work in the day, and at night they want to have fun, and they spend their money on alcohol and sex. The women are the owners of these bars also*’ (NGO chairman, Puerto Maldonado).

Although the violence in La Pampa mostly affects the temporary and floating male miners who choose to work there, the above quotes highlight how the violence that becomes incorporated into the translocal mining community through its illegality is also gendered. Furthermore, although the poverty that underscores the ASM livelihoods puts both men and women at risk of modern slavery, there is a gender dimension to this vulnerability as women are more likely to be trafficked into sex-work.

Prostitution is often listed as one of ‘impacts of ASM on women’ as though it is self-evidently negative. This presents an overly simplistic picture of women’s actual diverse relationships to the sex industry (Mahy, 2011). While some Andean women become victims of human trafficking or are forced to engage in sex work to pay the debt off, others may migrate to work as cooks and supplement their income doing sex work (Hinton et al., 2003), while yet others migrate to mining areas specifically to work in the sex trade. However, often the realities of sex work can be obscured, so that a dichotomy is created of innocent women forced into prostitution and opportunistic migrants who voluntarily choose work engage in it (Mahy, 2011). In reality, participation in the sex trade can be more fluid, as women who supplement their income with sex work may stop doing so when they find a long-term partner in the mining settlement.

### 7.3.2. Involvement in translocal ASM livelihoods

While the above section has dealt with women who live in mining towns, this section will consider those women who are currently reside in origin communities. Viewing ASM livelihoods and communities through a translocal lens allows for an understanding of how all members of those households that engage in ASM on a seasonal or temporary basis are involved in ensuring the success of their livelihood strategy. As was highlighted above, in ASM it is women who tend to stay behind in the origin community, but this does not mean that they do not play an active role. Rather, it is their existence in that community and the activities that they carry out while they are there that allows for the creation of the translocal livelihood. Translocal livelihoods imply a diversification of livelihood activities across space. In Ocongate, a key role for women was maintaining the other livelihood activities, either that the household conducted before migration, such as potato farming and alpaca rearing, or new activities that were initiated with the money earned from ASM.

The management of remittances is important and the majority is spent on food and children’s education. The feminist migration literature has pointed out that some neoliberal policymakers derisively label this as an ‘unproductive’ use of remittances, which effectively criticises female-headed households for prioritising the needs of their dependents (Mahler & Pessar, 2006). However, it was observed amongst the respondent households that if they were able to save enough income from ASM, the money was invested in a business. Investments in these ‘productive’ assets often occur translocally - with a translocal investment being defined as one which takes place away from the location in which it is earned – and it is in their management that the women’s role in the translocal livelihood becomes most obvious.

Table 7.5 below shows that four of these translocal business investments in Ocongate have been in the form of small shops. In all cases, women had full responsibility for running the shops. Although the man may take over the running of the business to some extent if/when he returns to live in the community, while the household is engaged in the ASM livelihood, women have full control over the day-to-day running of the business. While it is not unusual to see Andean women running businesses, it is still an important step for a woman in a previously poverty-stricken household to gain some form of direct economic empowerment through her household’s engagement in ASM.

**Table 7.5. Business Investments in Ocongate with ASM**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Business Investment** | **No of households** |
| Livestock – alpacas and sheep | 2 |
| Artisanal crafts | 3 |
| Transport based business – motorbike/car | 3 |
| Small shop | 4 |
| Future investment planned in Ocongate – small business | 1 |

The table shows that a further three households invested in materials with which the woman could produce artisanal crafts, while another two invested in agricultural inputs for which the women had primary responsibility. Women did not have a role in the three businesses that involved providing transportation, as this is a male-dominated livelihood activity in Andean communities. However, one of these households invested in a small shop as well as a motorbike, thus providing alternative livelihood options for both husband and wife. This ability for women to earn in the absence of their husbands is very much opposed to the findings that suggest women become more financially dependent on men as a result of migration (Mondain & Daigne, 2013). Rather, the findings lend support to Hinton et al’s (2003) argument that through reducing women’s dependency on men, ASM can actually weaken traditional gender roles.

In many countries, households in which a man migrates to work in mining areas can be the poorest in rural areas. However, in some contexts, such as Suriname, men are actually encouraged by their wives to migrate as they think it is likely to improve the household’s economic situation (Heemskerek, 2000). Success does however depend on the way the household manages the translocal livelihood. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the concept of ‘livelihood’ encompasses far more than direct income-generating activities and also refers to the gender relations required to support and sustain a certain standard of living (Ellis, 2003). For women involved in supporting translocal ASM livelihoods, added to the problem of the spatial divide are the risks inherent in ASM. Firstly, the levels of both wages and remittances are not guaranteed. As ASM is informal, miners lack labour rights, they have no fixed wages and if artisanal miners only find enough gold to cover their own expenses, they are unable to send any money home. As they lack rights, sometimes miners are not paid what they are owed, or at other times they spend money on extravagant consumption, leaving them less to send home as remittances. In addition, if their visits home are infrequent, the women have to go a longer period with no income. As a result, several of the women reported periods of time when they did not have enough money to buy food. Secondly, ASM is an inherently risky livelihood activity and carries the risk of injury or death. For example, one of the Ocongate miners had suffered a bad accident and had been unable to continue working in ASM, while one miner’s father had been killed in a mining site when he was run over by a truck. In such instances, women must devise coping strategies to deal with the absence of a steady stream of income. The diversification strategies as noted above will help with this. This productive work undertaken to support their household's engagement in ASM is overlooked in the literature due to a lack of focus on the translocality of the households’ livelihood.

Women need to draw on support from family and neighbours in the absence of their husband, particularly if there are problems with income. Thus, their ability to build their own social networks within the community of origin is crucial for the success of translocal ASM livelihoods. This has been noted previously in the migration literature, as women are seen to have a disposition for social capital maintenance in comparison with men (Molyneux, 2002). Interestingly though, while women’s ‘calming’ effect is seen as being important for the survival of ASM communities, the ASM literature has not considered this in relation to origin communities. As women are left to deal with the community and ensure supportive networks do not breakdown, they can effectively be seen as the lynchpin and ‘anchor’ in the translocal ASM livelihood. These issues will be illustrated in the following two sections.

## 7.4. Gendered impacts of translocal ASM livelihoods

This chapter has so far looked at the various ways that women contribute to the maintenance and success of translocal ASM livelihoods. However, it is also important to understand the impacts of ASM, particularly as they are likely to have gendered implications that have remained thus far unexplored in the literature. This section starts by first considering the impacts of household fragmentation. In doing so it highlights links with some existing work within feminist geography regarding the emotional labour that underpins mobility (Conradson & Mckay, 2007). It then goes on to discuss communication and flows of information, as this is crucial for maintaining households and livelihoods across spatial divides. Lastly, section 7.4.3 moves on to discuss the impacts of excessive consumption in mining sites, which has been discussed at length in relation to the men who partake in it (e.g. Grätz, 2004a; Walsh, 2003), but the implications for women have rarely been considered.

### 7.4.1. Household fragmentation

Translocal livelihoods often involve some level of household fragmentation, as household members become separated across spatial divides. Of the eleven households in Ocongate currently engaging in ASM, this engagement involves the husband working in mining sites for at least three months of the year whilst women remained in Ocongate with their children. Of the five not currently involved in ASM, either because they had been able to invest in alternative livelihoods in Ocongate or because the husband was now too ill or deceased, all but one experienced periods of household fragmentation. Even in Laberinto, in four of the interviewed households, the wife lived in the nearby city of Puerto Maldonado where the children attended school. In two households although the wife lived permanently in Laberinto the husband often remained in mining camps for extended periods. For almost all the households in the sample there had been some experience of household fragmentation, which is to be expected as a feature of a translocal community.

Migration and movements through places are associated with complex sets of emotions (Davidson et al, 2005) and these are seen as a key dimension of translocal subjectivities (Conradson & Mckay, 2007). Considering this, it is not surprising that the majority of the female respondents in Ocongate reported emotional distress as a result of separation. For some, the separation seems to have had a lasting impact on both their mental health and their marital relationship. Chaska said she was always incredibly lonely and depressed when her husband was away and noted that not only did he not come back as frequently as he was supposed to, but when he did return he was irritable and jealous. She said she almost prefers it when he is away as he is not around to upset her, but conceded that at least when he comes home he brings money back with him. However, the majority of the women reported adopting various coping mechanisms to help them deal with the temporary separation from their husband. Two of the women talked about purposefully keeping themselves busy looking after their children and tending to their farm or shop, while another, Paola, said she drew on the support of her family and ate meals with them often. Fortunately for Paola, her husband works alongside her brother, so he is also able to keep an eye on her husband’s behaviour.

Household fragmentation does not always leads to emotional distress however. Two of the women in Ocongate reported an improvement in their relationship since their husband started working in ASM. Sandra said that the serious financial problems the family had suffered before their engagement in ASM had caused her husband to drink a lot, which led to emotional and physical abuse. However, since the family has improved their standard of living through working in ASM her husband no longer drinks. Now, when he travels away for work he keeps in constant contact and their relationship has improved dramatically. For Mayu, although there has been no improvement in her relationship with her husband, she says her emotional wellbeing has improved because she does not have to put up with her husband being irritable – ‘*everyone is calm now that my husband goes to the mine for the whole year*’. Assuming that household fragmentation across the translocal community always results in emotional distress does not consider those situations in which there was a certain level of emotional abuse prior to engagement in ASM.

### 7.4.2. Communication, language and flows of information

In the previous section, it was noted that one of the key reasons Sandra’s relationship with her husband had improved in his absence was because he stayed in constant communication with her. Three of the other women also stressed the importance that good communication had played in maintaining their marital relationship within a translocal household. In some cases, their husband would ring every day, which had allowed them to stop worrying that an accident may have befallen him in the mine – a common fear, as the women are all aware that ASM is a physically dangerous activity. The improvements in telecommunication have made it far easier for migrants to keep up links with hometowns families and friends (De Theije & Bal, 2010), thus making it easier to maintain a translocal livelihood in recent years. One of the older miners explained that when he first travelled to the Madre de Dios in the early 1980’s, he told his girlfriend that he would return in six months but had no way of contacting her throughout that time. Fortunately, she waited for him and when he finally returned home they decided to both move to Laberinto together. The frequency of visits also helps. For example, Ana explained that even though she no longer works in the mining are with her husband, there are no changes in their relationship because he came back every two weeks to see their children and phones them almost every day. This has obviously become easier with improvements in technology but also the construction of the Interoceanic Highway, which means travel to La Pampa now only takes 6-8 hours.

Good communication is key for maintaining marital relationships that are conducted across space and is also crucial for the successful implementation of a translocal livelihood strategy such as ASM. It is the communication channels that flow between the various sites in the translocal community that enable migrants to keep up an active orientation towards home (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005). In keeping their husbands connected to the immobile members of the local population, women effectively facilitate maintenance of their attachment to the place of origin. Furthermore, through these everyday actions of communication, including frequent visits, phone calls and, more recently, whatsapp messaging, women actively contribute to the formation and maintenance of the translocal community. The language used in this communication is also important however, and reality can be easily misrepresented. For example, while it was clear that women in Ocongate knew about the illegal nature of mining activity, many of them seemed less clear about the crime and violence endemic in the area unless they had previously worked there themselves. This is interesting, as it suggests that the men may hide the level of danger in the mining areas from the wives. Thus, while communication is essential for maintaining a translocal household, that communication may not be entirely truthful. This is particularly true when working in illicit livelihoods that carry a lot of risk and may cause other household members to either worry or reassess the appropriateness of engagement in the livelihood activity.

### 7.4.3. Extravagant consumption, prostitution and adultery

As was outlined in the previous chapter, households often engage in ASM as a route out of poverty, and those who are able to save enough often invest in new business opportunities to further diversify their income sources. However, although the prospects for such investments may encourage households to engage in a translocal ASM livelihood, remittance levels are not guaranteed. One of the key problems is the tendency of men working in ASM to engage in conspicuous spending patterns with their fellow miners. As discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis, men working in ASM often bond through socialising in bars and collective spending on extravagant consumables, such as alcohol and prostitutes (Grätz, 2004a; Walsh, 2003). The purpose of this section is not to consider why men in ASM communities engage in this behaviour, as the literature has previously drawn links to its role in building social relationships (Grätz, 2004a), rejecting traditional authority (Walsh, 2003) and rebelling against patterns of global repression (De Boeck, 1998). Instead, by applying a translocal livelihood lens, this section broadens the analysis to consider the impact of this behaviour on both the household and the wider translocal community.

Chapter 6 showed how these patterns of behaviour are observable in Laberinto and the other mining settlements in La Pampa. One of the main ways men build social relationships in an unfamiliar environment is through drinking with other miners. One of the miners explained that ASM communities are notorious for what he referred to as ‘bad fun’ – clubs, bars, alcohol and prostitutes – and for the variety of reasons outlined above, men spend money on these things while they are socialising and attempting to make friends. This is reflected in the experiences of the miners in Laberinto.

‘*I worked (in La Pampa) for three years, but I didn’t save anything because I wasn’t doing things well and there are a lot of girls there so you spend a lot of money on them and on alcohol*’ (Jorge, Laberinto).

This is not to say that all men in ASM communities are forced to behave in this way. There are some examples of male miners actively avoiding participation. One miner who worked in Laberinto explained that he lived in a very small place down river called Boca Amigo as it was free from the temptations that existed in the bigger mining settlements. This allowed him to save more money. Also, although in the quote above, Jorge explained how when he worked in La Pampa he had spent too much money, he had decided to return to work in Laberinto after his girlfriend became pregnant so he could get away from these problems and save money. This is important to remember, as many migrant men do fulfil their expected roles and save money to provide for their children (Gutmann, 1996). However, as explained above, this section is more focused on the implications of this behaviour for the other family members involved in the translocal livelihood rather than why men do or do not engage in such behaviour.

Taking a translocal approach highlights how excessive consumption patterns in mining sites can reduce the level of remittances and decrease standard of living for the members of the household that have remained in the origin community. Indeed, several of the female respondents in Ocongate complained that their husband did not send as much money home as they were expecting. For example, Chaska’s husband sends her so little money every month that she sometimes goes hungry and although he is supposed to bring the rest home with him, he comes home far less frequently than planned. Similarly, the money Illary’s husband sends her is not enough to care for their four children, let alone save to improve their house or invest in a business. He barely comes home to see his family at all. Interestingly, of all the households it is Chaska and Illary’s husbands that go to the mine for some of the longest time periods per year.

Potentially more problematic for households is that much of the extravagant consumption involves spending a lot of time in bars where there are lots of women, many of whom are sex workers. During an interview in Ocongate with Tomasa, who had previously worked in La Pampa, she discussed how the men and women there get very drunk together and that there is a lot of prostitution. She said that in some cases this had resulted in men abandoning their families and not returning to Ocongate. Several of the interviewed policy makers and NGO representatives also discussed the social problems that result from the high levels of mobility that are characteristic of the translocal ASM community:

*‘Mining is very dangerous and it is lonely. People lose their relations with their community, as it is quite individualistic. There is a lot of money but no family, and so men often spend their money on prostitutes and alcohol. It is very complicated for the family, (but) it is normal in these migration situations, all over the world’* (Representative from MINEM, Lima).

Interestingly, Mahy (2011) has observed the tendency for women in mining towns to be treated as a homogenous group, often as being powerless victims of their husbands’ sexuality. This seems to be reflected in the quote from the Ministry representative above, but in reality women deal with these situations in very different ways, as I will illustrate below.

This environment in the mining areas had a direct impact on the relationships of many of the women in Ocongate who were trying to manage their household’s livelihood translocally. Lucia said that initially when her husband went to work in ASM he would call her when he was drunk and deliberately tell her about women he had met. After putting up with this for some months, eventually she threatened to leave him and things immediately improved– ‘*he said “since you have put up with me when so many other women have left me, I will give you all my money and buy you whatever you want”’.* Carolina also discussed how her relationship with her husband had suffered due to numerous extra-marital affairs he had with women in the mining areas:

*‘It affected me because we had problems and we did not live well. As he started to earn enough money, other women were after him and he was happier with them. He treated me badly and it was because of the money that he earned. When we fought, the children could hear and they didn’t study. Now my children are older and we live happily and are together. I don’t want him to go to the mine now, because he will earn money and the women will follow him’* (Carolina, Ocongate).

It is interesting that Carolina mentions the effect this behaviour had on her children, as often households engage in ASM in order to provide for their family and invest in children’s education. This highlights that when households engage in a translocal livelihood, focusing solely on increases in income is not sufficient to understand how successfully that particular family has coped.

Fortunately, in the examples above, Carolina and Lucia were both able to exert some control over the situation with their husbands, either by threatening a breakup or influencing a decision to move back to Ocongate. Similarly, as Tomasa is aware of this situation, she and her husband have jointly decided that he will work in construction in the municipality rather than travel to work in ASM. Sadly, for some women it is not possible to exert the same level of control. In the example of Illary given above, her family has been all but abandoned by her husband, and they are visibly poorer than others in the community, especially those who engage in ASM. Her children display anger towards their father, with her teenage daughter proclaiming after the interview that she hoped her father never came home. It seems likely that her husband has a new family in the mining area, which is not unusual. Several NGO representatives talked about the problems of miners finding new partners, wives and families in the mining areas and either abandoning the previous partner or juggling two families in secret. Thus while Naumann and Greiner (2016) have pointed to socio-economic stratification occurring in translocal communities between migrant and non-migrant families, these examples highlight how translocality is inherently more risky for the household members who remain behind.

There is however evidence of women deciding to move to the mining areas to prevent such situations. For example, Leo said that his wife had been living in their home town of Sicuani while he was working in Madre de Dios, but when he started to send her less money, she became suspicious that he was spending it on drinking, gambling and women. After she became pregnant she visited Laberinto unannounced to find out what was going on. After finding him in an extremely drunken state, she decided to move to the town permanently as she couldn’t trust him to look after their money unsupervised. Similarly, Carla lived at home in Sicuani for three years while her husband worked near Laberinto. He sent very little money home. Her aunts warned her that he would likely find himself a new family, if he hadn’t already. She also arrived in Laberinto unannounced, only to discover that he had not told his work colleagues and friends that he even had a wife and son. At first, her husband was angry and made her return to Sicuani, saying Laberinto was not a suitable place for a child, but within a month they had agreed that she should move there to live with him. These stories highlight how women are not always passive victims in these situations.

The characteristics of the translocal mining community can have a negative impact on household relationships even when both husband and wife live in the mining areas. As noted earlier in this chapter, these households can still experience some level of household fragmentation if men spend some nights sleeping in nearby mining camp and not in the main town. However, the proximity of the men’s wives does not eliminate their spending on women and alcohol. For example, Azucena and her husband have been working together in what is now La Pampa for many years, but in a rather comedic assessment of the threat posed to her marital relationship by the increased translocality of her local community, Azucena compared it to the threat of theft of her inanimate possessions:

‘*There was a time that you could leave your motor on the beach, your gear, your tools, your gas, your motor. You could leave it there and go to Puerto Maldonado for two weeks and everything would still be there. But when the illegal mining started, you were not able to leave anything. Whatever you left, even for hours, you wouldn’t find it. No tools, no motor no camp, no nothing… (and)…the mining brought bars and prostitution…Men are attracted to spend their money on these things and to overcome their problems by drinking or with prostitutes. Now you cannot even leave your husband working because when you come back he’s not going to be there either*’ (Azucena, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Similarly, another female miner in Laberinto explained that due to the increasing numbers of prostitutes working in the local bars, sometimes her husband, like other men in the area, did not return home at night – *‘the only people who get angry with that are us, the ladies’*. NGO respondents also referred to the high numbers of single mothers in mining communities due to the transience of the miners, particularly the *floatantes* identified in the previous chapter, and therefore lots of children with absentee fathers. One NGO respondent also stressed that this was sometimes associated with child abuse, especially when single mothers moved in with new partners.

## 7.5. Gender dynamics in the translocal community

Social links have already been shown to be important in translocal communities, particularly as successful livelihoods are closely linked to reciprocity (Benz, 2014; Greiner, 2010; Naumann & Greiner, 2016). It is important therefore to consider the entire social field in which ASM livelihoods take place. This entails looking at the community that was left behind. Through a focus on extended family and other personal networks, translocal livelihood approaches emphasise the role that all actors play, rather than that of the migrant. This often means they are able to provide a more thorough understanding of women’s contributions to livelihoods through the role they have in communities and networks. Women have been shown to constitute a bridge between rural development and ASM (Perks, 2011), indicating that they play an important role in the translocal community. Feminist analysis has also shown that structural adjustment would have been far more devastating had it not been for the efforts of women to secure survival strategies (Molyneux, 2002). Thus, women’s ability to maintain households and livelihoods in the absence of their husbands is crucially important for the success of translocal livelihoods strategies.

This section will reflect on interviews with women and community members in Ocongate, primarily to show how relationships have changed as a result of ASM. It will first look at the changes in local relationships, both positive and negative. While some households found their higher income earned them more respect and social standing, as well as access to certain organisations, others found that they faced hostility from other local people. The chapter will show how the respondents often blamed this hostility on jealousy, but that there are several other issues that are likely to have contributed to these problems. Here the focus is not on the impact of outmigration on households not involved in ASM, but rather on their interactions with those households that are involved in the sector. Section 7.5.2 then goes on to examine how women’s relationships with extended family. Particularly how they might draw on these as a way of dealing with the emotional side of migration. This section does not explicitly focus on the experiences of women in Laberinto, as it is looking specifically at women that have been left behind but nonetheless contribute to translocal ASM livelihoods.

### 7.5.1. Local community relations

The translocality literature frequently highlights how places of origin remain a ‘space of belonging and identity’ for most migrants (Brickell & Datta, 2011, p.13). However, translocality has a big impact on local relationships. If these impacts are negative this may be problematic for women, who may find that they need to draw on the support of their neighbours in the absence of their husbands. An important role for women is acting as an anchor for the household to ensure that their translocal livelihood does not completely uproot them from the place of origin. This links back to the observation in chapter 4 that women are often expected to invest more in social networks and the development of their household’s social capital, despite being less able to capitalise on these connections due to the persistent inequality between their position in the social field relative to that of their husband (Thieme & Siegmann, 2010). Interestingly however, within the ASM literature, although women have been described as a lynchpin in ASM communities (Eftimie et al., 2012; Hinton et al., 2003; Perks, 2011), this has not been examined in the context of origin communities and with reference to the translocality of livelihoods.

Deteriorations

The notion of community often hides the critical differences and divisions within it (Chambers, 2008; Gujit & Shah, 1999; Lahiri-Dutt, 2011). There appear to be a growing number of issues within the origin community of Ocongate. Several men and women reported deteriorations in their local relationships since their household’s involvement in ASM, which they blamed on other non-mining households being jealous of them. For example, Chaska says that now when she greets people in the street, they often do not respond to her. The respondents said they dealt with the animosity in various ways. Two said they were selective about who they chose to form relationships and said they rely on the support of their family when they have a problem rather than relying on neighbours. One miner in Ocongate said that the animosity aimed at his family was so bad that when he was away mining, his wife spent a lot of this time a little way out of the village looking after their alpacas so she did not have to put up with too much hostility from local people. These deteriorating relationships will make it more challenging for women to successfully manage a translocal livelihood in the absence of their husband, but also cause problems for remaining ‘rooted’ within the place of origin if ASM is continued on a long-term basis.

All of the households that experienced this animosity blamed it on jealousy. Three of the women said the jealousy had occurred since they had improved their house and become visibly richer and claimed that the other residents did not want them to improve their lives. Although there is little evidence to support these claims, the local community leader did say that it was people being jealous of the mining families that had prompted more of them to travel to work in ASM. This level of jealousy is dependent on how well the household does. One woman explained that her family had never been the target of any jealousy as her husband had only sent enough money to cover the cost of food for her and their children –‘*no one could get jealous of that*’. At the same time, the majority of the women expressed the belief that the non-mining households could not complain if they remained poor because they had decided themselves not to get involved in ASM. For example, Sandra said the poorer members of the local population who were envious of them were idle, while Tomasa claimed that although those households wanted to be able to afford the same things as the mining families, they were not interested in working elsewhere to achieve it.

There is clearly increasing inequality within Ocongate. Interviewees frequently mentioned that this was because households that engaged in ASM could invest the income in household improvements or start local businesses. Even when walking around town, it is obvious which of the households are involved in mining and which are not based on the quality of the houses, as some are newly built with modern materials and have multiple storeys. While it may therefore be possible that this increasing inequality is driving resentment amongst the non-mining members of the local population, this does not provide the complete picture. In some instances, it is the household’s engagement in ASM that causes the problems, rather than the inequality that is generated. For example, Chaska said that her neighbours criticised her because her husband went to work in the mine, suggesting that they did not approve of it as a livelihood activity. This is interesting in a place where migration to mining has happened for decades and in some cases generations. While Chaska blamed the opinions of her neighbours on jealousy, another problem maybe the increasingly negative portrayal of ASM in public discourse changing the perceptions of some local people.

With the influx of miners to the gold mining sites in 2007, the increased destruction of the rainforest and the shifting government regulations, the attitudes of the non-miners may have changed. Furthermore, the young miners now go to work La Pampa, whereas before the miners would mostly have been going to work in the mining corridor, as there was little mining activity outside of this area. In Werthmann’s (2009) study she notes that wider society in Burkina Faso considers mining camps as ‘a world apart’ where drug abuse, criminality, violence and prostitution prevail. It is likely that the same perceptions are creating tension with origin communities, which was reflected in fieldwork interviews. For example, Mayu’s husband made some ‘bad friends’ through working in ASM and his behaviour changed dramatically, as he drinks a lot and no longer goes to church. Mayu was worried about this and said that local men frequently tell her he is crazy, suggesting that she was concerned her husband’s poor behaviour may affect her social relationships with people in the locality. This also reflects how some members of the local population perceive men who go to work in ASM. It has already been noted that in socially-fractured localities women face particular pressure to build and maintain cohesion amongst the population (Hinton et al., 2003; Jenkins, 2014), but the negative reputation of ASM may be making it more difficult for women to perform this role in the translocal ASM community.

It is often claimed that mobility and translocal livelihoods can undermine place making and identity formation (Cuba & Hummon, 1993) and lead to complicated and often ambivalent relationship between rural points of origin and current urban development areas (Sørensen, 2002). Furthermore, in other migratory contexts, there is evidence of non-migrants viewing migration as robbing the local community of its life force (Mondain & Daigne, 2013), therefore seeing those who partake in it in a bad light. Thus, rather than the problem being ASM *per se,* it is the act of migration leading to men being absent from the local area which is leading to relationship breakdowns. For example, Juan, a man of about 35 who was working in ASM, said that the local people were particularly annoyed as he went to work in the mines for most of the year and not just for a few months at a time. Anyone in the village who wants to work away for an extended period has to apply for a permit from the community leader or pay a collectively-agreed absentee fine, which is common in many Andean towns and villages (Boelens, 2015). However, despite these measures, the community leader said that problems still arose if the miners wanted to go away for more than 2-3 months of the year:

‘*The other community members say that they shouldn’t go because it is solely for their own progress and to build their house, and buy cars…and that we shouldn’t give them permission to go’* (Community leader, Ocongate).

Although the community leader’s comments could be taken as reflecting an element of jealousy between local people, it also suggests that there is perceived to be no wider benefit to households engaging in ASM.

Many of the households who are still actively involved in ASM are quite young couples who have only been working in ASM for a few years, yet the older couples that continued to mine had remained embedded in the local community and did not report any deteriorating relationships. This implies that it may be the attitudes of the young men who are at home for less time than the older miners that have an impact on the way they are perceived by other local people. During the interview with Juan, he explained than in order to maintain local relationships he decided to return home more often and was in fact only at home at the time of interview because he had to help with the *faenas*. However, many of the other young miners did not do this, which may be linked to the fact that they intended to move to Cusco when they had saved enough money. It has been shown that when one proposes to move away permanently, their relations with local people are likely to be forever altered and possibly severed (Hamilton, 1985). Therefore these young men may be less interested in maintaining local links. While Walsh (2003, 2012) has explored the impact of young migrant miners ignoring local authority and norms in mining towns with high in-migration, this has not been explored in the context of places of origin.

For local people, one of the key issues is the completion of *faenas*. F*aenas* are community-based tasks, such as cleaning ditches and repairing public buildings, in which households contribute labour for free (Paerregaard, 1997). However, while men are obligated to participate, women usually only contribute on a voluntary basis (Ibid.). There are problems when the local people perceive men to be avoiding these responsibilities when they migrate, particularly if they are going to a place of ill repute where they will behave badly. In their absence, women take on the responsibilities of attending the *faenas*, and Valdiva et al (2013) has previously shown that this may include representing their husband in local meetings and even assuming certain leadership roles. Some of the women in Ocongate explained that a further source of tension was that they were often unable to complete the *faenas* to the same standard as the men, or with the same speed, because they lacked the physical strength. Furthermore, when the women participated in local meetings in the absence of their husbands they rarely spoke up and gave their opinion, which meant that the meetings were generally considered to be not as fruitful as when the men were able to attend. One woman said, ‘*we don’t have opinions*’, and said that the men who had remained in the village inevitably took all the decisions. This suggests that men who remain behind may become relatively empowered in the absence of those men who have gone to mine. It is not clear what implications this might have for broader gender relations within the local community.

Improvements

Poverty has been shown to both erode social capital as well as strengthen kin ties through shared adversity (Molyneux, 2002). When faced with poverty, households and women in particular, may have to develop coping strategies that rely on a form of cooperation, but we may expect to find local relationships change from forced cooperation to elective forms of solidarity as income levels rise (Ibid.). Despite the deteriorations within Ocongate that were discussed above, there is also evidence of some improvements in local relations as a result of household engagement in ASM. Some of the women explained that they had previously been recognised as being a poor family and had been looked down upon. One said that people did not want to associate with them if they had no money. However, they said they were now able to participate more in the community and had more friends.

Women among low-income groups are frequently those with the strongest local ties, and this includes supporting church activities and participating in associational life (Ibid.). Interestingly, in Ocongate, some female respondents said they were now able to participate in local associations, which further boosted their social status and was obviously extremely important to them. For example, one woman said she now had an important position within the Guinea-pig association[[6]](#footnote-6). Furthermore, as some of the women had invested ASM income into buying materials to make handicrafts, they had been able to join the local association for artisanal crafts. Joining this association requires the individual to have enough money to have a small business in the first place. However, one woman said that on joining she had to pay some fees and although her family can afford to pay the fees, her husband is annoyed because he doesn’t want her to work. It seems that although he does not mind her making some handicrafts from within the home, but is unhappy for this to be seen as a job through joining an association.

Another thing to note is that as women are also participating more in the *feanas* and local meetings, this has the potential to contribute to their empowerment and give them a chance to be influential within the local area. However, as noted above, this does not seem to be happening, as the women rarely actively participated. This is similar to the findings of Valdivia et al (2013), who noted that Aymara women in the Andes rarely speak at local meetings and public decisions are still usually taken by men (Ibid.). This perhaps highlights that there are other constraints on Andean women’s active participation in such social spaces other than their physical presence and that these cannot be easily negotiated or changed simply through an increase level of responsibility as a result of high out-migration and the absence of their husbands.

### 7.5.2. Extended family

Women that remain immobile within the translocal mining community often find themselves needing to rely on neighbours and family in the absence of their husbands. It is therefore necessary to actively strengthen pre-existing relationships. Many of the women in Ocongate stressed the importance of family relationships in this regard, rather than those with other non-relatives. Perhaps this is not surprising, given the apparently divisive nature of their engagement in ASM. As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, there can often be problems with women receiving sufficient money from their husbands. There are therefore several examples of women deliberately strengthening family relationships so that they can rely on them for financial support. For example, when Carolina’s husband first went to work in ASM, he was frequently unable to send her money because he had not been paid. Sometimes he would even come for visits with just an IOU from his *dueno.* Fortunately, Carolina was able to draw on her extended family, both on her side and her husband’s side, to borrow the money needed to smooth household consumption until he was paid.

At other times, women draw on family relationships for emotional support. For example, Paola said she spent more time with her sisters in the absence of her husband and frequently ate meals with them. In some cases, there was evidence of women strengthening their relationships with in-laws. For example, Mayu said that she had bonded with her in-laws since her husband had left and found that they were getting along better now that ‘he isn’t around being irritable’. Chaska has purposefully strengthened her relationship with her husband’s mother while he has been away – both to prevent her feeling lonely and ensure her household has support in his absence, but perhaps also in an attempt to give her more leverage in household decisions and within her marital relationship in general. She says that she often tells him that she will tell his mother about his bad behaviour in the hope that it will make him be nice to her. Interestingly, this reflects Silvey’s (1996) observations of African-American women using their spatial rootedness in a local community to their advantage, which suggests that in some respects immobility can represent power as well as oppression.

## 7.6. Summary

Through its application of a translocal livelihoods approach and its interest in the power dynamics that shape the various, overlapping social fields within the translocal community, this chapter has been able to add to emerging literature that examines the involvement of women in ASM. In chapter 4 it was acknowledged that individual mobility may be restricted depending on one’s position within the social field (Thieme, 2008). Women in particular were likely to face multiple restrictions as a result of societal norms. Although women are actively involved in household livelihood strategies, there are gendered dimensions that not only restrict the ways they can engage in ASM but also in some cases limits the influence they can exert in decision-making processes. However, while both ASM and migration are often both seen as male-dominated pursuits, particularly in Peru, women are involved in both in a variety of ways.

Many women migrate to work in the mining areas in Madre de Dios, and not all of them do so because they are following their husband. Women are able to travel with friends to find work and may either settle in the area with a new family, or return to their community of origin when they get married. Despite this, there remains a clear distinction between the mobility of men and women’s bodies in the context of ASM. Even those women who choose to settle in Laberinto may still find themselves to be relatively ‘immobile’ in comparison with men who move around the mining sites to work. There is also some evidence to suggest that women who become permanent residents of the mining town do so as a result of relatively weak relationships in the origin community. Here there are some similarities with the work of Werthmann (2009, 2010) in Burkina Faso, which have highlighted how women enjoy the relatively ‘loose’ social conventions in mining towns.

Until recently, the ASM literature had tended to ignore indirect engagement in the ASM sector. This chapter has added to this growing literature by documenting Peruvian women’s engagement within mining sites, where they may be working directly on mining activity, usually with their husband, or working in one of the myriad of support services within the ASM economy. This has given a better representation of the lives of women in mining sites in Madre de Dios, beyond a picture of prostitution, violence and bonded labour. Crucially, however, taking a translocal lens to ASM has provided an insight into women’s roles in the origin community that contribute to the household’s livelihood. Often this involves continuing activities that the household was involved with before mining, such as subsistence agriculture and rearing alpacas, but also involves the investment of remittances in providing food, clothing etc. for children and other household members. This can be extremely difficult during times when their husband is able to send little money back from the mine sites. However, what is important to note is the ways in which households in Ocongate, and to some extent in Laberinto, have invested money in businesses that the women control, at least in the absence of their husband. Rather than women necessarily becoming more reliant on their husband as a result of migration, this suggests that those women who successfully manage the households diversified livelihood options amay also become economically empowered.

This chapter has also highlighted the ways in which women contribute to mining livelihoods through the development of social capital. This can help build the networks that are used to find work in mining sites. Even in cases where women remain in origin communities, connections can often be made through her relatives, which also seem to provide relative power within livelihood decisions. The translocal analysis has also pointed to the role of women who stay behind in keeping their household ‘rooted’ in the origin community. This is particularly challenging in the context of ASM in Peru, as it not only requires their partner missing out on compulsory community activities, but also tends to be viewed negatively due to the sector’s increasingly bad reputation. It is women that have to manage these social networks in the absence of their husband. At the same time however, women that remain in origin communities can to some extent benefit from their immobility. Through forging stronger relationships with extended family and community and utilising the translocal investments to increase their economic independence, women can gain a lot from their incorporation into the translocal space.

# 8. Divergent livelihoods: tension and contestation within mining communities

## 8.1. Introduction

While chapter 7 highlighted the intra-household divisions that may occur within a translocal community, there are also wider community dynamics to consider. The typology provided in chapter 6 characterised the miners and other residents of mining settlements according to the nature of their translocal livelihood and migration habits – permanent, temporary, floating and non-migrant. Thus, whilst the individuals within the translocal ASM community all exist within the same social field, their divergent livelihood trajectories lead them to occupy very different positions with different personal interests. As I have highlighted previously, the divergent translocal livelihoods that lead actors to occupy different positions necessitates an extension to the concept of translocality that enables an analysis of the temporality of translocal livelihoods rather than just a spatial analysis. In this chapter, I highlight the importance of this extension through illustrating how divergent livelihood trajectories have implications for place-attachment and may lead to tension and conflict within the social field. Such conflicts represent a form of contestation that I refer to as temporal friction. This is important for understanding the heterogeneity of the population that resides within mining settlements and the implications for community dynamics, but also adds to our understanding of translocal livelihoods in general.

This chapter will draw on the typology of mining migrants introduced in chapter 6 and further our understanding of these various positions by drawing attention to the nature of relationships between them. Keeping in mind Bourdieu’s assertion that social fields are characterised by contestations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), the exploration of these community relationships highlights in particular the various ways in which translocality creates tension within a given locality. In true Bourdieusian fashion, it therefore provides a rather antagonistic vision (Shammus & Sandberg, 2016) of social interactions within translocal mining communities. Translocal livelihoods have long been shown to fundamentally change the various places they connect (Greiner, 2010; N Long, 2008). It is unsurprising therefore that these changes may manifest themselves in tension within the various localities. Aside from tensions caused by current levels of mobility, future livelihood aspirations create competing long-term interests between community members. This leads to a variety of contestations that can be grouped together and thought of as temporal frictions. Meanwhile, those who remain for long periods of time in the most highly transient mining settlements expose themselves to superficial working relationships and feelings of alienation. While these temporal frictions may not necessarily result in outright aggression and interpersonal violence, I will show that they nonetheless affect community dynamics.

The chapter discusses the key sources of tension within the community in order to highlight how the temporality of translocal livelihoods creates an underlying source of tension within the social field of ASM. Section 8.2 first looks at issues over access to land and labour mobility, before moving on to environmental sustainability concerns that exist within mining towns. It then considers the more social aspects of life, including weakening social networks, social exclusion and the pressure on social relationships. A key thread running through this section is the lack of interest that temporary and floating miners have in long-term economic security, environmental sustainability and the building of a community spirit within mining settlements, particularly when compared with their more permanently settled neighbours. Section 8.3 then moves on to examine crime and violence, explaining that while this remains far worse in La Pampa, high mobility is becoming linked to rising insecurity in more settled mining towns such as Laberinto also.

The final section of chapter 8 then introduces the contestations that occur between the actors within the social field, including ASM operatives and other residents of mining towns and settlements and the Peruvian Government. These contestations manifest in sometimes violent protest and other forms of active resistance, such as the continuation of illegal mining activity, as a result of the perceived injustice of the Government’s policy on ASM. However, the temporal and spatial nature of translocal ASM livelihoods can sometimes result in a relative lack of willing amongst the temporary residents of Laberinto to engage in the more organised forms of protest. This is primarily because their long-term interests are not in the town. They will simply move on, to a new place and/or a new livelihood, if the Government becomes too repressive. An understanding of these dynamics is important to set up for the following chapter, which will look at how contestations within the social field are manifested in discourses of illegality.

## 8.2. Sources of tension within the translocal ASM community

In the Bourdieusian conceptualisation of contestation, agents primarily struggle with each other over scarce resources and the right to dominant the direction of the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Whilst these contestations are often conceptualised as occurring at the elite level, it has also been shown that similar contestations play out at the lower echelons of society, such as within street crime and gang culture (Sandberg, 2008; Shammus & Sandberg, 2016). Within the mining economy, active agents follow very individualised livelihood trajectories and thus vary both in the degree to which they identify with the sector and the extent to which they see the mining town or settlement as their home. This leads to competing livelihood interests, as the various actors not only have different access to resources, such as access to concessions or mining equipment, but also have different long-term plans and interests. Bourdieu (1985) argued that these opposing interests within the social field would lead to the emergence of contestations and we do indeed find that the different positioning of actors within the translocal ASM community leads to tension within mining settlements. While these tensions do not necessarily break out into physical conflict and violent disputes, although certainly may do so in some cases, they have important implications for community dynamics. This section will discuss several sources of tension that occur within Laberinto as a result of the translocal nature of ASM livelihoods, and will illustrate how they are particularly exacerbated by the fluid movement of miners between Laberinto and La Pampa.

### 8.2.1. Access to land and resources

The lack of land rights and continuous changes in ASM policy result in highly insecure livelihoods for ASM operatives in Laberinto. This has been further exacerbated by the massive influx of miners. Permanent miners keen to protect their land have had to compete with increasing numbers of temporary and floating miners, who they sometimes refer to as ‘invaders’. A key problem is that many *concessionarios* have lost the titles to their land due to increasing taxes and changes in policy, which poses a threat to the miners’ long-term economic security. The Government does however not resell the land, as it is no longer issuing new concessions, even within the mining corridor. The ex-*concessionarios* thus continue to claim a social ownership of the land, which may rely on physical force when it becomes common knowledge that the concession is now free. Jorge discussed his experience of continuing working on his concession after he lost ownership of it:

*‘Well, I lost my land but I’m still there. I’ll fight to protect my land (from invaders), and I stay there. They can’t sell the land because we are recognised as owners, we just don’t have any documents*’ (Jorge, ASM miner).

Although Jorge continues to work on the same land, his ability to ensure his family’s long-term economic security is jeopardised and he has no legal entitlement to the land he is trying to defend. The influx of new miners, who are unable to buy their own concessions even if they want to, see this as an opportunity, resulting in increasing tension and outbreaks of violence.

Not all temporary miners would be pejoratively referred to as invaders, as many organise work through *duenos* or arrange access to land with the *concessionarios* in order to use their own machines on their land. Even the floating miners often organise work in a similar fashion and thus do not access land without permission. However, as noted in chapter 6, the relative mobility of the temporary miners and particularly the *floatantes* means they move around a lot and sometimes operate without contracts. As Walsh (2015) observed in mining communities in Madagascar, these young, relatively mobile populations tend to adhere less to traditional modes of authority. In Laberinto too, mobile populations are not as bounded by the norms within the mining community and have less to lose from encroaching on the land of others and occasionally stealing gold.

‘*The problem is that the other miners invade. You can be working in the mine and when other miners hear you have a lot of gold, they will do whatever they can to steal it. That happened to me. There’s no solution for this, we just have to fight’* (Xavier, ASM miner).

Interestingly, Xavier is himself a temporary miner, although he has invested some money in his own mining equipment and has developed relationships within the community. His experience juxtaposed with the more transient miners highlights both the varying degrees of translocality within ASM livelihoods but also how this can erode some of the social norms that may otherwise prevent such conflict emerging.

The intensity of conflicts over land and protection of access to gold deposits is such that it even manifests itself between people who have legitimately organised work on neighbouring concessions. David, a permanent miner in Laberinto explained that when the *concessionarios* give the miners (those who own motors) permission to mine on their land, they can sometimes accidently move over the boundary and work on other people’s lands –‘*This causes a lot of problems (and) they could then fight with guns or knives*’ (David, ASM miner, Laberinto). While an LGA representative insisted that there were no problems like this in Laberinto, because they take the problems to the authorities and make a solution immediately, this was not mentioned by any of the other community members. Even if it were applicable to those who had been resident in Laberinto for some time, it is unlikely to be in place for the temporary miners who have not yet become sufficiently integrated into the community.

In La Pampa the situation is worse, as it lies outside of the designated *Corridor Minero* and there are no concessions or *concessionarios*. Although mining there is completely illegal, miners can potentially earn more due to the high density of gold deposits, which have not yet been extensively mined and the access to land which has not already been sold as concessions. The vast majority of people have arrived since 2007, as both a response to the high price of gold and the improved accessibility to these remote areas due to the completion of the Transoceanic Highway. As all of the inhabitants of La Pampa reside in settlements that are not formal towns, they are unable to settle permanently and are constantly under threat of being physically removed by state interventions. Their livelihoods are inherently therefore more translocal than the permanent miners in Laberinto, as there it is at least possible for people to reside legally and therefore settle long-term. There are however a number of mining families in La Pampa who have been mining in the area for decades without government interference, but became ‘illegal miners’ in 2000 when the boundaries of the National Park buffer zone were drawn up around where they lived. In order to protect their livelihood and ensure long-term economic sustainability, these families formed into small associations and have been trying for many years to negotiate with the Government to change their position and secure their rights as miners, which has been well documented by Damonte (2016). However, as the price of gold has increased and more temporary and floating miners have come to work in La Pampa, the sustainability of their livelihood has become increasingly threatened.

The problems that exist for the permanent miners in La Pampa are well represented by the experience of Azucena, a female miner and a member of one of the mining associations in La Pampa. Azucena said that although her small community had experienced problems with the Government for many years, their real problems started in 2007, when a group of miners cleared a small road close to their community to provide access from the newly constructed Transoceanic Highway into the jungle. Shortly after, the first of many ‘invaders’ arrived, using highly destructive gold mining techniques. The local associations complained to the Government about the impact the new miner invaders were having on the local environment, but were not offered any support to keep the new miners out and so the problem escalated –‘*The next year there were not two people, there were lots of people, and there wasn’t one hole there were many. The Government did nothing when we told them they were starting mining there*’ (Azucena, ASM miner, La Pampa). Damonte (2016) has documented similar problems as experienced by members of other local associations who are based within the buffer zone.

While economic security in La Pampa is threatened by changes in government policy, a larger problem is the extent of in-migration. Increasing numbers of miners competing for land have caused big changes in local ASM livelihoods. Azucena described in detail the changes she had faced since migrants came to La Pampa:

*‘In the past, it was just the family working. There was no pressure, you weren’t doing something wrong or building a hole. You worked one day, and then the next day you could rest. You only worked some hours a day. But now you need to work 24 hours a day, and you need at least 4 people – two people working today and resting tomorrow…. If you don’t get the gold, someone else is going to take it. Nowadays there are so many people inside (the jungle), and so much pressure. People are working the most they can. In the past we used to work and have a good life, but now it’s so insecure…Every time you can work and make money, you are going to do it*’ (Azucena, ASM miner, La Pampa).

Azucena explained that due to the high numbers of migrants competing for gold, their livelihood activities had become extremely time pressured – ‘*Everything is such a hurry…there is less gold and many more problems*’ (Azucena, ASM miner, La Pampa). Again, this highlights how the influx of people causes problems for the miners’ economic security.

What is clear is that the permanent miners have come to blame the new invaders for many of their problems. The benefits of applying a translocal approach to this research have been to illuminate the experiences of some of the migrants that Azucena and others may consider to be invaders*.* During interviews with households in Ocongate it became apparent that most people from there migrate to La Pampa in a poverty driven attempt to make money to support their families. However, even for temporary miners, the realities of life in La Pampa can be difficult to deal with. Temporary migrants such as Carlos and Rosaria, who would be considered *invaders* by Azucena, discussed how they had found the environment in La Pampa to be extremely hostile:

*‘There is not a friendly environment in La Pampa. Everybody is there just for the money, and everyone is in competition with each other. Even the businesses are trying to raise more money than their neighbour’* (Rosaria, hotel owner, Puerto Maldonado).

This shows the difficulties in building a livelihood when everyone is primarily motivated by immediate pay-off and has no long-term interest in developing a sense of community. Instead, we find agents within the translocal community entering into varying degrees of contestation with one another in order to improve their own position in relation to the available resources and their own long-term interests.

### 8.2.2. Labour mobility

Informality is often seen as being one othe defining characteristic of the ASM sector (Siegel & Veiga, 2009), which also inherently means there is a lack of employment regulations and labour rights (Verbrugge, 2015). This lack of rights means that informality can often lead to the exploitation of the labour force, but it has also been argued that formalisation only benefits the elite entrepreneurs within the sector and not the general poverty-driven workforce (Verbrugge, 2015). Thus, while the benefits seem obvious, many *obreros* and temporary miners have little interest in formalisation, not least because of the restrictions it may place on their mobility. As discussed in chapter 6, there are economic benefits for the temporary/floating miners in remaining mobile, because it enables them to move to areas with more gold and claim a higher price for their labour. Remaining mobile also enables them to avoid government crackdowns. However, their high mobility can cause problems for permanent miners. A representative from the women’s centre noted that population fluidity in Laberinto, a key characteristic of life in translocal mining towns, meant that workers may only be around for three months at a time and it was never definite if and when they would return. The transience of the *obreros* in particular can cause problems for permanent miners’ revenue, as it decreases the reliability of labour, as was explained by Gustavo:

*‘The problem is these people often don’t tell the miner when they are going to leave the mine. In Fortuna there are no bars or canteens, if they want to drink alcohol, they have to go to Laberinto. Its 20 minutes away. If they go to Laberinto and get drunk they are not going to work the next day, which means a loss for us*’ (Gustavo, ASM miner, Fortuna mine near Laberinto).

Although the permanent miners benefit from the *obreros’* lack of labour rights, this goes hand-in-hand with the *obrero*s’ high level of mobility. Thus, maximising income becomes a balance between the maintaining flexible working arrangements and not losing revenue through an unreliable workforce. However, it is not just the *obreros* whose highly-translocal livelihood benefits from their mobility. Even *duenos* can be mobile with their equipment if they do not have to remain fixed to one concession. Rodrigo is not a *concessionario* so currently he is free to work wherever he wants, and as he is only a temporary miner he is not invested in Laberinto:

‘*I work in different places. I am looking for another place at the moment. Sometimes I might only find 1-2grams of gold a day, and that is not enough. I have my workers, two of them, and…we sleep in a compartmento away from the town. We have a kitchen and other things there. We built it, but it is only temporary, and made with things we found in the jungle*’ (Rodrigo, ASM miner, near Laberinto).

As many of the *obreros* in Laberinto are unable to earn a lot, partly due to the inability to own land or purchase their own motor, La Pampa becomes a more attractive option. There is therefore high mobility between La Pampa, Laberinto, and the numerous other mining sites in the region, which is a key feature of the translocal ASM community.

‘*There is a working link between Laberinto and La Pampa, some people here go there because they don’t have money. You can earn more money there. We don’t blame those guys, it’s fine if La Pampa guys work there, because they need money and everyone needs to make a livelihood but it should be controlled*’ (Diego, ASM miner).

In the above quote, Diego mentions the link that is formed between the localities. These interconnections make it difficult for those in Laberinto to disassociate themselves from the social and environmental problems in La Pampa. For those miners committed to formalisation to secure their long-term economic prospects, the continuing crime and violence in La Pampa provides a source of tension as it hinders progress and makes formalisation more complicated. Thus, the high mobility that is a feature of some miners’ translocal livelihoods creates insecurity for the more permanent, rooted miners, highlighting again how the contestations within the field of ASM have both a spatial and temporal nature.

### 8.2.3. Environmental sustainability

ASM and the related migration to Madre de Dios is unequivocally resulting in accelerated destruction of the Amazon (CINCIA, 2018), although in many ways this destruction fits into the region’s history (Damonte, 2016; Salo et al., 2016). As one NGO respondent noted, ‘*this kind of migration to extract resources has been happening for years. This has shaped the history of migration; people coming here to destroy everything*’ (NGO representative, Puerto Maldonado). While environmental destruction is occurring in Laberinto, particularly through contamination of waterways, the scale of the problem is far worse in La Pampa. La Pampa not only lies within the buffer zone of the protected Tambopata National Park, which is an area of extreme biodiversity and home to indigenous tribes, but the mining activity there is inherently more destructive. Whereas in Laberinto the gold deposits are in the rivers, allowing the miners to extract the minerals without cutting down any trees, in La Pampa the gold deposits follow the path of a dried up river bed and land must be excavated to get to it. The mining activity is therefore heavily associated with deforestation that is clearly visible from the air – ‘*When the Government fly over they can see the destruction as they can see the big holes’* (Alejandro, ASM miner, Laberinto). Furthermore, its location in a place that has been ascribed environmental meaning at a global level means that it attracts condemnation far beyond national borders.

While it is the informal nature of ASM that is often thought to be the cause of the sector’s environmental destruction (Hilson, 2013), one NGO representative specifically attributed it to the fact that miners in La Pampa are not invested in the area. They therefore have little reason to care about environmental sustainability within host communities. Conversely, local people in Ocongate were worried that the discovery of gold nearby would lead to a similar level of environment destruction in their own locality, despite the fact that many of them carry out ASM activity in Madre de Dios with little concern. Interviews in La Pampa also suggested that it is the translocality of ASM livelihoods that contributes to the miners’ apparent lack of concern about the environment, rather than simply the sector’s informal nature. One permanent miner explained how her local association have been involved with an NGO to work on reforestation of certain concessions using new techniques. Meanwhile, many of the permanent miners in Laberinto were growing plants and vegetables in their gardens, which one ex-miner claimed was evidence that they cared about environmental sustainability. This perhaps reflects a desire amongst permanent residents for a sustainable livelihood and a growing understanding of the importance of conservation. This was also supported by a couple of NGO representatives, as they acknowledged that miners in Laberinto were more conscious about environmental issues than those in La Pampa.

The increasing numbers of miners who operate their livelihoods on a more translocal basis seem to have less interest in securing their environment long term. A few of the miners explained the problem of new miners arriving and cutting down trees or polluting the water, highlighting their own awareness of the environmental problems associated with ASM:

‘*The miners are like gypsy...Where these guys came there were no trees after. I have never seen one person in 20-30 years ever planting one thing at all*’ (Mario, ASM miner, Boca Union).

Such opinions suggest that environmental degradation arises because transient migrants do not plan to live in the area long-term and therefore have less desire to protect common-pool resources. This also reflects Bourdieu’s ideas about contestation, as those holding different positions within the social field will attempt to gain access to available resources in ways that further their own self-interest. Interestingly, the permanent miners are also likely to be the ones to own a concession, suggesting their relatively elevated position within the social hierarchy of the field. As they have access to this resource, it is in their interest to protect it. The temporary and floating miners often do not own concessions, and they must maximise their resources through any means possible, even if it leads to greater environmental destructions.

A further issue is that in the context of a translocal community, the social relationships that may modify behaviour in line with social norms are weakened, as people feel less connection to those around them. For example, Justiniano explained that the association of miners in Laberinto had signed laws in the past trying to protect the environment, especially with regard to mercury contamination, but that some of the more temporary and transient miners didn’t respect those laws. Justiniano thought that a key problem was that FEDAMIN were not strong enough to ensure that everyone abides by the rules, because the leaders were too busy working to go after any miners that broke the laws. Thus, due to the temporal and spatial dynamics of translocal livelihoods, not only do temporary miners care less about the environment in host communities but they also are less bound by the local social norms that may mediate their behaviour. This clearly has implications for community dynamics and creates sources of tension and contestation within mining settlements. For example, the destruction from ASM attracts national and international condemnation towards the whole of Madre de Dios. The miners in Laberinto blame La Pampa for the current political situation and the stability it causes to their livelihood – *‘If La Pampa hadn’t existed we would be fine. We’re not destroying the environment, they are, because they don’t care what they put in the water*’ (Diego, ASM miner). This will be explored in greater detail in chapter 9.

There are clear antagonisms between the miners in Laberinto and the Government, which may affect the desire of the miners to protect the environment. Some miners in Laberinto seemed to want to pass the buck, saying the onus was on the Government to stop environmental degradation, which is interesting given their opposition to any form of intervention that may stop their mining activity. It is however true that while there is a risk of the state forces blowing up or confiscating machines, miners remain unwilling to invest in expensive greener technology, although several expressed an interest otherwise. It is however difficult to assess the extent to which they are serious about such endeavours. Other miners such as Francisco admit that they are polluting, but that it is what they have to do in order to mine. This is especially true in relation to protecting the rivers, as the Government want to prevent them transporting oil on the rivers or working in them. Nearly all the miners discussed this problem, but they all had differing opinions on how much of a legitimate concern this is and if there is any way the miners could continue with their livelihood whilst adhering to the rules.

There is also a lot of scepticism about the environmental impact of mining, but this comes particularly from the permanent miners. The temporary miners seemed much more open to admitting that yes, ASM was damaging to the environment and of course the Government would try to stop them doing it. The scepticism on the part of the permanent miners ranges from assertions that other countries and big mining and petroleum countries contaminate far more than ASM (Miriam), Meanwhile, three respondents doubted that mercury was even dangerous, as reflected in the quotes below from Gustavo and Mateo:

*‘I am 71, since I was a young man I’ve had so much contact with mercury. Sometimes I’ve even drunk mercury, because people told me it would be good to help me forget about my problems. It just tastes like Chicha’* (Gustavo, ASM miner, Laberinto).

*‘The Government exaggerates the environmental destruction…It’s natural to have mercury in the fish etc*’ (Mateo, Engineer, Puerto Maldonado).

It is impossible to analyse the systems of belief that underpin these statements, or why it is that the permanent residents seem so worried about the future of their locality but not its environmental sustainability. On one hand, the permanent residents’ identities may be so bound up with mining that they are in denial about its relative consequences. Shammus and Sandberg (2016) have argued that existence within a social field can lead to transformative effects on an individual’s habitus and these narratives may become part of the miners’ field-bounded existence. On the other hand, the miners may be making such claims despite knowing them to be false, perhaps in a bid to de-demonise the sector. While it is impossible to verify this, it is still interesting to see the ways in which the permanent miners develop narratives about the environment that support their cause. Similar discourses around sustainability that seek to contrast their own ASM activity with that of large-scale mining have been observed amongst small-scale miners in Colombia when trying to formalise their industry through marches, lobbying, and political engagements (Tubb, 2015). I will elaborate on this further in Chapter 9, where I reflect on how these narratives and discourses are shaped by a collective identity that is linked to a sense of injustice at the criminalisation of ASM and a perceived threat to place and livelihood.

### 8.2.4. Social networks and trust

As described in chapter 4, Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) saw an individual’s social capital as being a key element of one’s position within the social field. The translocal nature of mining communities means that migrants have to forge new relationships with people they do not know. The fastest way to do this is through a shared working environment, due to the close proximity of one’s work colleagues and the physical and sometimes dangerous nature of the work. Several of the respondents in Laberinto talked about the ease with which they had made friends, discussing how their work gave them something in common –‘*Most of them are really fun and they talk a lot and we get on well*’ (Mario, ASM miner, Laberinto). The miners draw on these relationships to find new working opportunities or increase their income in other ways, as described in this quote from Christian:

‘*Sometimes when I leave the work to go to be with my family, for one month or even longer, I can give the work to my friends, and they do my work for me – in a “coupo”. This allows me to earn more money. One example is that my friend had to leave the mining area and he gave us some land to work on while he was away. Sometimes also there are accidents, and they supported me with some money’* (Christian, ASM operative, near Laberinto).

However, the translocality of some ASM livelihoods and the associated high levels of migration are resulting in relatively weak relationships between the temporary and floating miners. This makes it increasingly difficult for them to trust each other, which is problematic given Bryceson and Jønsson’s (2010) assertion that miners have to be capable of trust and cooperation, as well as hard work and sobriety, if they are to make a success of artisanal gold mining. Even when working within the *Corridor Minero*, the weakening of relationships and unfamiliarity means that it is becoming difficult to know if other people are thieves or not, let alone if they are able to work hard. Rodrigo has been working in Madre de Dios for some years, but as his translocal livelihood means that he moves around a lot and sleeps in a camp, he has not developed good support networks with other miners. As a result, he said that he felt he could only rely on his family:

*‘It’s difficult at first to make friends because you are changing the place, your friends, and to make friends is difficult because you don’t have the same trust in the new people. Also, there is so much crime here, and there is so much insecurity, it is hard to know whom to trust. Things are not reliable for us, and I don’t trust people’* (Rodrigo, ASM miner, near Laberinto).

Now that Rodrigo has his own motor and small mining business, he is struggling to hire people he can trust. He explained how he has resorted to testing people by leaving money lying around to see if they steal it. Rodrigo’s desire to remain mobile rather than being based in Laberinto means that he tends to come into contact with other highly mobile, temporary and floating miners, which has prevented him from developing strong social relationships. Several other miners also complained that the increasing crime and violence was making it more difficult for mine owners to trust new people enough to give them jobs.

In La Pampa there are particularly high levels of crime and violence, linked to high in-migration and the total illegality of mining activity. This is destroying forms of social organisation such as trust, norms and networks (de Andrade Filho, 2008). Jønsson and Bryceson (2009) highlighted the importance of social networks for finding work, but we see these processes being undermined in La Pampa by the translocality of the population, making it difficult to find work:

‘*It was easy for them (new miners) at the beginning (to integrate) because every mine needed people. Now it’s a bit difficult because it’s dangerous and already if people are successful and familiar and know each other they can get jobs. But if they don’t know you at all they might not hire you because they think something can happen, as everyone is scared*’ (Carlos, ex-miner, Puerto Maldonado).

There is also evidence to suggest that due to the highly transient nature of life in La Pampa, work relationships are more superficial and feelings of alienation higher. Two of the miners explained that all the workers are called by nicknames and because they do not always work with the same people, they are unable to form close connections. As the miners are all migrants, the bosses have no obligation to keep them there, particularly if they do not work hard enough *–‘when somebody dies they don’t know who he is*’ (Francisco, ASM miner, Laberinto). Jorge, a young miner who had recently moved back to Laberinto, went on to elaborate on what this meant for a miner living and working in La Pampa.

‘*You wouldn’t consider La Pampa your home even if you live there, it’s not your home. You don’t know the people and everybody lies. In La Pampa we use nicknames and not give our real names. For example, my nickname in La Pampa was Joseph, because it’s so dangerous. We didn’t have close relationships with each other. Someone might need a worker and ask you to work for them, and you go because you need the money, but they don’t care about you. If you die, you die. If the work is too hard, it’s your problem, if your unhappy with the job it’s your problem, if you have an accident it’s your problem. It’s not like here’* (Jorge, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Jorge’s account is particularly interesting because the use of nicknames in mining teams in Benin has been interpreted as highlighting the close bonds that form between miners (Grätz, 2004b). The problem of weak social relationships reinforces the importance of the temporal and spatial aspects of translocal ASM livelihoods and the implications for agents operating within the social field.

Although the illegality of ASM in La Pampa does breed crime and violence, the problem has escalated with the increasing numbers of migrants. Carlos had worked in the area for a few years and noted the changes over time:

‘*At the beginning, when I was there, there was a lot of unity. If you have a problem, I will go and help you in the mine because you need hands to work. If someone attacks you, I will respond. But now it is different because there are a lot of thieve*s’ (Carlos, ex-miner, Laberinto).

Carlos’ quote highlights how the fragile relationships that had been forged within the translocal community had been broken through increasing insecurity. This had ultimately undermined the ability of local people to work together to defend themselves. A few of the miners who had worked for some time in La Pampa and also gave accounts of local justice, where the community took physical revenge on perpetrators of crimes. However, this was not reported to occur in Laberinto, which has lower crime rates and the necessary local institutions and a more developed culture of norms and sense of community.

### 8.2.5. Social exclusion/inclusion

As ASM is reliant on finite resources, gold-rush towns often end up in economic decline (Galeano, 1971; Walsh, 2012, 2015). However, the analysis thus far points to a desire among permanent miners to build both a sustainable livelihood and an enduring sense of community. While the above section examined the weakening of social and professional relationships, particularly amongst the transient miners in La Pampa, the permanent residents of Laberinto had a different experience. Eight of the permanent residents described high-levels of social cohesion, with the town’s residents knowing each other well and providing support to each other, either at work or within the home. A few of the respondents went as far as to say they were ‘like a family’. Yet these assertions did not extend to the entire population of Laberinto and most notably did not include the majority of temporary and floating residents of the town. Instead, some element of hostility was detectable, such as in the quote from Francisco below where he discusses the changes that had occurred since he arrived in 1976:

‘*There are some people that want the foreigners to return home, but at first when I moved here it wasn’t the same… When we first moved here we were all together, but now there are communities and some people don’t want more foreigners’* (Francisco, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Here Francisco is referring to the new temporary and floating migrants who have chosen to incorporate ASM into a translocal livelihood strategy as a response to the increased price of gold. His use of the word *foreigner* is particularly insightful given that he is himself a migrant. Indeed, none of the interview respondents in Laberinto were indigenous and even the very few who had been born in the town had migrant parents. For Francisco, the *foreigners* are the recent migrants that have not assimilated into the community and continue to follow a translocal livelihood trajectory rather than ‘rooting’ themselves in Laberinto. Similarly, Willan distinguishes between *foreigners* and the more close-knit residents of Laberinto:

*‘Everyone here is equal, like a family, we talk the same to the workers and the concessionarios. But not for the foreigners, people that are new in the town, no. But if you live here, you’re like friends and we have animal nicknames for each other’* (Willan, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Again, like Francisco, Willan sees those who do not reside permanently in Laberinto as outsiders. He specifically refers to people that live permanently in the town as being like family. In doing so he highlights the gap between them and those members of the translocal community who constantly move between mining sites or are primarily rooted in origin communities.

At first glance, it may appear that the permanent residents of Laberinto are attempting to exclude newcomers from their ‘place’, which effectively comprises the fixed core to their translocal community. However, there is evidence that suggests otherwise. For example, Roberto said that ‘*everybody is welcome in Laberinto*’, and explained that migrants were encouraged to come to the town to work as they didn’t need a job certificate or an ID card to find a job. Similarly, Alejandro claimed that it was easy for the newcomers to integrate as the people of Laberinto were welcoming and were generally *‘really good people*’. One LGA representative in Laberinto even explained that the municipality had held some campaigns to promote and encourage people to live in the town and ‘have their identity’ there. One campaign involved the transfer of land to 150 families for free so that they can build a house – ‘*Hopefully now our population has increased, I think now it is around 5,000*’ (LGA representative, Laberinto). In fact, encouraging migrants to the area long-term is important for the development of Laberinto, because the temporariness of the majority of residents means that many are registered in other districts and thus the official population remains small. One LGA representative estimated that although the population was around 20,000, only 2,400 were registered and voting there. This means that the interests of people living in Madre de Dios are unrepresented in the National Government and that Laberinto is not allocated sufficient budgets, meaning there are poor public services. The permanent residents of Laberinto would therefore stand to gain from an increase in the *official* population.

Perhaps rather than be socially excluded from involvement in the Laberinto community, the more transient miners are choosing to self-exclude. Due to the desire of temporary/floating miners to remain mobile and their lack of interest in building long-term relationships in mining towns, their livelihood trajectories diverge from those of the permanent miners. The translocal nature of their livelihoods, both in terms of time and space, means that many miners and *obreros* remain transient. As they are only in Laberinto for short periods, they therefore only need to build work connections. Seasonal migrants in particular are likely to see mining as a job and not a lifestyle choice, whereas in Laberinto everything revolves around mining, even for those people who are not actually miners. The lack of rootedness within the new community, possibly due to migrants keeping an active reorientation towards home, means that temporary/floating migrants do not become embedded to the same extent (Faist, 2000; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004) and the meanings they ascribe to Laberinto will be different (Brickell & Datta, 2011). This seems to result in them keeping themselves at a distance, to the detriment of other community members. This is particularly important in the context of insecurity due to on-going conflict with the Government, which necessitates some form of collective action to secure long-term economic security in the face of mounting pressures.

It is clear then that the spatial and temporal elements of translocality that prevent some miners from rooting themselves within the locality creates tensions amongst the residents. Willbert and Alejandro both explained this problem in some detail:

‘*There are two types of migrants. Those responsible migrants who come with their own culture, but that respect this new local culture that we have here. They come and they socialise and they integrate with the people here, and they treat the other community members and miners as equals and like them. But there are irresponsible migrants, that come here and they don’t want to contribute to the society. They do not want to respect the social rules here, for example, there are people that come here but they don’t want to be part of the town, or take responsibilities, they don’t want to vote here or chose authorities, and they don’t want to participate in the town authorities. They just see that they are working here and nothing else*’ (Willbert, ASM miner, Laberinto).

*‘They just come here to use the resources, and they have no real interest in this land long-term. With the money they earn they will rent a room here, but they will invest the money in buying a 4-story house in the sierra or wherever they’re from*’ (Alejandro, ASM miner, Laberinto).

From the above quotes, it becomes apparent that many temporary migrants are not interested in deepening their social relationships, or even in developing an economic link with the town. Another miner explained that this problem was visually observable in the way that the temporary miners chose to live whilst in the local area, as rather than living in a house in a nearby settlement, they often just build a shelter out of four sticks with plastic around it – ‘*That is no way to live, but they don’t care because they’re just here to make money. Unless we change their mentality, change isn’t possible*’ (Mario, ASM miner, Boca Union).

This notion that translocality may lead miners to self-exclude highlights another dimension to a phenomenon identified by Fisher (2007), who showed that while highly-mobile miners in particular may find themselves excluded from wider society, they may also actively exclude themselves in the hope of transgressing boundaries and acquiring wealth through illicit trade. Thus, it is also the norms in the mining community as well as those of the wider, dominant society that the miners wish to exclude from, as has already been highlighted above in reference to local rules regarding protecting the environment. This idea was touched on to some extent by Walsh (2003, 2012), who showed that newly-arrived young miners in a Madagascan sapphire mining town deliberately ignored traditional authority and social norms and remained aloof from local institutions and hierarchical relationships in order to remain flexible and maximise income, leading to animosity within the community. This is very similar to the behaviour of temporary and floating miners in Madre de Dios. In fact the desire to self-exclude from the norms of Laberinto may be one of the reasons that miners are drawn to work in La Pampa, which lacks the social institutions that have developed elsewhere.

### 8.2.6. Community life and social relationships

High levels of migration and weakening social relationships obviously have implications for the local community. Given the tendency for ASM operatives to socialise in bars and bond through consuming alcohol (Grätz, 2004a; Walsh, 2003), it is not surprising that there are an increasing number of bars and clubs that attract miners from the camps in the evenings and at weekends. La Pampa has severe problems with prostitution and human trafficking. The residents of Laberinto fear this emerging in their own town. Currently, the prostitution in Laberinto is not as bad as La Pampa, with one resident claiming this was because it was ‘*a very small place and we know each other very well…in a place where everyone knows each other it is difficult to have these kind of things*’ (Jorge, ASM miner, Laberinto). As chapter 7 showed though, prostitution is a growing concern in Laberinto. In Boca Union too there are now a couple of bars and a brothel, whereas before there were none – ‘*We didn’t have this before, and you wouldn’t have imagined it could exist here*’ (Mario, ASM miner, Boca Union). The residents blamed these changes on the growth of La Pampa and its spillover effects.

As well as changes in the forms of entertainment available in Laberinto, migration also leads to changes in community activities and other social relationships and a couple of the miners noted some benefits. Benito and Justiniano both said that migration brought people with new ideas who could potentially improve the town based on their experiences in places such as Cusco and Lima. Furthermore, despite the translocal nature of the town, there are clear examples of social institutions that have been pervasive in the face of high in-migration and population fluidity. For example, Laberinto has local assemblies that often provide updates on mining activities and changes to laws or government regulations. The local residents have also become organised and engaged with the Government to build a new school and other community facilities. There is growing evidence of community protection, or in some cases mob justice, appearing in the face of crime and violence. One ex-miner (Mateo) explained that the increasing violence in some mining towns was leading to the establishment of small community-based security organisations. Although there was no discussion of this in Laberinto, which is relatively safe and has a local police station, such organisations were reported in other mining settlements within the *Corridor Minero* and in La Pampa.

Interestingly, community protection does not only cover criminals and violent gangs. The residents of the mining towns within the *Corridor Minero* feel that government agencies and NGOs pose a threat to their livelihoods, community and even their identity:

‘*People here we protect each other from the new people that we think might be someone from the government or NGOs. It’s not only the miners, but also hotels or restaurants and also the transport guys. They offer protection because they know that everyone works together, and if the miners here have a problem, then they will also have a problem…The people here don’t want contact with foreign people who are dangerous or who might have other purposes*’ (Mario, ASM miner, Boca Union).

This quote perfectly highlights how for many permanent residents, the *foreigners* who threaten their community can be government and NGO representatives, just as much as unknown migrant miners. NGOs that are concerned primarily with conservation of the Amazon and/or the protection of indigenous communities are perceived as being particularly hostile towards ASM, which as will be shown in chapter 9, is not an inaccurate perception.

Yet, while the miners and residents of Laberinto and other mining communities come together in various ways, some of the permanent members emphasised how the newcomers’ lack of integration was impeding the development of a strong community culture. One said that Laberinto did not have an integrated community because it was not a culture based on traditions, thus could not foster the development of shared values and respect. He went on say that when the migrants leave the town they leave nothing, so Laberinto is ‘culturally poor’, consisting only of money. Several other miners and NGO respondents also talked about how the temporary, transient miners didn’t leave anything behind:

*‘Where I work there are people from all areas of Peru – all over the country, not just the Andes. They do some work and then they return to their towns. They don’t leave anything to the area, or invest anything here*’ (Christian, ASM miner, Laberinto).

*‘The population growth is a problem. People are from different places and we do not know each other. There is no strong community culture’ (*Women’s Centre representative, Puerto Maldonado).

Such quotes directly show that the translocality of the Laberinto ASM community that means many migrants have no intention of investing, either socially or economically, can have an impact on the culture of community that is able to develop. It is also similar to findings by Walsh (2003) from Madagascar, which showed that local investment of mining money contributed towards enduring, locality-based moral orders, but that the potential for this was compromised when spent on frivolous consumables or sent to distant locales as remittances. This is problematic for permanent miners, who want to develop social institutions and an enduring sense of community within Laberinto. In particular, temporary miners are less inclined to participate in collective action against changes in Government policy, which undermines local resistance efforts:

*‘That’s why the Government can do what it wants here because the community are not together enough and they can’t act collectively. In Cusco there are activists and politicians, but here there is nothing*’ (Willbert, ASM miner).

In this quote, Willbert directly links Laberinto’s lack of social cohesion and community values, which have resulted from the translocality of the inhabitants’ livelihoods, to its inability to find a solution to the problems with the Government. For their part, during interviews the temporary/floating miners generally did not mention the increased crime rates, the problems associated with in-migration or the conflict with the Government, illustrating that these social problems are not a major concern for them. This again reflects the fact that these migrants have maintained an orientation towards home, rather than becoming emotionally invested in their host locality.

## 8.3. Crime, violence and the insecurity of translocal ASM livelihoods

So far, this chapter has attempted to highlight the tensions that arise within the social field of ASM as a result of the competing interests of actors who are attempting to improve their own position. While the contestations described above do not necessarily involve physical violence, it is certainly possible for contestations between actors to manifest themselves in this way. This has been shown in prior work on street gangs, for example (Sandberg, 2008). The field is ruled by its own internal logic meaning that external norms that view illegal mining as criminal have little influence, yet within the field there are other norms that may be broken by some actors in an attempt to improve their own position. As Sammus and Sandberg (2016) noted in reference to those partaking in violent gangs as an aspect of street culture, not everyone within the field is predisposed to engage in such activity, but there are certain rewards and penalties available to those who are. As noted in chapter 4, academics have already pointed to the ability of groups of miners to use their marginality to their advantage, by going against social norms to accrue power and wealth (De Boeck, 1998; Fisher, 2007). What is clear here is that these may sometimes be the norms of the social field rather than those external to it and include conducting mining activity outside of the mining corridor or, on a more extreme scale, engaging in theft, human trafficking and/or acts of violence that may threaten other agents within the field.

Unfortunately, many of the respondents discussed how these problems were increasing, noting that Madre de Dios often attracts migrants who are hiding from the law:

*‘There’s a bad thing of migration. The people in different parts of Peru who have legal problems; maybe because they robbed someone or killed someone, they come here. So there are lots of these “refugees” here, not just in Laberinto but in Madre de Dios in general*’ (Bernardo, ASM miner).

In Ocongate the majority of the miners go to work in La Pampa, in informal settlements that experience far higher levels of crime and violence than Laberinto. This is at least in part to the illegal nature of the area, as all mining activities are banned and people are not supposed to live there. However, due to the location of the settlements, they attract criminals from different parts of Peru – ‘*Who can find you there? That’s why the criminality started growing because people were fleeing from prisons and jails’* (Carlos, ex-miner). The ex-miner went on to say that although these people may have initially started doing mining work, when the Government started its airstrikes and interdictions, there were fewer jobs available and so they turned to crime to earn money.

The miners gave numerous examples of how increasing insecurity was affecting ASM livelihoods. Paola’s husband Eduardo talked at length about how people were robbed on a daily basis and they were afraid to go out at night – *‘The boss doesn’t take care of us after the work finishes. We need to be careful because we are alone. We have to take care of where to walk’* (Eduardo, La Pampa). A few others mentioned the danger of walking around at night, with one explaining that in the evening, armed thieves come out of the jungle, claimed the road for themselves and robbed anyone they found outside. As a result of the high insecurity, miners in La Pampa have resorted to hiring their own private paramilitary security guards, also known as *rambos* to protect themselves. However, these *rambos* are illegal and were said by respondents to have ‘no respect for anything’, and certainly not the norms of the social field and therefore pose a danger. One miner said they would often confuse the miners with thieves and shoot them ‘by accident’. Others pointed out that the *rambos* had quickly become involved in rent-seeking, extorting protection money from the miners. On at least one occasion they had killed some police who were trying to do the same thing, as they felt they were interfering with their business. The insecurity of life and livelihoods in La Pampa has resulted in some moving back to work within the *Corridor Minero*. Two of the younger respondents said they had returned to mine in Laberinto because La Pampa was simply too dangerous.

The threat to ASM livelihoods is well illustrated by the case of Azucena, who had been mining with her husband in the area that is now La Pampa since the 1970’s. Their small miner association had been trying to secure mining rights from the Government for many years, but in late 2017, she was chased from her land by ‘invaders’ who had threatened to kill her. Despite these problems, Azucena continues to see the area as her home, and has little interest in moving elsewhere:

*‘We constantly go to check the camp, with no gold in our pocket so we can’t be robbed. We just go to try and make a presence there. I hope things will improve soon and then we will go back*’ (Azucena, ASM miner, La Pampa).

Azucena’s situation is very similar to that of the small mining associations described by Damonte (2016) that work in the same area, who have not only failed to gain government recognition but now have to cope with the invasion of more recent miners. These small associations have engaged with the Government through formal channels, yet now face high levels of insecurity due to the Government’s failure to stop miners and criminals operating within the buffer zone.

Rosaria and Carlos, who had both worked in KM108 since 2009, shared similar violent experiences. The hotel they were running often got robbed and they were frequently threatened by people with guns. Eventually, when the violence became too much, they decided to move to Puerto Maldonado. Rosaria said that many other people had also left, leaving criminals running many of the businesses.

‘*The things I know from people that are in La Pampa, most of them have left now. They said it was too insecure. They left, and all the obreros, the miners and the business people, they all left because the insecurity was crazy. Now the people in La Pampa are new, and they are from the VRAEM*[[7]](#footnote-7)*. They are criminals. My cousin has a hotel there, but there is such a problem because each day there are some people who are dead*’ (Rosaria, ex-resident of La Pampa).

Rosaria went onto say that although some of the local business owners still torture or executed some of the criminals, this gave her little comfort – *‘I didn’t like this kind of life, so I decided to leave’* (Rosaria). The high insecurity is even now affecting the residents’ ability to implement community justice, as one miner said that if they organise into groups they become a target for the criminal gangs.

Although the worst of the violence exists in informal settlements outside of the *Corridor Minero*, it is also occurring in areas within it. In the small mining settlement of Boca Union for example, about six months prior to fieldwork, 18 people on motorbikes had arrived and robbed all the shops and businesses. During interview one female miner in Laberinto said the same thing had happened in Boca Colarado just the day before. There are also a lot of car-jackings and muggings on the road between Laberinto and Boca Union, making it too dangerous to travel by car. The majority of the respondents said that Laberinto itself remained relatively quiet, but some added that it was not as safe as it used to be, which restricted their movement to some areas. Furthermore, some expected the situation to worsen as the Government clamped down on mining in La Pampa –‘*They will come here soon*’ (David, ASM miner).

‘*In Lima I was scared just walking around. Here I felt safe and calm, as it was so quiet here. I liked it because even if you got so drunk you fell asleep in the street with money in your pocket, no one would steal it from you. That was before the creation of this road that goes from Puerto to Cusco, the TransOceanica. There were few people before the road, and it was easy to integrate. But since the road was created everything has changed, and it’s not all good*’ (Roberto, ex-miner, Laberinto).

Here, Roberto links the creations of the Transoceanic Highway, which is a big factor in enabling translocal ASM livelihoods, to both an influx of migrants and increasing insecurity. In total, nine of the respondents in Laberinto explicitly linked the increasing insecurity to the presence of migrants, highlighting another source of tension that develops between temporary/floating miners and the permanent residents. There is also evidence that these problems are making locals more wary of the more transient miners who they don’t know and haven’t had time to form proper bonds with – as discussed in the previous section, it is increasingly important for the miners and other community members to establish trust:

‘*There is a floating population which causes some problems, when the community members see new faces they are distrustful – they think “what is he doing here?” they think he is a criminal. They also might think they are going to commit sexual assault or rape. People are really afraid of that sort of insecurity from the floating populations*’ (Mateo, ex-miner, Puerto Maldonado).

Here, Mateo’s quote clearly highlights both the underlying insecurity caused by a highly transient population but also the negative way in which local people respond to it. While this is an extreme view, which was not articulated by every permanent resident of Laberinto, it shows the distrust that forms within a community when there are high numbers of outsiders who do not take the time to get to acquaint themselves with their neighbours.

It seems that high levels of mobility contribute to a cycle of illegality and violence that undermines both ASM livelihoods and community cohesion. However, levels of crime and violence are far worse in some locales within the translocal ASM community than others, with La Pampa being far more dangerous than formal settlements such as Laberinto. This is partly due to its highly transient nature, but also because of its illegal status as this attracts people conducting their livelihoods more translocally as well as criminals. Another miner in Laberinto suggested that perhaps the miners that chose to work in La Pampa did so because they liked the risk. This does seem to corroborate the findings of Walsh (2003) etc who have highlighted the excessive consumption and fast pace of life for young miners in these informal mining settlements. As with observations about street gangs (Sandberg and Sveinung, 2008; Sammus and Sveinung, 2016), there is a certain social capital that can be acquired if the miner is prepared to engage in the field in this way. Interestingly, Eduardo blamed the violence on high levels of new migrants, despite being a relatively recent migrant to La Pampa himself who would most likely be classed as an ‘invader’ by many of the permanent miners I interviewed. This highlights how the narratives of crime and illegality aimed at even just those miners in La Pampa masks the heterogeneity of miners and the realities of their livelihood.

## 8.4. Translocal communities and resistance against government interdictions

Although some agents within the field of ASM may be more powerful than others, the majority remain marginalised and are at the bottom echelons of mainstream society. The corrupt elite notwithstanding, ASM operatives are, like the members of street gangs, ‘at best a dominant faction among the dominated, far removed from the field of power’ (Shammus & Sandberg, 2016, p.10). Despite this, as I elaborate on further in chapter 9, the social field is still constituted by a struggle for legitimate power. The most obvious contestation is not between the miners within the translocal community, but against the dominant power of the state. Due to the high levels of environmental degradation and social problems associated with ASM, the Government is attempting to reduce the number of people working in the sector, which is a big threat to ASM livelihoods. Rather than trying to reduce ASM by investing in impoverished Andean communities, providing alternative livelihood options, or successfully implementing a formalisation process, the Government has adopted a more antagonistic approach. This consists of, on the one hand, increasingly complicated bureaucratic processes which make it difficult for miners to formalise, while on the other, violent interdictions that often involve airstrikes and the blowing up of machines (Salo et al., 2016). The result has been to effectively criminalise all of the miners in Madre de Dios.

As we have seen in the previous sections, the miners in Laberinto tend to blame the more recent migrants, particularly those that are more transient and/or based in La Pampa, for the government crackdowns. Problems have arisen because the miners feel persecuted by the Government, who they believe are unfairly characterising them as illegal miners. As the miners working inside the mining corridor do not see themselves as being illegal, they do not understand why the Government is treating them the same as those who mine outside of the mining corridor. This has created a scenario where the miners felt compelled to come together and fight for their rights and interests. This has been in the form of protests, which have frequently turned violent, but has also involved campaigning for candidates in the municipality and regional elections that they believed would protect their interests (the candidates were either miners or ex-miners):

*‘If…we get more oppression, we will march in the street without clothes to protest, as we are desperate. We are going to protest and the protest is going to be without clothes and that’s the only thing we can do. We don’t want any more laws’* (Benito, ASM Miner, Laberinto).

It was not clear why Benito thought that a naked protest would be effective at convincing the Government to allow them to continue their mining activities, but his comments do highlight the commitment that the permanent residents have to their cause. Meanwhile, the temporary/floating miners have less interest in fighting the Government to protect permanent interests. Thus, it seems that the translocality of ASM livelihoods and the resulting transience of many Laberinto residents undermines collective acts of resistance against the state, which has not gone unnoticed by the town’s permanent residents:

*‘I get angry when the new people don’t help when we are fighting for something important. When we organise to do something against the government the other people don’t help. These foreign people that come here, they are here in the good moments but they are not here in the bad moments. That makes me really angry, because I am young and I know they can do better than this*’ (Andres, ASM miner, Laberinto).

*‘People don’t have the community spirit. They don’t care about the community, they care about themselves, so they are just protecting their own jobs. And that’s the problem*’ (Alejandro, ASM miner, Laberinto).

*‘There are also a lot of people that don’t stay, they only come for those jobs and then they return to their homes. That’s a problem, because when we want to protest to the government, those people who are not from here and don’t have ID here and don’t care about the town, they don’t participate or contribute. When we complain to the Government, they disappear. When everything is fine, they appear*’ (Roberto, ex-miner, Laberinto).

These quotes highlight an important point about translocality, as while all three are permanent residents of Laberinto, Roberto is a mechanic and is therefore not directly employed in ASM. For him, the distinction between who supports community action and who does not seems to be between temporary and permanent residents, rather than miner and non-miner:

*‘When there are these problems with the Government, the people that don’t have families or land here, they don’t support us. Only the people who have settled here fight against the Government*’ (Roberto, ex-miner, Laberinto).

Roberto’s quote highlights how those people with livelihoods that are rooted in Laberinto are far more likely to engage politically than those following a more translocal mining livelihood, even though the Government clampdowns specifically target ASM. This is due to the fact that the economic security of non-mining livelihoods is still very dependent on the existence of ASM, but also because of the threat the policy changes pose to everyday life in Laberinto. This is a clear distinction to observations by Werthmann (2010), who highlighted a tendency for people in mining camps to differentiate themselves into socio-professional groupings.

There are plenty of examples of non-miners becoming involved in the political situation with the Government. For example, non-mining community members worked with miners to negotiate with police against the bribes they were demanding to allow transportation of oil on the rivers. Here the desire for a sustainable livelihood enabled a common goal to emerge amongst the people who used the port. Two women, both of whom were married to permanent miners, discussed how they had become actively involved in the strike.

‘*The community support the miners, because without the miners we wouldn’t have anything…They get support from the community during the strike in Puerto Maldonado. Everyone goes with them when they strike’* (Lorena, café worker, Laberinto).

These women who saw Laberinto as their permanent home knew that their own economic security and the survival of the community was dependent on the ability of ASM to continue. This also highlights how by broadening the analysis to include those working indirectly in ASM, the role of women in mining communities is included in the analysis.

Meanwhile, the transient lifestyle and diversified livelihood of temporary/floating miners means they are not as reliant on small changes to income and are able to move around if there are problems, either to La Pampa or even to the large mines in Puno such as La Rinconada. As a result, they have less interest in engaging in the political strikes and protests. Some of the permanent miners reported that their *obreros* often had to be paid to actively involve themselves in protests. Although they would end up getting involved in strike, they only did so when it started affecting their income:

‘*They don’t all get involved (in protests). Everybody works but the workers are not all involved in these processes. They’re free and they don’t have the same interest in the place*…(but)…*when there was a strike, the miners decided to go. They stopped the work and the obreros also started to protest, because they realised that they couldn’t work either*’ (Gustavo, ASM miner, near Laberinto).

In the above quote, Gustavo references the lack of interest the *obreros* have in the local area, highlighting how the translocality of the *obreros* in particular means they have a diminished sense of place and feel no responsibility towards the community. This ambivalence is reflected in some of the views of the temporary residents during the interviews. For example, Yara dismissed the possibility of staying in Laberinto long-term given the current situation with the government, claiming ‘*the community wasn’t going to fight against the Government*’. She said her and her husband would just go to work in Arequipa if things became difficult. Some of the other temporary miners either did not seem interested in the situation with the Government or were unaware of it. Thus, the current situation with the Government provides an interesting lens for viewing the community dynamics that have developed as a result of people following different livelihood trajectories.

## 8.5. Summary

Like transnationalism, translocality is defined by an individual’s simultaneous embeddedness in multiple locations. However, as we know that the agents within a given social field occupy very different positions (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986; Shammus & Sandberg, 2016). Thus, while an individual’s embeddedness can be conceived as existing on a spectrum, no two people will be embedded in either location to the same extent. Thus the positions they occupy within the translocal ASM community are not the same. Furthermore, the nature of ones’ embeddedness is dynamic and changes over time. While some may become rooted in a new location, others may move on, or return to a community of origin. As Walsh (2005) observed in Madagascar, this means the rooted populations risk being effectively ‘left behind’ by the transient miners. The differences between livelihood trajectories are both spatial (the frequency and distance of an individual’s movement between locations) and temporal (the duration this movement continues for), and both are crucial components of translocality. An understanding of these dynamics is important due to their effect on place attachment and the relationships between people within the social field. Using the typologies set out in chapter 6, this chapter has highlighted the importance of extending our understanding of translocality to consider temporality and shown how divergent livelihood trajectories can create tension within the discrete locations within the translocal ASM community. These tensions represent a specific form of contestation within the social field, which I refer to as temporal friction, and I have presented some examples of this in this chapter.

Resource extraction is inherently unsustainable. The miners are aware that gold deposits are already being depleted, leading to contestations as miners and other residents attempt to access resources in order to improve their own position. A key source of tension is that transient miners, who have less need to conform to reciprocal norms and local forms of authority, often invade concessions and work there without permission. In La Pampa small communities of miners have even been overrun, in some cases chased away by the new arrivals. It is also clear that the general way of life in La Pampa is more difficult, with miners showing far less concern for the safety of others. Informality also creates problems, particularly in terms of labour rights and formalisation, but it also allows for high mobility within the sector. While it makes economic sense for *obreros* to remain mobile in order to secure a better price for their labour, for the permanent miners this causes an element of risk. Environmental issues are also more of a concern for the permanent residents of Madre de Dios. This leads to clear antagonisms between those miners and the more transient ones who seem to care less about the environment. In La Pampa the few permanent miners feel powerless to stop the invaders and at the same time blame the Government for not supporting them. However, it seems that environmental concerns are less important to the permanent miners than the more pressing threats to their livelihood and local community.

Although the permanent residents are invested in Laberinto as a place, and have ascribed to it meanings of home, the miners that remain translocal do not share the same concerns. Not only does high mobility erode trust and social networks, but also the permanent residents of Laberinto are becoming increasingly wary of newcomers who choose to self-exclude and do not involve themselves in community activities. This is most obviously reflected in the on-going contestation with the Government, as the temporary residents are less inclined to get involved in collective acts of resistance. While this resistance is particularly important to the permanent residents, who feel the Government are threatening everyday life in Laberinto, the more transient residents are only concerned with earning money in the short-term. This is an important distinction and emphasises how some residents have developed a strong place attachment that ought to be considered when designing future ASM policy. Elsewhere Hilson et al (2007) have shown that a policy in Ghana designed to relocate miners away from mining sites largely failed due to the roots that some miners developed in the town, such as through marrying local women or setting up businesses. Understanding the long-term aspirations of the residents of mining settlements is extremely important if policy makers want to design appropriate policy regarding the future of ASM activity.

The high levels of in-migration to Madre de Dios have also resulted in increased insecurity, as the lawlessness has attracted criminals who are willing to go against even the rules of the social field to further their own position. While nearly all the residents of Laberinto are migrants, it is the temporary and floating miners who are blamed for this increasing insecurity. However, it is important to remember that all the men from Ocongate that work in mining do so in La Pampa, attracted by the ease of finding work, and are therefore likely to be seen by Azucena as *invaders.* Interestingly, while external norms clearly view all ASM activity is criminal, internally the position of miners is fluid and temporal, as agents try to maximise their position based on their capital endowments, the available resources and their long-term interests.However, while there are temporal frictions within the social field, the biggest contestations occur as ASM operatives attempt to regain some legitimate power from the state. In terms of government interventions, the tensions are two-fold. Firstly, it is the influx of recent miners to the area that are seen as attracting the attention of the Government. Secondly, the temporary miners are not as bothered about involving themselves in protest. The next chapter will go on to consider how the contestation with the Government is reflected in discourses of illegality and the emergence of a collective identity.

# 9. Discourses of illegality: the importance of place for collective identity

## 9.1. Introduction

The preceding three chapters have analysed ASM livelihoods from a translocal perspective, highlighting how the different types of miners build their lives within the translocal community in different ways and how this manifests itself in various tensions between local residents. While chapter 8 looked primarily at sources of tension within the translocal social field created by ASM, here we look in more detail at contestations with other social fields, particularly with the ‘field of power’ (Bourdieu, 1983, 1996; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This is important, as although social fields are semi-autonomous, they are also created and shaped in an on-going process of dialectical interaction with other segments of social reality, most notably the state (Bourdieu, 1999; Shammus & Sandberg, 2016). Within the Peruvian mining sector, the lack of state control in Madre de Dios (Damonte, 2016; Salo et al., 2016) means that the rules of the field can be constantly reinterpreted. At the same time, miners are coming into increasingly violent conflict with the Government, highlighting the existent of contestations between fields. This chapter therefore examines the relationship between the translocal ASM community and the dominant society, with a particular focus on the State and conservation NGOs.

While the translocal nature of mining livelihoods may weaken local community relations in some ways, the previous chapter pointed to a strong sense of community developing amongst the permanent residents of Laberinto. This is most obvious in the way the residents engage collectively in resistance against the State, but is also reflected in the discourses they present about the relative legality or illegality of ASM activity within Laberinto, particularly when compared with that in other areas of Madre de Dios. Throughout fieldwork it was clear that what constituted illegality, informality and criminality were very much blurred. Not only is official Government policy extremely inconsistent, leading to confusion amongst key stakeholders, but also miners and other actors appear to engage in discursive processes in a bid to legitimise behaviour and advance their own agendas. In doing so, the residents are attempting to protect or improve their own position, but at the same time their interactions with other societal domains may eventually reshape the field itself and the rules and logics within it. This chapter attempts to provide an analysis of the discourses and narratives presented by the miners and other permanent residents in comparison to that posited by the Government, the media and public opinion, as this is a key element of their interaction with the dominant society. It will also point to differences with the narratives adopted by the temporary/floating miners, as this reinforces the implications of the temporal nature of translocal livelihoods.

The chapter will initially outline the inconsistencies in Government policy with regard to ASM livelihoods that have not only shaped the social field and the contestations within it, but have ultimately provided scope for competing definitions of illegality to emerge. It will go on to explain the Government’s lack of differentiation between miners working within the mining corridor with those working outside of it, and how this creates a place-based grievance that is collectively shared amongst the residents of Laberinto. Several links will be drawn between place attachment, the illicit ASM livelihood and community identity, based primarily on spatial grievances and the threat to local lives and livelihoods. The role of FEDAMIN will also be discussed, to show how local organisation has aided the development of a strong community identity. This is crucial for showing how persecution and marginalisation of ASM communities can result in active resistance against the field of power, but moreover, how this process is hindered by the translocality of mining livelihoods through limiting both place-attachment and the development of a community identity. The chapter will go on to demonstrate how the strong community identity that exists between permanent miners is reflected in discourses of illegality, designed to legitimise ASM activity in Laberinto through processes of neutralisation. This has firstly involved a construction of the ‘other’, which neutralises the deviant behaviour of the ASM community in Laberinto by positioning themselves against the ‘more deviant’ miners in La Pampa, whilst also seeking to delegitimise the dominant society that has labelled them as deviant.

## 9.2. ASM policy inconsistencies

Echoing theorisation by Trouillot (2001), the policies and actions of the state in relation to ASM have come to life in the social context in Madre de Dios in ways that it does not control and perhaps were not envisaged. As has been discussed already in this thesis, the government policies that supported both colonisation of the Amazonian frontier and small-scale resource extraction were replaced in the 1990’s with economic liberalisation. While liberalisation did not actively discourage mining, it did lose the Government an element of control over the sector whilst leaving the miners in limbo (Cortés-McPherson, 2019). This, along with increasing inequality and the surge in the price of gold in 2007, facilitated a rapid increase in ASM activity in Madre de Dios. Concerns about environmental destruction, mercury contamination and deforestation grew as a result. As a result, successive Governments have changed their approach to ASM, which has effectively changed the logic within the social field and the rules within which miners operate.

In order to reduce ASM activity and the associated destruction, the Government has imposed increasingly restrictive regulations, including the designation of areas of the Amazon as National Park Buffer Zones. At the same time, they are also pushing formalisation, although many of the miners find the various laws to be conflicting:

*‘There is a law for the formalisation, and after that another law came which said it was illegal to work in mining. So there is one law that says yes, and one that says no, but the latter one is newer, and that makes it difficult for us’* (Miriam, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Here Miriam is referring to the inconsistencies in government policy, which claim to encourage formalisation whilst at the same time prohibiting it. For example, mining activity close to rivers or in areas designated for other land-use activities has been banned, which makes it practically impossible for the majority of miners in Madre de Dios to formalise (Salo et al., 2016). Yet at the same time, the MINEM have recently initiated a renewed drive to formalise miners, including those working within the *Corridor Minero,* based on the concept of ‘breaking the inertia’. The Ministry claimed to be supporting the miners to formalise but warned that if they failed to complete the process within a certain period, they would be rendered ‘illegal’, with no possibility for extensions. However, despite this push, official government figures show that while miners are being formalised elsewhere in Peru, within Tambopata the push for formalisation is not working (MINEM, 2017). One LGA representative confirmed that as of 2017, no one in the town was legalised and the process had ‘*completely failed*’ (LGA representative, Laberinto).

In recent years, the illegality of mining activities in La Pampa has undoubtedly bred violence and insecurity. In Peru, as in many countries with a strong ASM sector, the dominant discourse is that ASM miners are criminals with little regard for the negative outcomes of mining activities (Ofori & Ofori, 2018; Thornton, 2014). As such, miners are considered to be criminals or deviants who exist outside of the dominant society (Becker, 1963), which speaks to the idea that those with power impose language and definitions on others, in a process which naturalises social inequality (Bourdieu, 1999; Sandberg & Fleetwood, 2017). The Government’s portrayal of all ASM miners in Madre de Dios as illegal is a clear example of labelling, which is an important element of public policy (Wood, 1985), and in this case attempts to control how artisanal miners are viewed and understood in political discourse. In Chapter 5, it was noted that the labelling of the miners as criminals effectively closed off the legitimate opportunities that were available for other citizens (Cohen, 1965). Cohen (1965) has argued that labelling ascribes groups a social role, changes their public image and activates a set of appropriate responses, both on the part of the miners and the wider society. Alongside this, the Government pursues a strategy of violent interdictions, designed to reduce illegitimate opportunities. The labelling of the miners as criminals justifies this approach and the two can be seen as being mutually reinforcing. However, the continual policy changes and heavy-handed approach to ASM, and the fact that it has coincided with a process of criminalising the indigenous Amazonians who protest against large-scale extractives, has provided scope for the actors within the social field to adopt competing discourses of illegality, informality and criminality to further their own agendas. The miners’ perception of the Government’s treatment of them has also led to protests, activism and the growing influence of individuals previously associated with the FEDAMIN organisation.

## 9.3. Government’s lack of differentiation within the ASM social field

As Becker points out, the ‘questions of what rules are to be enforced, what behaviour regarded as deviant, and which people labelled as outsider must…be regarded as political’ (1963, p.7). As explained in chapter 8, the permanent miners feel persecuted by the Government due to the labelling of them as criminal and what they see as an unfair assault on their livelihood and community. Fraser and Atkinson (2014) have observed the same differentiations when examining the antagonistic relationship between the distinct social fields of street-based youths on the one hand and law enforcement on the other. While the youths may see their identification with the group as fluid and as offering a sense of belonging, police officers view the gang as a static entity of violence, where membership is not only fixed but also often recorded in computer databases. It is clear that the formers’ version of reality conflicts dramatically with the logic of police officers and intelligence analysts (Fraser & Atkinson, 2014; Shammus & Sandberg, 2016). In the same way, the logic of the field of ASM conflicts with that of the dominant society and particularly the field of power, which is preoccupied with the labelling of all residents of mining towns as criminals, although interestingly not those temporarily living in their origin communities in-between stretches in the mining towns.

While theorists have pointed to the tendency of the state to impose classifications and penalties based on an external understanding of how a social field operates, which may not be how the agents themselves see the field (Shammus & Sandberg, 2016), in ASM the tendency has been for the state to ignore the differentiations between those operating within the field. The miners frequently complained that the Government make no distinctions between them and the miners in La Pampa, both in their targeting of interdictions and their public discourse. They consider this unfair as Laberinto lies within the *Corridor Minero,* in which mining activity was previously permitted and formalisation is still theoretically possible, whereas La Pampa is in the National Park Buffer Zone where the truly ‘illegal’ mining takes place. These issues were mentioned several times. One miner insisted that although the miners in Laberinto wanted to formalise, the Government not only made the process too difficult but also treated them the same as the ‘illegal ones’ in La Pampa.

*‘The problem is, thanks to La Pampa everybody thinks we are the same, and that’s a problem for us. And that’s why it should be destroyed. It’s not good to be associated with them*’ (Noe, ASM miners, Laberinto).

In this quote, Noe is referring to the negative press surrounding La Pampa that has drawn attention to artisanal and small-scale gold mining in the whole of Madre de Dios. The social and environmental issues in La Pampa have given it a level of notoriety even at the international level, but the narrative has come to refer to the illegal miners of Madre de Dios, and not specifically those in La Pampa. Thus, Jorge explained that when the Government say they want to eradicate the illegal mining from Madre de Dios, they also include those mining within the *Corridor Minero – ‘and that’s no good for us’* (Jorge, ASM miner, Laberinto). Similar sentiments regarding the lack of understanding at the national level were reported within local government, with one LGA representative noting the disconnect between the conceptualisation of ASM at higher levels of government, particularly those based in Lima who have rarely visited Madre de Dios, and the realities on the ground:

*‘They just don’t understand what we’re doing…and how we live here and what our interests are. The Government just treats us like the rest of the miners. And that’s a problem because we’re different… The Government needs to come and see what’s happening here… We have a reputation that we are damaging the “lung of the world”. We are mostly known as illegal miners, all of us. This isn’t good for us*’ (LGA representative, Laberinto).

As the quote shows, there is a belief at the local level that the Ministry do not understand the difference between informal miners working within the mining corridor in towns such as Laberinto, and those working in La Pampa where mining is prohibited.

The State has responded to the increase in ASM activity with a dual-approach of regulation and interdiction. These interdictions take the form of police and military action, in which miners are arrested and their mining equipment blown up. As the Government makes no distinctions between miners, the informal miners in towns and settlements within the Mining Corridor can be subject to the same interdictions used to control the illegal mining in the National Park buffer zone. As a result, the miners sometimes have to work at night or hide their machinery to prevent losing it. According to one NGO representative, the miners who find themselves being bombed are often the very same as those who are in the process of formalising. The miners frequently discussed the consequences of this for their livelihood:

*‘The Government are making our machines blow and they don’t have respect for us. They think we are all drug traffickers. Now we are afraid. Everyone is a thief to the Government. I’m a thief, everyone is a thief, as if we are killing people here. And the police came here…why did they do this?’* (Kiara, ASM miner, Boca Union).

Here, Kiara likens the way the government treats them to how they would treat other criminals, namely drug traffickers, which Peru also has a serious problem with (Kernaghan, 2015; van Dun, 2012). She is alluding to the fact that some of the miners operating in La Pampa, the ‘big guys’, are often thought to be involved in organised crime, including human and narco-trafficking, which contributes to the violence in the area. While Kiara’s family have so far been fortunate to avoid arrest and having their machines blown up, some of the other interviewed miners have not been so lucky. A good example of this is Jorge, whose family previously owned a concession inside the mining corridor, close to Laberinto. They had lost the rights to the concession due to an inability to keep up with the increasing taxes, but had continued mining on it as the concession was not sold to a new titleholder. However, a year or so ago the Government blew up Jorge’s mining equipment:

*‘Now I have a kid I work for money for my kid. The small money I earn every day is for my family. Sometimes the army or navy or police come here and they take this small money. That’s not fair, because I work to get the money for my family and they take it from me. And we really don’t earn that much here’* (Jorge, Obrero, Laberinto).

Although he had managed to avoid arrest, Jorge lost his investments and had been forced to go back to being an *obrero*. Although he hopes to be able to reinvest in some new machines, he thinks it will be difficult to save enough as he is currently spending most of his earnings on providing for his child. This reinforces the fact that while mining helps people get out of poverty, for most it is far from being a get rich quick scheme. Jorge’s experience also shows how the actions of external actors can affect the positions of agents within the social field, reducing their access to resources and making it more difficult for them to earn a livelihood. It is unsurprising therefore that those contestations may occur between these fields, rather than just within them.

For many of the miners in Laberinto and elsewhere in the mining corridor, the notion of illegality is linked primarily to place. They tend to focus on the location of mining activity as the marker of criminality. As a result, many miners expressed confusion as to why the Government treated them the same as the miners working outside of the mining corridor:

*‘La Pampa is the illegal place because it’s close to protective land, but this part is different. The Government go there to make things explode because its illegal, but they’re also coming here. I don’t understand that. We have concessions, why are they making it explode?*’ (Noe, ASM miner, Boca Union).

The key issue for many of the miners, as illustrated in this quote from Noe, is that the Government previously sold them the concessions yet were now trying to stop mining activity on those same concessions. One of the miners also questioned why they were being targeted while the mining activity within La Pampa, where there are no concessions, had not yet been eradicated. Although the Government’s interdictions do target La Pampa, it was not sufficient to halt mining activity, yet at the same time the Government were perceived to be wasting resources attacking mining operations within the mining corridor. This clearly constitutes a spatial definition of legality, as it is primarily linked to the geographic location of the places in question, but also highlights the way these two places are linked:

*‘While (La Pampa) still exists they will come here as well, and they will confuse us with them and think we are the same…That is the problem, the corruption is part of La Pampa, but it makes it hard for everybody if La Pampa still exists’* (Noe, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Noe’s quote above shows the consequences of the Government’s dissolution of the spatial boundaries between La Pampa and Laberinto, which the miners consider to be one of the key distinguishing features between them. This also links back to the concept of translocality, as it highlights how it is not only that these two places are joined by the people, equipment and money that flow between them, but also that for many they are conceptualised as one system – albeit a system in which the origin communities of those migrant workers is still rarely considered.

While the majority of miners and other residents in Laberinto use spatial definition to distinguish themselves from those in La Pampa, those working inside La Pampa have to rely on different narratives of illegality in an attempt to defend their own livelihood activities. For example, Azucena uses a temporal definition of illegality because she distinguishes her small community, who were mining in the area for decades before it was designated as a National Park Buffer Zone, with those who arrived after mining activity was prohibited. She refers to these illegal miners as ‘invaders’, which again highlights not a spatial differentiation but a temporal one. Unfortunately for Azucena, even if she is able to reclaim her land and go back to mining there, she realises that it will be difficult to convince the government that she was not also illegal:

*‘It is difficult, no? Even if the government get rid of illegal miners…If we go back to mine there, we are also illegal miners’* (Azucena, ASM miner, La Pampa).

Azucena’s comment points particularly to the miners’ self-awareness, and their understanding of the need to negotiate their self-interest within broader ASM policy issues that are imposed on the social field by external forces. Such behaviour has been observed in other sectors where livelihoods have been rendered illegal through changes in policy aimed at protecting natural resources (Agrawal, 2005). It also serves as evidence of ASM regulation forcing miners into illegality, which has been well documented elsewhere (Geenen, 2012; Hilson & Osei, 2014; Tschakert & Singha, 2007). Local populations often oppose the introduction of new policies and regulations that threaten existing livelihoods, and it is unsurprising that the same patterns of behaviour are witnessed amongst the miners in Madre de Dios. The following sections will go on to explore this in more detail.

## 9.4. Place and collective identity

The previous section has started to sketch out how place is important in debates and narratives about criminality in Madre de Dios and can be used to make spatial distinctions with other groups. As noted in the chapter 4, a strong, collective place-identity at the community level can also be linked to collective forms of active resistance against labels of deviance and criminality aimed at the members of the social field by the dominant society (Cross & Hernández, 2011). The specific location of a place has shown to be a crucial aspect of place attachment and collective identity, particularly if that place also suffers from relative poverty and marginalisation (Cross & Hernández, 2011; Gieryn, 2000). However, the threat to lives and livelihoods and the presence of a driving organisation have also contributed to the collective identity seen in Laberinto, which goes far beyond simply a mining identity. This section will discuss how such an identity is developed and highlight how these processes are undermined to some extent by the translocality of the community. What is important to note at the outset that there were no observable differences between the men and women who had settled in the area permanently in terms of their apparent attachment to the mining area. Although this was not a key focus of the research and thus was not investigated deeply, it is interesting to note because it has previously been claimed that women are often more eager to leave mining settlements for engagement in alternative livelihood activities (Seeling, 2002).

### 9.4.1. Use of spatial differentiations in the construction of deviance

From the discussion above, it is clear that the miners’ understanding of illegality is very directly linked to place, not least because of Government policy drawing clear boundaries between where mining is tolerated and where it is not. While the Government now pursues anti-ASM policies that seemingly ignore these spatially imposed boundaries, the miners in Laberinto continue to refer to them. They argue that as they work on land previously designated as mining concessions they should not be considered illegal, highlighting the fact that this is very different to mining in La Pampa where mining activity is prohibited.

*‘La Pampa is a place where people are not supposed to work. It’s a national park and it’s protected. But here is the opposite, we’re allowed to work because it’s the Mining Corridor. The Government knows that we pay taxes, and that we get receipts and we buy and sell gold. And the Government know that some concessionarios have their own titles proving they have this land and they have to protect the land, but it doesn’t matter. Even though the Government know they have these documents, they are acting like this place and La Pampa are the same thing’* (Jorge, ASM miner, Laberinto).

The quote from Jorge above perfectly summarises how angry the conflation between Laberinto and La Pampa makes people in the former. It highlights the formal procedures that occur within the ASM sector in Laberinto, such as paying taxes and having documents and titles, which sets it apart from La Pampa. The perceived unfairness of being, *de jure,* recognised by the Government yet being *de facto* criminals creates part of a shared identity which is intrinsically linked to place, particularly its geographical location (Gieryn, 2000). LGA representatives in the area also discussed how the illegality of life in La Pampa extended far beyond the simple act of mining where it was prohibited, although it should be noted that some of the elected local representatives are also involved in ASM in some way. For example, one LGA representative in Laberinto discussed how even day-to-day life had illegal connotations due to the informal nature of the settlement.

*‘Laberinto is in the mining corridor designated by the government but La Pampa is next to the National Park and so mining is forbidden there…The best way is to make it disappear because there’s no way to fix it. The contamination is in the river and there’s no way to fix that. Everything is illegal there, gasoline, food…’* (LGA representative, Laberinto).

Again here the LGA representative is making a clear spatial distinction between ‘here’ and ‘there’, but this time highlighting the differences in day-to-day life activities, such as buying food, as well as making comparisons about more destructive activities such as pollution.

### 9.4.2. Threats to livelihood and place

In Laberinto the entire economy is based on ASM. The nature of those activities and the way the town has built around them can be linked to place-identity. The subterranean nature of the sector emphasises the importance of the local environment and contributes to the significance of ‘place’. Furthermore, the nature of mining activities also involves miners working in close proximity to each other, forming close bonds through place-based activities. Almost all of the interviewed miners explained how they had initially formed social networks in Laberinto through their work, creating a basis for community building. Work-life in ASM thus requires constant cooperation with neighbours and contributes to the mining identity observed elsewhere in the ASM literature (Bryceson & Jønsson, 2010). However, this overlooks the extent to which place-attachment may develop, especially amongst the permanent miners, and the sense of community that becomes linked to both livelihood and place, which are inextricably linked.

The importance of livelihoods and place are compounded further when they are both threatened. As noted in chapter 2, Werthmann (2010) has suggested that the collective awareness of being despised by the social mainstream may contribute to collective identity, and here I argue that this is exacerbated in Laberinto due to the perceived threat to place and livelihood. The Government’s lack of differentiation between the miners within the mining corridor and those outside of it would not cause such concern amongst the miners if it wasn’t for the Government’s claims that they want to get rid of the illegal miners in Madre de Dios. In some countries where ASM is technically illegal miners are rarely prevented from carrying out mining activity, but in Peru the interdictions are a major threat to livelihoods. This is particularly concerning for the permanent residents, who have become convinced that the Government want to completely remove them from their land, and not just stop them from mining.

*‘What I’m really afraid of is being chased away from here by the Police and the Government, if they tell us to leave our machines and get out of the land*’ (Andres, ASM miner, Laberinto).

*‘The Government is doing everything to close these places, and the government effort to stop them is stronger than ever…I could do agriculture here if the mining was closed, but it is difficult here it seems that the Government want to close everything here, not just mining but agriculture too*’ (Willan, ASM miner, Laberinto).

The quotes above highlight the threat to the miners’ space of work is likely to contribute to the formation of a shared identity, although it may be expected that the permanent miners will feel this threat the greatest as they have fewer alternative options. Furthermore, for the permanent miners in particular, Laberinto is their home, meaning that the threat posed to the local area is no longer simply a livelihoods issue. As Andres and Willan’s quotes both show, the perceived threat is not merely to ASM, but to the entire area. While Andres thinks they will be chased away, Willan sees them shutting down all economic opportunities, not just ASM, which will still effectively mean the miners have to leave to find work elsewhere. Due to the push for conservation, many alternative livelihood activities in Madre de Dios are also restricted, especially on a large scale.

As outlined in the theoretical framework, the ability to claim control over a particularly place is central to the creation of a collective identity. This is further cemented when local people perceive that they are marginalised by the dominant society (Cross & Hernández, 2011). The shared feeling of being persecuted and vilified effectively creates what may be thought of as a unifying ideology. The threat to local livelihoods enables residents to create a common perception of their lives based on their everyday interactions (Cross & Hernández, 2011; Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Hummon, 1992). The residents of Laberinto are acutely aware that their association with ASM renders them as deviant from the norms of the dominant society, but their shared experience allows them to create their own narratives which resist this labelling and, further to attempt to influence future ASM policy. This has become fundamental to local resistance and the continuation of livelihoods considered deviant by outsiders. Crucially, the reliance of the town’s economy on ASM ensures the support of all permanent residents.

### 9.4.3. Organisational integration – FEDAMIN

For place attachment to result in a collective identity which is able to resist the deviant label attributed to it by the dominant society, there must be a source of organisation and leadership that turns a common purpose into a strong ideology (Cross & Hernández, 2011). In this context, the common purpose is the desire to protect ASM livelihoods and the way of life in Laberinto. Local people’s continuation of deviant livelihood activities can be viewed as resistance towards what is perceived to be a repressive system (Ibid.). During interviews it was clear that the permanent residents of Laberinto were united in their desire to continue their mining activity and had planned additional strikes and protests to further their cause. This collective action was primarily aimed at protesting the Government interdictions, due to the threat posed to life and livelihoods and the lack of alternative economic opportunities.

*‘We are united against the Government. They taught us that they will do whatever they want, and we need to respond. We need to do it because the Government is forcing us to. We have to take ourselves, and protest and complain. It’s the Government that’s forcing us; we want a quiet life’* (Roberto, ex-miner, Laberinto).

The above quote highlights not only that the town’s residents feels that they have no other options but to organise around active resistance, but also alludes to how at least part of this resistance must take the form of protests.

These protests were mentioned many times throughout fieldwork, and several respondents suggested that they were willing for protests to turn violent in order to preserve their livelihood. Numerous references were made to the need to ‘fight’ the Government, as miners claimed they were prepared to engage in illegal action in the face of more crackdowns:

*‘It’s not going to be easy for the Government. We’re going to fight. There must be dead people, but we will have to fight…if the Government doesn’t want to understand, we can do strikes, but the government will have to fight us to make us get out*’ (Andres, ASM miner, Laberinto).

*‘(There will be) civil war! We are going to fight for our rights. People here are not willing to move somewhere else they want to stay here, and it is their land and we are organised and we are united, and we want the Government to accept or we will fight. I don’t think it’s only us, I think it is most of the towns and communities*’ (Leo, ASM miner, Laberinto).

What is clear from the above quotes is that while the need to fight is closely related to the desire to preserve ASM livelihoods, it is also very much linked to place. Leo clearly states that his primary motivation is to remain in Laberinto, while Andres refers to how the Government will have to fight to make the miners ‘get out’ of the town, rather than to make them just stop mining. This is both because, for the permanent miners in particular, ASM livelihoods are so closely associated with place, but also because that place has come to be their home.

It is clear that the resistance against the government is not only driven by a collective identity, but is also further enhancing it. Drawing on work by Turner (1978), Cross and Hernandez (2011) argue that local people involved in illicit livelihoods can neutralise the negative psychological effects of labelling by glorifying their role in the continuation of their illicit livelihood and avoiding arrest. While the miners in Laberinto do not take pride in being ‘deviant’, and as has been illustrated, argue to the contrary, they do display pride in their ability to not give into repressive Government policy. There is evidence of the miners taking pride in the size of the protests they have been able to organise and in their ability to recover their strength when they feel that all is lost:

*‘Things won’t change, we’ll always be in the middle. They can’t stop us, but they will try to stop us. This solution will go on for a long time. There is corruption, and because of corruption the Government will try and kick us out, but we will find other solutions’* (Alejandro, ASM miner, Laberinto).

In the above quote, Alejandro not only references the commitment of the miners to defend their livelihood and local community, but also says that he sees the situation going on for a long time. This suggests that he doesn’t think the Government will ever change their policy, but also that he has confidence that the local people can continue to resist these restrictions.

The protests and other forms of collective action that the miners refer to are all organised through FEDAMIN, who are the central point of the resistance against the Government. FEDAMIN distributes information to the smaller organisations of miners regarding mining techniques, formalisation criteria and changing government policy, which is usually done through meetings held centrally. The organisation has been extremely influential in the on-going negotiations and is perhaps likely to bear some responsibility for the narratives and discourses that have emerged around the illegality of ASM. FEDAMIN have had a strong influence in the local area politically and the leaders have got into positions of power at the local and regional level (Cortés-McPherson, 2019; Damonte, 2018). A couple of the interviewed miners boasted about putting their support behind certain pro-mining candidates in the municipal and regional government elections and these candidates were local miners who were previously involved with FEDAMIN. It seems likely that the elite members of FEDAMIN have been able to use the support of the miners and other residents to shore up power locally, in some cases rallying the miners against the Government by exploiting the fears of local people. An example here is that many of the miners believe that Tambopata has already been sold to large-scale extraction companies, despite there being no evidence for this, which makes them more likely to lend their political support to candidates linked to FEDAMIN. It is likely that these widely-held beliefs have been encouraged by FEDAMIN.

Bourdieu saw associational life as inherently conflictual and contradictory, as the social capital it generated represented an instrument of power and domination which could lead to the creation of inequality and domination within the social field (Bourdieu, 1977; Harriss, 2006; Thieme & Siegmann, 2010). This analysis is highly relevant to FEDAMIN, as while the organisation is undoubtedly a driving force behind the collective identity in Laberinto, their vested interests have not gone unnoticed by some of the permanent miners. For example, one miner claimed that the organisation only survived by getting rich from the money donated to them by *concessionarios,* while others hinted that those in charge are only interested in political gain:

*‘FEDAMIN don’t work well, and they don’t really help anyone at all. They don’t do anything for the mining. They have political interests, and the people who work there want to be something higher, but they don’t really want to help the people’* (Willbert, ASM miner, Laberinto).

*‘FEDAMIN is shit, the organisation is bad because most of the presidents have been cheating on them, taking money from the Government to try and change people’s minds. I don’t think FEDAMIN is good or helps anyone*’ (Willan, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Willan’s quote is particularly interesting, and reflects a belief that FEDAMIN’s presidents are actually working on behalf of the Government. However, another interpretation is that these leaders who have come to power do not want to be governed and formalised, especially if it involves working within current ASM policy (Damonte, 2016). As Becker (1963) notes, not all factions amongst delinquent groups will agree and there is usually some internal conflict which ultimately determines their function. Interestingly, the quotes seem to reveal a tension between the more elite miners, those who have multiple concessions and earn a lot from mining activity, and the poorer miners who are struggling to survive. This is a deeper distinction than simply temporary/permanent, or obrero/dueno/concessionario, as it reflects more of who has political power within the social field. While this is not something there is space to discuss in this thesis, it is important to highlight the broad links with the work of Verbrugge and Besmanos (2016), who have critiqued ASM formalisation frameworks for emphasising access to mineral tenure rights, and overlooking the lack of labour rights which leave the majority of the informal workforce at risk of exploitation.

### 9.4.4. Translocality and place-identity

The construction of place is as important to the collective identity of the permanent miners in Laberinto as is their livelihood. However, from the above, it can argued that translocality impacts on place-identity in two key ways. Firstly, aspects of the translocality of ASM contribute to a collective identity among the permanent residents of Laberinto through the threat that recent migrants pose to land access. As some of the *concessionarios* have lost their land due to an inability to pay taxes, this land is often used by newly arrived miners while they are unable to do anything about it – ‘*Although we lost it we were still working on it, it was ours before. It was our place*’ (Jorge, ASM miner). Three other miners said they also felt they were protecting the land from ‘invaders’ and this spatial threat reinforces the importance of location to the development of a community identity. The antagonisms that the permanent miners in Laberinto have for these new migrants is reflected in their use of the word ‘invaders’, which highlights a temporal element to the notion of identity. This is similar to the way in which Azucena frames the problem of illegality within ASM, as was discussed previously. These ‘invaders’ that threaten the land are temporary or floating miners for whom accessing the land in ways that were against the procedures guided by local norms have limited or no consequence, which can at least partly be explained by a highly translocal livelihood which has limited need for local roots or connections. This temporal difference between migrants again highlights this an important aspect of translocality that has not been fully explored in the existing literature.

Secondly, the more temporary and floating miners have a less developed sense of place and thus do not share in the collective identity to the same degree. Not all residents of a given location consider their community to be an important part of their identity. Recent migrants in particular may see the area where they live more as a matter of convenience (Cross & Hernández, 2011). This is evidenced by the observations made in chapter 8, that the permanent residents of Laberinto were more likely to engage in resistance with the Government, even if they were not miners themselves, than the temporary miners were. In many cases this was because the temporary and highly translocal nature of their livelihood meant they were not deeply embedded in the host mining community. While the temporary miners are aware that the land they work on is threatened, often referring to the immediate problems of arrests, depleting gold and encroachment on land by new arrivals, they are far more accepting of these issues, on the understanding that if things become too difficult, they will just leave. While temporary miners may still find their work affected by invaders or *floatantes*, the long-term risks are much lower, due to their reduced emotional and financial investment in the area and a lack of meaningful place attachment. In many of the interviews with temporary miners, it was clear that they accepted that mining was illegal, and in some cases even played down the impact the Government interdictions were having on the area:

*‘The Government treat here and La Pampa very different…the Government come here once in a while or so just to make a show for the media, but here in Laberinto the government don’t do anything because it is a quiet place. The Government focus on La Pampa and here there is no problem. Sometimes there are campaigns and they can explode some motors but it’s once every 1-2 years*’ (Xavier, ASM miner, Laberinto).

This understanding that translocality and relative embeddedness between locations occurs on a scale is similar to Levitt and Glick Schiller’s (2004) description of the tendency for migrants to pivot between locations. What they do not discuss however, is how these migrants relate to each other. It seems clear that in a rural-rural/peri-urban migratory context, the reluctance of some migrants to embed themselves in destination communities has bigger implications for those that are more rooted. This provides further evidence of the existence of temporal frictions within the social field of ASM.

Translocality also affects the exposure that miners get to FEDAMIN, which is a key avenue through which the temporary and floating miners integrate themselves into protests. While the permanent residents are very focused on resistance, with or without FEDAMIN, the push for organisation is noticeably lower amongst the more short-term and transient miners. The previous chapter highlighted how the temporary miners often seemed unaware of the resistance with the Government, whilst others just seemed unconvinced about the ability of the miners to influence ASM policy:

*‘If they continue to make it difficult, we will just go to Arequipa, because we work there before and we have connections there…The community isn’t going to fight against the Government’* (Yara, market stall worker and wife of miner, Laberinto).

*‘I have hope that the Government will make a law that will help us to be formalise and will enable us to continue working. We are going to continue working as we do now for as long as we are able to, but maybe the government will bomb us’* (Rodrigo, ASM miner, Laberinto).

For the temporary and floating miners who spend their time based in camps around Laberinto, there is very little interest in becoming involved with FEDAMIN. For example, Rodrigo noted that as the miner’s mobility was often guided by work opportunities, this was more important to them than being based somewhere close by so that they may be involved in the organisation:

‘*It’s so far – some of them come to the meetings, but not the majority. They want to find other work opportunities and this is more important than being involved in an organisation*’ (Rodrigo, ASM miner, Laberinto).

In La Pampa although the miners do actively resist government interventions through the continued act of working in the area, they have no official engagement with the Government, as they are excluded both from FEDAMIN and the negotiation process. There is however some evidence of the community working together, such as to rebuild after government interdictions, but this seemed to be more on an immediate needs basis.

This above suggests that translocal livelihoods can undermine the organisation of miners around their marginalisation and ‘deviant’ labelling, as they are attached to neither the livelihood the community is built around nor the physical place it occupies. In general, the temporary miners did not openly attempt to discredit the Government. In some cases they actually supported the Government’s stance on ASM, even though they were continuing to act against it.

## 9.5. Neutralisation through the creation of an out-group

During fieldwork, it was clear that a large number of miners had built narratives around the concepts of ‘informal’ and ‘illegal’ which allowed them to legitimise their own position. This can be viewed as an act of resistance against the norms of the dominant society that have labelled the miners as deviant. The importance of being seen as ‘informal’ rather than ‘illegal’ is linked to their feelings of persecution, but also allows them to position themselves against an ‘other’, whose behaviour they seek to delegitimise in order to legitimise their own. While Becker (1963) noted that not all deviants regard judgements about their behaviour as unjust, the narratives provided by the permanent miners are evidence of their development of strong ideological explanation of why they are right and those who disapprove of and punish them are wrong. Sykes and Matza (1957) described this as a process of neutralisation, but Fleetwood (2016) has argued that such narratives go beyond excusing deviance and are closely linked to a deeper search for identity and one’s existence within a particular social field. Thus, as well as being a mode through which the field of power can attempt to exert control over marginalised groups, narratives within social fields have a crucial role in connecting the self and one’s group and setting clear boundaries with other groups (Sandberg & Fleetwood, 2017).

In Laberinto, the miners position their own collective group against those who mine outside of the mining corridor, which creates a superior identity for themselves that becomes tied to definitions of legality. The temporary miners working in Laberinto and elsewhere within the mining corridor are not included in this conceptualisation of the ‘other’ miner as they are still working on land designated for mining and, for the most part, negotiate access to land with *concessionarios* and *duenos*. While the *invaders* who encroach on concessions without negotiating access are also regarded in negative terms by all the miners in Laberinto, they often do not explicitly form part of this construction of the ‘other’ as it is based primarily on a spatial distinction. This section will show how the respondents position themselves against a more criminal ‘other’ in their discussions about illegality and how the permanent miners in particular weave conservation and environmental issues into this narrative.

### 9.5.1. Co-opting environmental rhetoric

In Chapter 8, I highlighted how tensions were developing within the translocal community related to the environment. The miners and other residents of Laberinto played down the impact ASM activity and mercury pollution was having on the environment locally. However, they criticised the miners operating in La Pampa for higher levels of pollution and deforestation, and the Government for not doing enough to prevent this from happening. In general, it seems that the miners in Laberinto co-opt environmental rhetoric when it suits their purpose. Primarily, this is done to distance themselves from the illegal miners operating in La Pampa. As the environment has taken on a central importance in relation to notions of criminality and illegality, the miners focus on it when blaming La Pampa for the current political situation, claiming that they have drawn the attention of the Government and NGOs with their destructive livelihood. This is similar to observations made in other areas of the Amazon, where newly arrived migrants have employed environmental concepts to legitimise their own livelihoods while delegitimising other actors (Campbell, 2015) and can be thought of as a way of constructing an ‘other’ in order to protect one’s own in-group identity (Cross & Hernández, 2011).

In chapter 8 it was shown that the mining in La Pampa is deemed to be more destructive than that in Laberinto. This is not to say that ASM in Laberinto is not destructive. A representative from the MINEM clearly stated in interview that the miners in Laberinto had not wanted to adopt new, cleaner methods of cleaning gold due to its relative expense. Despite this, the relatively higher destruction in La Pampa translates into a general narrative adopted by the permanent miners, in which they care more about the environment than the more recent ‘invaders’ in La Pampa, claiming they have no respect for the earth and didn’t care about contamination or deforestation. This is well summarised in the following quote from Benito, a permanent miner in Laberinto:

*‘There’s a big difference between the miners. We want to work with clean gold, but the other guys in La Pampa don’t care about it. They don’t care about the environment...From the road you don’t see anything but just inside the jungle you see all the garbage. They use the same water to drink, wash themselves, work, and this water is contaminated, so probably the owner gets a lot of money but the workers are getting money but also killing themselves (with mercury poisoning). We protect the environment and our land from invaders’* (Benito, ASM miner).

The quote from Benito is particularly alarming because it almost dehumanises the miners in La Pampa, suggesting that they don’t care about anything at all, having as little regard for their own health as they do for the environment. This was very closely echoed by another permanent miner, who claimed that the miners in La Pampa only cared about money – ‘*To them not even human life matters, only the money’*’.

One of the key aspects that is constantly discussed by the miners was the method of gold extraction in La Pampa, including the amount of mercury used, the rampant deforestation and the way the earth was cleared. They also claimed that the scale of mining activity was far larger in La Pampa, both in terms of the size and number of machines. There were several assertions that mercury use was also higher in La Pampa, with no evidence other than the claim that the miners in Laberinto used less mercury as they were more concerned with protecting the environment.

*‘Oh La Pampa was a beautiful place when there were no people there. It was so beautiful, but if you see it now they have completely destroyed it. There are lots of kilometres without anything and the river is completely brown, and it didn’t use to be like that…Of course we contaminate a bit, but it’s not that big and at least it’s not as bad as La Pampa*’ (Jorge, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Jorge’s quote shows how the description of environmental tragedy in La Pampa is used as justification for other environmentally damaging practices and is a perfect example of normalising behaviour by comparing it to something which is socially accepted as being relatively more immoral (Cross & Hernández, 2011).

The adoption of environmental rhetoric to legitimise behaviour is perhaps even starker in the case of Azucena, who had been mining in the area that is now La Pampa since the 1970’s. During the interview she repeatedly insisted that the Government’s failure to support her in the face of the invaders had led to the extreme environmental degradation as her land had been taken over. Another miner, Mario, explained that according to government policy, while it was illegal for miners to work in the river, it was permitted to take the materials from the river as long as it was worked on whilst on land, as this does not contaminate the water. Mario said the problem was when miners tried to do things quickly and cleaning the gold with mercury in the rivers. I had observed several miners working in the river between Laberinto and Boca Union on my trip. Mario said these miners were being completely illegal by continuing to work in the river, but he insisted that it was the more transient miners who were likely to work in this way.

### 9.5.2. Highlighting levels of violence and criminality

The miners expand beyond the use of environmental rhetoric to create symbolic boundaries between themselves and the miners in La Pampa. There is a strong focus on the existence of other types of behaviour that constitute criminality, with many miners making references to prostitution, rape, murder, drug trafficking, theft and organised crime. A good example of this, which again reflects the use of almost dehumanising rhetoric, is highlighted in this quote from Stefano:

‘*These illegal miners have no loyalties and no respect. They steal, rob, kill etc…We don’t really know what happens there as we don’t like to go there…they bury people alive. It’s nobody’s land and they can do whatever they want’* (Stefano, ASM miner, Laberinto).

In some cases, the miners actually stressed the criminal nature of the individuals who had moved to La Pampa, suggesting that rather than the mining being the problem, it was the illegality of the region that was attracting ‘criminals’ from elsewhere in Peru. This links directly back to the translocality of the mining livelihood being portrayed as the problem, rather than the action of mining itself. Mario for example blamed the recent assault on Boca Union and the rise in car jackings on the road from Laberinto as being due to the migration of criminals for whom stealing is a business.

Similar processes of neutralisation have been observed in other empirical studies relating to illicit livelihoods, in which in a bid to defend themselves, people compare their own livelihood activities, such as selling pirated DVDs, to something that is widely perceived to be more immoral, such as selling drugs (Cross, 2007; Cross & Hernández, 2011). This emphasis on another forms of deviant behaviour allows the individual to frame the ‘other’, in this case other miners, as being ‘criminal’ and position their own community against it in a favourable light. For example, Diego claimed that La Pampa is ‘not a controlled society’, whilst indicating the ways in which Laberinto operated like any other town in Peru. Others pointed out that while their livelihoods were becoming more insecure due to the on-going conflict with the Government, they were not subjected to the same social ills as La Pampa. Some highlighted the fact that La Pampa is so dangerous that the miners there have had to hire paramilitary security guards to protect them. Unfortunately, these paramilitaries have subsequently created a new level of insecurity as they do not respect anyone and often shoot miners. Three of the miners who had previously worked in La Pampa said that it was the violent nature of the area which had caused them return to Laberinto and settle there, despite the fact that they made less money, while others claimed they would never even consider working there due to the constant insecurity.

For the temporary and floating miners in La Pampa, the discussion over what constitutes ‘criminal’ tends to focus on a more traditional definition of criminality encompassing thieves and murders. Several noted how criminals had been attracted to the area due to a desire to escape the law, which had fuelled the violence in the region. Although the community members in La Pampa see the Government’s treatment of them as unfair, they express this in terms of their lack of engagement in other illegal activities. Rosaria wasn’t actually a miner herself but she still did not use a definition of criminality based around mining activity when discussing the problems she had faced whilst living in La Pampa:

*‘A group of police, or maybe the army, they came in a helicopter and they told us to leave in five minutes and we would bomb everywhere. They treat us all like delinquents. We took a few of our things but as we had nowhere to go we ran into the jungle to be disguised’* (Rosaria, hotel worker, Puerto Maldonado).

For the residents of La Pampa, it is not possible to create a relatively more criminal ‘other’ based on a spatial differentiation. Therefore, their definition of illegality changes again, away from a focus on ASM activity entirely.

### 9.5.3. The impact of translocality and identity on narrative development

As noted in the above section, for miners who carry out their livelihood in a highly translocal fashion, the sense of place attachment and identity within the host community is likely to be far less developed. It therefore follows that as these miners have little long-term interest in the town, they will be less inclined to develop narratives relating to what is considered to be an out-group. This is particularly true if the miners are inclined to move around and work in different places. Although the temporary miners in Laberinto acknowledge the fact that mining in La Pampa takes place on ground that has never been designated for mining, they do not build a construct of the ‘other’ in the same way as the permanent miners do. Furthermore, while the temporary miners still sometimes blame environmental degradation on high-levels of in-migration, they did not seek to create differentiated identities, claiming that everyone treated the land in the same way and ‘*didn’t think about deforestation*’ (Christian, *Obrero*, Laberinto).

The mining families based in Ocongate, all of whom carried out their mining activity in La Pampa or the equally illegal Andean mining settlement of La Rinconada, did not distinguish between different levels of informality and/or illegality. The narratives they provided treated legal miners as anyone employed by a large multi-national mining company and the rest to be working illegally. For the inhabitants of Ocongate, it was the lack of labour rights and medical insurance they were most worried about, rather than a need to defend the legitimacy of their livelihood. Although some of the respondents noted that the Government was attempting to eliminate illegal mining, this comes with the acceptance that at some point working in the area may stop being viable. Although these households are engaging in translocal livelihoods, the majority have retained an active orientation towards home (Islam & Herbeck, 2013; Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005), which means the development of a community identity in the destination community had not been as well developed as it is for the permanent miners in Laberinto.

The examples provided in section 8.5 have illustrated how narratives are used to legitimise behaviour, but they are also clearly linked to identity and existence within a social field (Fleetwood, 2016). The interesting point to note is that this construction of the ‘other’ is aimed at other actors *within* the translocal social field, rather than external actors or groups. Although this may seem to detract from the idea that miners are all operating within the same social field, we know that the agents within a social field occupy different positions and do not therefore exhibit identical behaviour (Shammus & Sandberg, 2016). De Boeck (1999) and Fisher (2007) have previously highlighted how marginality and going against the norms of dominant society can allow miners to accrue wealth, yet even within the social field there may be some agents who deviate from internal norms for the same ends. While all the miners are marginalised, not all are willing to engage in ASM in La Pampa or break the other rules of the field by engaging in acts of violence, theft or organised crime. They are likely to view those that do in much the same was as wider society viewed the diamond miners in de Boeck’s (1999) study.

## 9.6. Neutralisation through delegitimising the field of power

Those who find their behaviour labelled as deviant often reject the rule by which they are being judged and may even regard those who have made these judgements as either incompetent or not legitimately entitled to do so (Becker, 1963, p.1-2). This is evident in the narratives constructed by the miners in Laberinto, which are designed to delegitimise the Peruvian state. This section will focus on how the miners do this by pointing to inconsistencies in government policy, highlighting evidence of corruption and co-opting environmental rhetoric in a bid to question the authority of the Government to label them as deviant and control the social field. The section again draws on the neutralisation techniques identified by Sykes and Matza (1957), but with the understanding that these narratives are tightly bound with habitus and may not therefore be as highly strategic as they originally suggested (Fleetwood, 2016).

### 9.6.1. Deflecting environmental rhetoric back on policy makers

As mentioned previously, ASM in Madre de Dios attracts international condemnation due to the damage it causes to the Amazon. This is one of the key arguments used by the Government when attempting to eradicate ASM from the area. In an attempt to delegitimise the Government’s attacks on them, the miners co-opt the environmental rhetoric used in debates about ASM and the destruction of the Amazon and turn it back on the Government to question its commitment to conservation. Firstly, miners and other residents question the validity of scientific claims about the health implications of mercury, which can be seen as a neutralisation technique as it both questions the judgements made by the dominant society, thereby condemning the condemner, and attempts to deny injury by down-playing the impacts of mercury contamination. Secondly, they continuously highlight the fact that the Government wanted to ban other livelihood options in the jungle for similar environmental concerns. As this eliminates the availability of alternative livelihood options, the miners claimed that they had no other option but to continue mining, thus allowing them to deny responsibility.

The miners attempt to question the legitimacy of ASM policy by pointing out the hypocrisy in these conservation narratives, the arguments for which are three-fold. Firstly, the national Government continues to actively encourage foreign investment by large-scale extraction companies and the associated environmental destruction and social unrest such investments create, which they claim is far worse than ASM. For example, the García administration responded violently to indigenous protestors in the Amazon who were attempting to protect the rainforest from large-scale extractive development (Orihuela, 2012). Secondly, neither the national or regional government seem interested in working with the miners to reduce the environmental impact of ASM. These two issues in particular were discussed by one of the miners in his radio programmes, aimed at mobilising the community to work together to actively resist marginalisation:

*‘I talk on radios and television that it’s crazy that the Government are against the illegal mining and are investing money in bombing it because they want to save the environment, but aren’t trying to help and invest and then sell loads of land off to foreign companies’* (Willbert, Obrero, Laberinto).

Several of the miners pointed how the lack of general awareness about the environment was making it difficult for the miners to complete the formalisation process, and blamed the Government for not doing more to help them meet the requirements. The lack of knowledge and financial capacity of miners to invest in technological advances and the lack of support they receive from state governments have been pointed to elsewhere in the ASM literature (Helwege, 2015; Kuramoto, 2001; Labonne, 2014; Tschakert & Singha, 2007). Thirdly, the national Government’s policy of violent interdiction against the miners not only wasted funds that could be used for investing in more environmentally friendly mining technologies, but is also bad for the environment, due to the use of dynamite and the petroleum ending up in the rivers. The hypocrisy of the Government can in part be explained by the conflicts of interest that exist between the MINEM and the MINAM, as they both have divergent conceptualisations about the future of ASM and the conservation of the Amazon.

Despite the adoption of the environmental narratives to question the legitimacy of the Government’s concerns over conservation and its general policy towards ASM, the clear antagonisms between the Laberinto community and the Government appear to be reducing the commitment of the miners to find alternative solutions. It is possible to interpret the miners as almost holding the environment to ransom in order to negotiate a policy that enables them to continue their livelihood:

‘*The Government and the Minister of the Environment try to motivate people to protect the environment. We don’t have problems with doing this, but as the Government is against us, and there are no bonds between us and so first we want our protection and rights and then we will help them think about the environment*’ (Esteban, ASM miner, Laberinto).

*‘In the future, as the laws are new, Laberinto will become worse than La Pampa…There will be less concessions, and less people wanting to be formalised, and they will look for gold in more illegal places when it gets depleted. We feel bad about this, and we know we could be better but we can’t due to the situation with the Government’* (Willbert, ASM miner, Laberinto).

As the quotes above show, the miners are highlighting their understanding of the environmental costs of ASM, whilst emphasising that the government needed to work with them to address these issues. In particular, Esteban talked about the lack of trust between the miners and the Government that discourages the former from tackling environmental issues before their rights have been secured. A couple of the miners also complained that environmentally friendly mining techniques were expensive. They claimed that the Government was causing insecurity that meant it was not viable for them to invest in machines that may subsequently be blown up by the government anyway.

### 9.6.2. Questioning ASM policy

The permanent miners in Laberinto overwhelmingly blamed the incompetence and poor policy decisions of the state for the current situation. They believed it was up to the Government to find a solution to the on-going dispute, yet this has not been forthcoming. This is perfectly summarised in the quotes below from Mario and Leo, two permanent miners in Laberinto:

*‘The law should be stronger with the people that aren’t respecting the law. It should be respectful of those that are trying to formalise. The law is the only way to protect everything. If we change the law, the environment will be protected, the organisations will be fine, the police will be doing their job, and the miners will be working on the land’* (Mario, ASM miner, Laberinto).

*‘The Government is not the owner of the Peru and it is not possible that they treat us the way they are treating us now. It is possible that they give us many solutions to this problem, but they just don’t want to. It’s a government problem and they need to fix it’* (Leo, ASM miner, Laberinto).

In some cases the miners argue that the Government’s treatment of them all as illegal miners actually facilitates the situation in La Pampa, and risks violence and environmental destruction spreading further. While the Government have claimed that everyone must formalise or be considered illegal, very little support is given to the miners to do this. Some of the restrictions mean that it is impossible for miners working in Laberinto to comply with the new rules, even those working on concessions. For example, one NGO representative said that the proximity of some of the concessions to the river meant that formalisation was not a viable option for many miners. Several of the miners used these inconsistencies to highlight how the policies have been poorly conceived:

*‘Garcia made the laws 1100, 1105 and this is where the formalisation started. But where do you want the legalisation, here in the earth or the heaven. Because in the earth you are saying you don’t want mining in the rivers, as your saying you can’t work in the rivers, so where in the hell are we supposed to mine?’* (Benito, ASM miner, Laberinto).

If the miners are unable to be formalised under the current rules, then they can never become ‘legal’ in the eyes of the law. Several miners saw the prohibition of mining activity in the water as evidence that the Government intended to remove them from the area, rather than work with them to find a solution. The frustration was clear during interviews. Many of the miners complained that the government were doing nothing to support the formalisation process, despite being the ones to introduce it. They believed the process had been deliberately made difficult so that it was impossible to complete. Aside from formalisation policy, the miners also use the land conflicts to discredit the policies of the Government, claiming that overlapping concessions had been issued for competing livelihood activities in order to make people fight with each other.

### 9.6.3. Highlighting corruption at the regional and national level

Central to the miners’ narratives are accusations of corruption, but these claims were largely supported during discussions with NGOs and LGA representatives. Corruption is a widespread problem in Peru. There are plenty of allegations of politicians taking bribes from multi-national companies and colluding, or at least benefiting from, organised crime (Buccella, 2014). The permanent miners in Laberinto tend to be supportive of the regional politicians, as they are sympathetic to the miners’ agenda, but they use allegations of corruption at the state level to emphasise how criminality in the extractive industry sector is endemic and far worse than the illegal activity they are engaging in.

As in other illicit livelihood contexts (Carrier & Klantschnig, 2016; De Andrade Filho, 2008), police are widely reported to take bribes, either when the miners try to transport oil on the river or when they come to explode the motors and arrest people. Several of the miners also said that the miners were often warned in advance of when the raids would take place, although they didn’t know, or at least didn’t say, who these warnings came from. One miner explained that the abundance of natural resources in Tambopata and the possibility for rent seeking meant that the more corrupt police were attracted to work in the area. The policy of interdiction can only be as successful as the police implementing it. Many of them are happy to take bribes to prevent arrests, thus calling into question the effectiveness of Government policy. Azucena also used an environmental narrative to question the integrity of the Government, claiming that the forestry concessions were all allocated to friends of government officials. She said that as the Government knew she had good knowledge of the local area they alerted friends and family to whichever concessions she showed an interest in, meaning she was always outbid.

The mining activity in La Pampa is thought to be owned by ‘big guys’ with links to organised crime – ‘*No one knows who owns the motors in La Pampa, there are big people who have the motors there, as the small people that want to have motors there are killed*’ (Benito, ASM miner, Laberinto). A couple of miners claimed that either these big guys were working in the Government or were at least paying the government and the police large amounts of money to be able to continue their activities. This explicitly creates a link between the Government, who are openly accusing the miners in Laberinto of being criminals, with the miners in La Pampa, who have already been distinguished as ‘other’, more violent and deviant miners. The miners therefore argued that it was the Government’s action, this time in the form of corruption, which allowed the illegality of La Pampa to continue:

*‘La Pampa is still alive because of the corruption, because they can pay the police and the bad guys in the Government… While it still exists they will come here as well, and they will confuse us with them and think we are the same…That is the problem, the corruption is part of La Pampa, but it makes it hard for everybody if La Pampa still exists’* (Noe, ASM miner, Laberinto).

Inside La Pampa, the scale of corruption is even worse. Azucena told a story of five policemen who were shot by unknown assailants for taking bribes on a patch of land that wasn’t ‘theirs’. This story was corroborated by an NGO representative, who said that the story about the police disappeared from the news within 24 hours, highlighting the dangers of entering La Pampa without permission from whoever is in charge. One LGA representative in Laberinto questioned why the central Government did not do more to eliminate the whole of La Pampa, claiming it could be easily overrun with a few explosions. The insinuation here is that mining activity in the buffer zone continues because the Government chooses for it to do so. A couple of miners in Laberinto claimed that because the miners in La Pampa were always alerted to the police raids, they were able to hide their machines and the police were unable to explode anything. In order to look like they were doing something effective, the police would then come to Laberinto and blow up the motors there.

One of the key accusations of the Government that the miners weave into their narrative is that the land in Tambopata has already been sold to large-scale extraction companies. It is unlikely that this is the case, firstly because the type of mining in the area is not well suited to large scale extraction and secondly because there hasn’t been a more concerted effort to clear the area of illegal miners. However seven of the permanent residents of Laberinto held this belief and used it to question the Government’s motives and delegitimise their drive for environmental conservation.

*‘The Government just wants this land so they can give it to big people or big companies for them to use. The problem is that the Government is smart, and of course they want a slice of the cake from the big companies. Under the table they will get a slice of the money, because they are smart. So who pays with their blood? Us because we are living here and our houses are here and our families are here’* (Roberto, ex-miner, Laberinto).

The collusion between government and big business that is alluded to by Roberto is evidence of a wider trend in Peru, in which the Government’s response to extractives has eroded the authority and legitimacy of the state (Arellano-Yanguas, 2008). While the narratives about the Government selling off the land to big business is unlikely to be based on fact, at least in part due to the nature of the gold deposits in Madre de Dios, the issue raises an important question about sustainability, natural resources and foreign investment in general. As one miner noted, ‘*there is one big company in MDD that is working with petroleum. For that company, there are no obstacles, but for us there are. Why is that?’* (Jorge, Laberinto). At the same time, it is important to question why so many of the miners in Laberinto believe this to be true when there is no evidence. FEDAMIN are likely to have a role in this, given their interest in rallying support against the state Government. What is also interesting is the similarities with observations made by Walsh (2005) in Madagascar, where local miners were convinced that national reserves were set up by corrupt politicians and state officials to provide foreigners with exclusive access to the resources in return for personal gain.

### 9.6.4. The impact of translocality and identity on narrative development

A key issue to consider in the narratives that form around ASM is that the majority occur around a collective need to challenge the labelling of the community as deviant through questioning the legitimacy of the accuser, which in this case is the Peruvian state. It may be expected that the same narratives used by the permanent miners are not used by the temporary miners, as their highly translocal livelihoods have made them less invested in the locality. This section will briefly highlight how although the temporary and floating miners have immediate concerns regarding the continuation of ASM as a livelihood, there is less need to construct narratives which seek to delegitimise the dominant society that has perceived them as deviant. In most cases they are accepting of that label.

The most important thing to note is that the more temporary and transient miners were very honest about the damage ASM did to the Amazon and did not question the fact that mining was causing contamination. They understood that the Government would need to act it if it continued. There was little evidence of them co-opting environmentalist rhetoric to legitimise their own behaviour:

*‘The pollution of the water is the problem for the Government, we are contaminating it and the water goes to the communities…That’s why the Government wants us to get out of here, because we are polluting the land and especially the river*’ (Justiniano, ASM miner, Laberinto).

For many of the temporary miners, this explained why the government had made the formalisation process difficult. While they discussed the challenges of formalisation and believed that the Government wanted to eradicate ASM from Madre de Dios, they were a lot more understanding of this policy. For example, one woman whose husband worked as an *obrero* said that it was obvious that the Government wanted to control mining as currently the miners were not paying any taxes.

The fact that some of the temporary miners are not interested in being formalised means that they are far less concerned about the politics, as long as they can continue to bribe their way around regulations. For highly translocal miners, formalisation is almost impossible because it requires ASM operatives to work in one location. It is therefore unsurprising that they are not as concerned about it. As they have no long-term interest in the area, they are more accepting of the ‘illegal’ label and did not seek to delegitimise the government. One miner in particular took a very different view of the Government’s approach to mining, explaining how they were trying to achieve formalisation:

*‘The Government doesn’t want to stop mining. They want the taxes and they want everyone to be legal. It’s just other people who think they want to stop mining. They actually want everyone to be legal*’ (Xavier, ASM miner, Laberinto).

While the livelihood activities of the temporary and floating miners are equally threatened by a Government policy that treats them as illegal, there are less long-term risks due to the translocal nature of their livelihood, which is clearly reflected in their narratives.

## 9.7. NGOs, media and public Opinion

For the miners of Madre de Dios, it is not just government discourse they have to contend with, as the media and NGOs also portray them negatively. Leo complained that the media often seemed to be working on the side of the Government – *‘I don’t like this situation and it makes it difficult for us to trust the Government*’ (Leo, ASM miner, Laberinto). Several of the miners complained that the media failed to distinguish between miners in La Pampa and in Laberinto:

*‘People use the name of La Pampa to blame us for their mistakes. Always in the news and researchers they always use information and witnesses from La Pampa, but they always say Madre de Dios’* (Bernardo, ASM miner, Laberinto).

In public discourse, it does appear that environmental NGOs have cast Peru’s artisanal and small-scale miners as villains, which is similar to the treatment of other actors in the Amazon, such as ranchers and loggers (Campbell, 2015). In NGO narratives, there is a strong focus on the social ills associated with the illegality of ASM. For example, human trafficking was not specifically discussed by any of those respondents working directly or indirectly in mining, even those based in Ocongate from where trafficking is a severe problem, but the NGO workers in Puerto Maldonado talked about it extensively. While several academics have discussed the need for NGOs to change the language used when discussing the ASM operators (Hilson & Gatsinzi, 2014), a larger problem is that often NGOs avoid engagement with ASM altogether. This is due to a combination of political difficulties, prejudices and problems associated with carrying out community development amongst mobile populations, at the detriment to giving people a voice to express their concerns (Fisher, 2007). This is certainly a problem in Madre de Dios, and NGOs working on relevant issues to do with conservation and indigenous rights do not include miners in their activities. Some NGO representatives say this is because they consider all miners as illegal and insist that they are simply not interested in compromising on protecting indigenous rights or the environment.

Some NGOs do however paint the miners working within the mining corridor in a more positive light, explaining that the reason they don’t engage them directly when looking for conservation solutions is because the problem is too political and complicated. Some NGO representatives insisted that the major problem was the Government policy of interdictions, which was worsening the situation, yet said it was difficult for them to intervene. This issue was discussed by many of the miners as well as the NGO respondents, with one clearly emphasising the highly translocal nature of life in La Pampa as a key factor:

‘*There is a difference because places like Laberinto have miners which are more conscious about environmental issues and the productive things they are doing. In La Pampa, they don’t care about it and they won’t change their attitude. They don’t have their investments here, they have their investments in another place*’ (NGO respondent, Puerto Maldonado).

For their part, the miners focus on discrediting the work of local NGOs. One questioned why the Government put so many environmental NGOs in Madre de Dios when they were not doing anything – ‘*they just sit in their offices in Puerto Maldonado*’ (Diego, ASM miner). As highlighted in the previous chapter, the experience miners have had with NGO workers in the past has made them incredibly wary of ‘foreigners’, with this word used in this context quite differently from the mining ‘foreigners’ who come to settle in the community short-term. In Boca Union in particular, the community members spoke of how they felt the need to protect each other from people who may be conservationists or the Government just as much as if they were thieves who may rob them.

## 9.8. Summary

Throughout the thesis, the spatial and temporal divergences in livelihood trajectories have been illustrated, with discussion on how this creates temporal friction within the translocal space that is constituted by ASM communities. This chapter has shown how the insecurity caused by both translocality and government interventions have led to the creation of a strong place-based identity, cemented by the shared perception of the threat to lives and livelihood. This shared identity is reflected in group narratives and discourses concerning the illegality of ASM activity, which seek to legitimise in-group behaviour by both delegitimising dominant society and the field of power as well as positioning themselves against the less moral ‘other’ miners. An understanding of how the marginalisation of ASM operatives, especially those who have developed strong place-attachment to mining communities and see them as home, can lead to a collective identity that actively resists government action is important for policy-makers who claim to be interested in bringing key stakeholders into dialogue regarding sustainable ASM practices.

Increasingly bureaucratic formalisation procedures and violent interdictions is an attempt by the state Government to regain control of a situation it has clearly lost control of, but in some cases the duel effect is contradictory, with those miners who are trying to formalise often being targeted. At the same time, this action has been accompanied by increasingly hostile public discourse, which portrays all ASM miners in Madre de Dios as criminals. Such action can be seen as an attempt to change the logic of the social field and rules of the game, which has resulted in serious contestations. This chapter has shown how the contestations in this context can be directly linked to the effects of labelling, and Cohen (1965) has previously argued that labelling individuals or groups as criminals elicits an appropriate response from those that have been labelled. This has become particularly salient due to the external threats to life and livelihood that have led to a unifying ideology around place. A key reason for this is that the miners working within the *Corridor Minero* make a clear spatial distinction between themselves and the miners working within the National Park buffer zone, yet this distinction seems to be largely ignored in public discourse and government policy.

I have shown that the geographical location of Laberinto, and particularly its distinction from La Pampa, has become a crucial aspect of collective-identity. This is reflected heavily in discourses of illegality that seek to provide spatial justifications for mining activity. The close working environment of ASM also lends itself to the development of strong professional relationships, and it is important to note that place is heavily associated with livelihood for multiple reasons. Moreover, as Cross and Hernandez (2011) have shown in other contexts, the presence of a unifying ideology, in this case the threat to life and livelihood, has contributed to the emergence of a strong collective identity. This is clearly reflected in the narratives of residents of Laberinto and elsewhere within the *Corridor Minero,* in which several methods of neutralisation (Sykes & Matza, 1957) are evident as the residents attempt to contest the norms of the dominant society that are restricting livelihood practices in the social field. I have also highlighted the fact that these discourses are not shared by temporary and floating miners, as the translocality of their livelihood means they are less threatened by the external threats posed by changes in government policy, especially those which seem designed to remove people from a specific location.

# 10. Discussion and Conclusion

The initial idea for this research came from the observation that the negativity in public discourse around ASM in Peru did not appear to consider the role that the global economy and structural inequalities played in the growth of the sector. During initial conversations in Lima, it was evident that concern about environmental degradation was not matched with a clear understanding about why people engaged in ASM, particularly given how dangerous it was thought to be. This was despite growing acknowledgement that economic and environmental stressors were leading to the migration of people away from the Andes. Yet despite this, the links between the two were not made and they were often presented as discrete problems. Meanwhile, while the literature both highlighted the centrality of migration to ASM livelihoods and emphasised the need to understand ASM communities (Hentschel et al., 2002; Hilson et al., 2007; Hilson, 2005; Saldarriaga-Isaza et al, 2013; Spiegal, 2009), there are very few multi-sited studies that incorporated both destination and origin communities into the analysis.

The aim of this research was therefore to address this problem by providing a spatially holistic account of mining communities. In order to do this, I brought together ideas from distinct bodies of literature. I drew on ideas about translocality and translocal livelihoods and then grounded these in Bourdieusian theory to provide a loose framework for understanding ASM, particularly in terms of migration and human interactions. Bourdieu’s theory of social practice and the conceptualisation of the social field (Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) are particularly useful for visualising the web of relationships that exist within the translocal ASM community. Moreover, his descriptions of contestations within the social field seem to echo the temporal frictions we see emerging in Laberinto as a result of divergent livelihood trajectories, exacerbated by the precarious nature of ASM livelihoods. While the temporal dimension of translocality has generally been overlooked in the translocal livelihoods literature, Bourdieusian thinking allows for changes in one’s relative position over time. Bringing together these two bodies of literature therefore helps emphasise the dynamic nature of the social field of ASM, but the same thinking is also applicable to many contexts in the Global South where migrants share a livelihood, particularly where that livelihood is informal and/or highly precarious.

Using a translocal approach to my analysis has provided insights into migratory practices within the ASM sector in Madre de Dios and how these contribute to a translocal community that spans multiples localities. I have also contributed to advancing knowledge on the role of women in ASM by showing how they contribute to the maintenance of a translocal livelihood, and have reflected on the inherently gendered mobility in ASM. Finally, in the context of Madre de Dios, I have documented how divergent livelihood trajectories result in community members having very different long-term interests, which can create sources of tension. I see these as a particular form of contestation within the social field, which I refer to as temporal frictions. I have then reflected on the positionality of miners in relation not only to each other, but also to the government and environmental NGOs. This positionality stems from the impact that insecurity and persecution has on the formation of a collective identity, and I have shown how this is reflected in narratives and discourse.

This concluding chapter starts with a brief discussion of recent developments in Peru. This is centered on the latest Government intervention aimed at removing ASM activity from parts of Madre de Dios. I reflect briefly on what this intervention may mean for day-to-day life in the communities I visited and also on the intervention’s chance of success. The following section then elaborates on the key empirical contributions made by this research, referring back to the questions that were posed at the outset. In section 10.3, I reflect on my empirical findings to provide theoretical contributions to our understanding of translocality. Having identified the existence of temporal friction within the translocal communities, I suggest that a long-term view points to the existence of three broad categories of livelihood trajectory. I then revisit the diagram presented in chapter 4 and adapt it to take into account these temporal dimensions, enabling a transferability of the theory to other precarious migratory livelihoods in the Global South. I conclude by suggesting future avenues of research, particularly in light of the recent events in Madre de Dios related to Operación Mercurio.

## 10.1. Recent Developments

In February 2019, the Peruvian Government launched Operación Mercurio, aimed at removing illegal gold mining from La Pampa (Leas, 2019). Various news reports describe how over the following month, hundreds of army commandos and more than 1,200 police officers went into the area, arresting miners and destroying equipment and buildings (Collyns, 2019; DuPée, 2019; Leas, 2019). Although this is in many ways nothing new, the scale of the intervention is reportedly far bigger than anything seen before in the conflict between the miners and the Peruvian state (Collyns, 2019). A key reason for this is that Madre de Dios has a new governor and unlike the previous one, he appears to be committed to removing ASM from La Pampa (Ibid). These recent events highlight the pertinence of this research given the volatility of the situation in Peru. ASM in Madre de Dios poses a continuing problem for policy, sitting as it does on the nexus between livelihoods and environmental protection, and with the additional complexity created by interpersonal violence, human trafficking and organised crime. The Government’s new approach allows those living in La Pampa to relocate to work within the *Corridor Minero*, where ASM activity will continue to be permitted, at least in theory. The numerous families in Ocongate whose mining activity takes place largely outside of the *Corridor Minero* will therefore need to move or find alternatives to their current livelihood.

A key motivation for writing this thesis derived from the perceived injustice of the extent of demonisation of the migrant miners operating in Madre de Dios. It was clear that the highly mobile nature of ASM was closely linked to the observed environmental and social costs and therefore carried negative connotations. In Peru these costs are particularly high, as migrant miners are seen as a major threat to the conservation of the Amazon. However, many of these Andean migrants are reacting to the entrenched structural inequalities that keep them on the periphery of national development, as well as the increasing environmental pressures to traditional agricultural livelihoods caused by climate change. If we accept that the causes of the currently unsustainable ASM sector are found in remote areas, then it follows that the solutions are too. However, Operación Mercurio does seek to provide some alternative livelihood options; the plan is solely focused on economic development in the Amazon and not the Andes (Leas, 2019). This does not address the issue at its source and has rightly led to scepticism about the operation’s potential for success. Thus, as I have shown throughout this thesis, the extent to which migration shapes ASM necessitates an understanding of the community at the translocal level.

## 10.2. ASM as a Translocal Livelihood

While migration is widely acknowledged to be a key characteristic of ASM, analysis of ASM communities has largely remained spatially bound. Communities of destination and origin continue to be seen as discrete places and thus research tends to focus on either one or the other. While several academics have argued that transformative ASM policy requires a deeper understanding of mining communities, these claims and suggestions have usually been aimed at the local level (Hilson et al., 2007). This thesis has presented ASM as a translocal livelihood that links together multiple localities through flows of people, money and information, creating a translocal community. This has emphasised the relationships that cross spatial divides, in doing so connecting these places which then develop and change in relation to each other. Through adopting this translocal livelihoods approach, the research has illuminated the nuances of the migratory processes within the sector, pointing to divergent livelihood trajectories that have implications for community dynamics. Moreover, the adoption of the Bourdieusian conceptualisation of social fields underpinning this notion of the translocal community has allowed for an analysis of the contestations among community members and between them and external forces.

At the start of fieldwork, I spoke to numerous academics and NGO representatives in Lima who said that they could not comprehend why anyone would choose to get involved in such a dangerous, life-threatening activity as ASM. While debates amongst academics have moved on to thinking about the capital interests at play in artisanal mining, in Peru it is still important to emphasise the structural inequalities that exist for Andean people which may lead them to engage in the sector. This is particularly due to the widespread demonisation in the media and public discourse regarding artisanal gold miners. Through focusing on migration in ASM, rather than solely the activity of mining itself, I have tried to emphasise the structural inequalities that have contributed to the explosion in mining activity in Madre de Dios. Furthermore, the descriptive introduction to the motivations of migrant engagement in ASM provided a starting point from which to explore the nuances of translocal livelihoods, particularly the differentiations in livelihood trajectories. At interesting point to note is also the tendency for people to mine due to a family history of mining and/or pressure from social norms. This suggests a mining identity that goes beyond the individual (Bryceson & Jønsson, 2010), a theme that came up repeatedly throughout the research.

In the Bourdieusian social field, individuals must be thought of as occupying different positions, based on their relative endowments, and therefore as having different interests. I have shown that the people working in mining towns and settlements in Madre de Dios can be broadly divided into four types of migrant: permanent, temporary, floating and non-migrant. The permanent miners differ slightly from that of the career miners identified by Bryceson and Jønsson (2010) because the latter were highly mobile, whereas here they are defined by their rootedness within the destination mining community. The permanent miners see Laberinto as their home and direct their investments to building a life within it, often showing a desire for the development of a sense of (local) community. The temporary miners meanwhile have retained an active orientation towards home, or in some cases, are working in ASM specifically to facilitate a move to an urban centre. While the floating miners may not have an active orientation towards anywhere, they are also extremely mobile and are not invested in any of the discrete places within the translocal social field. However, over time there is a tendency for both floating miners and non-migrants to switch between categories.

A further empirical contribution to the ASM literature was made through exploring the second of the four questions posed at the start of the thesis, which related to the role of women in the ASM community. This has been possible through conceptualising the social field of ASM as a wide web of translocal livelihoods that encompass both origin and destination communities. Firstly, I have highlighted the gendered mobility inherent in ASM and the impact of that mobility on intra-household relationships and the agency of women. Secondly, I have illustrated the myriad ways women contribute to the maintenance of community relationships in the absence of their husband and the increasing difficulties they face due to the negativity surrounding the sector in public discourse. Thirdly, through a focus on the entire ASM sector rather than just those individuals directly involved in ASM activity, I have shown the direct contributions that women make to the maintenance of the household’s livelihood strategy. These findings add to an emerging body of literature that has started to shed light on women in ASM communities (Buss, 2018; Buss et al., 2019; Huggins et al., 2017; Rutherford & Buss, 2019).

Conceptualising the translocal ASM community as a Bourdieusian social field enables us to understand how tensions and contestations are created by the relative positions of the actors within the social field. As highlighted earlier, these positions are not just determined by relative capital endowments but also by the dynamic nature of translocal livelihoods. Drawing on the typologies identified in chapter 6, I have shown how these tensions arise over ASM activity, particularly in relation to access to land and labour mobility. While to some extent these tensions are created by relative capital endowments, such as the ownership of concessions, they are also related to the temporary and floating miners’ disregard of local norms. Fisher (2007) has observed that artisanal miners may intentionally exclude themselves from dominant society to gain access to illicit financial opportunities, but here we see miners also excluding themselves from the local mining community. Such behaviour is not just observed in relation to mining activity, and may extend to the protection of the local environment or investing in local culture, for example. In general what has been shown is how divergent livelihood trajectories, and the differing local embeddedness that result, leads to forms of contestation that can be characterised as temporal frictions.

The final chapter of this thesis explored the various ways that the miners in Madre de Dios positioned themselves against other actors, and in doing so shed light on the political situation with the Government. I frame this as conflict between the social field of ASM and the dominant society and particularly the field of power, which I suggest is the Peruvian state. The contribution I make in this chapter stems from bringing together theory on translocal social fields with ideas about place identity and deviance and applying them to ASM. In doing so, I add to our understanding of identity in mining settlements, which other researchers have often only discussed in relation to the mining profession. Related to this is the fact that the permanent miners often positioned themselves against the miners that remained transient. It was often claimed that these individuals were more likely to be working illegally and were therefore more ‘deviant’. The relative positions of people within the social field also affect the way they respond to the on-going conflict with the Government. Most notably, the temporary miners are far less concerned with engaging in forms of resistance against the Government, primarily because they are not as invested in the local area as the permanent miners are. Although such contestations may not be violent, they do highlight how the relative positions of actors within the field can affect the importance they attach to engaging in resistance.

Chapter 9 moves on focus on the positionality of people living in mining towns and settlements, building on knowledge of ASM in Madre de Dios. Chapter 4 emphasised how the notion of ‘place’ retained its importance in the translocal community and this becomes clear in the analysis here in two main ways. Firstly, the on-going conflict with the Government and the series of violent interdictions threaten not just livelihoods but also place. For those permanent inhabitants of Laberinto that are relatively more embedded in the local area, this makes life particularly insecure. Secondly, spatial definitions of illegality have retained central importance and are used to create both an in-group identity and the construction of an out-group that further bolsters that identity. Thus while a collective identity is formed through a shared location and profession, it is strengthened by feelings of insecurity and injustice. I highlighted how this identity was reflected in the narratives adopted by local people in a bid to justify their own behaviour. I drew on concepts of labelling to analyse these discourses and narratives, bringing these ideas together with a Bourdieusian analysis that viewed them as a reflection of the contestations that occur within and between social fields.

I argue that it is this shared identity that leads community members to work together in order to protect each other from both foreigners and the State and to organise resistance against what are perceived to be unjust policies. Academics and policy makers must be aware of this identity when attempting to engage local people in dialogue, not least because it represents a further layer of complexity that may inhibit attempts to resettle miners or provide alternate livelihoods, for example. However, as we know from existing literature, within the translocal community people can ascribe very different meanings to place (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). While there is undoubtedly a strong collective identity amongst the permanent residents of Laberinto, their more transient neighbours are not only less likely to feel a strong attachment to the local area, but they may also feel less threatened by insecurity as it is easier for them to move on or return home.

10.3. Towards a Theoretical Understanding of the Translocal Social Field

This thesis has focused on the case of a translocal gold mining community in Peru, which creates a web of connections between multiple localities in the Andes and Amazon. While the empirical findings that have been presented add to our knowledge of the Peruvian context specifically and to migratory ASM livelihoods more generally, there are also some theoretical contributions which pertain to the broader concepts of translocality and translocal livelihoods. Given the informal and often illegal nature of ASM in Madre de Dios, it may be tempting to dismiss it as an extreme case. However, many of the broad trends and emerging issues are symptomatic of translocality and informality, and can therefore potentially be generalised to a range of other precarious migratory livelihoods, of which there are many in the Global South.

In the translocal livelihoods literature, authors regularly criticise linear migration models yet still focus on migratory systems that are formed through migration from rural to urban areas (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005; Naumann & Greiner, 2016; Steinbrink, 2009). However, throughout the Global South, people and households also rely on migration to rural and peri-urban areas for occupations such as agricultural labouring. This is particularly true for ASM, where mine sites are unlikely to be situated in urban zones. In Peru, Andean migrants travel high up into the mountains to La Rinconada or to Madre de Dios to work in ASM, basing themselves in small, and often informal, mining towns or even in temporary camps. This migration to non-urbanised areas presents a migratory system, or rather a social field, very different from the ones explored in the current literature on translocal livelihoods.

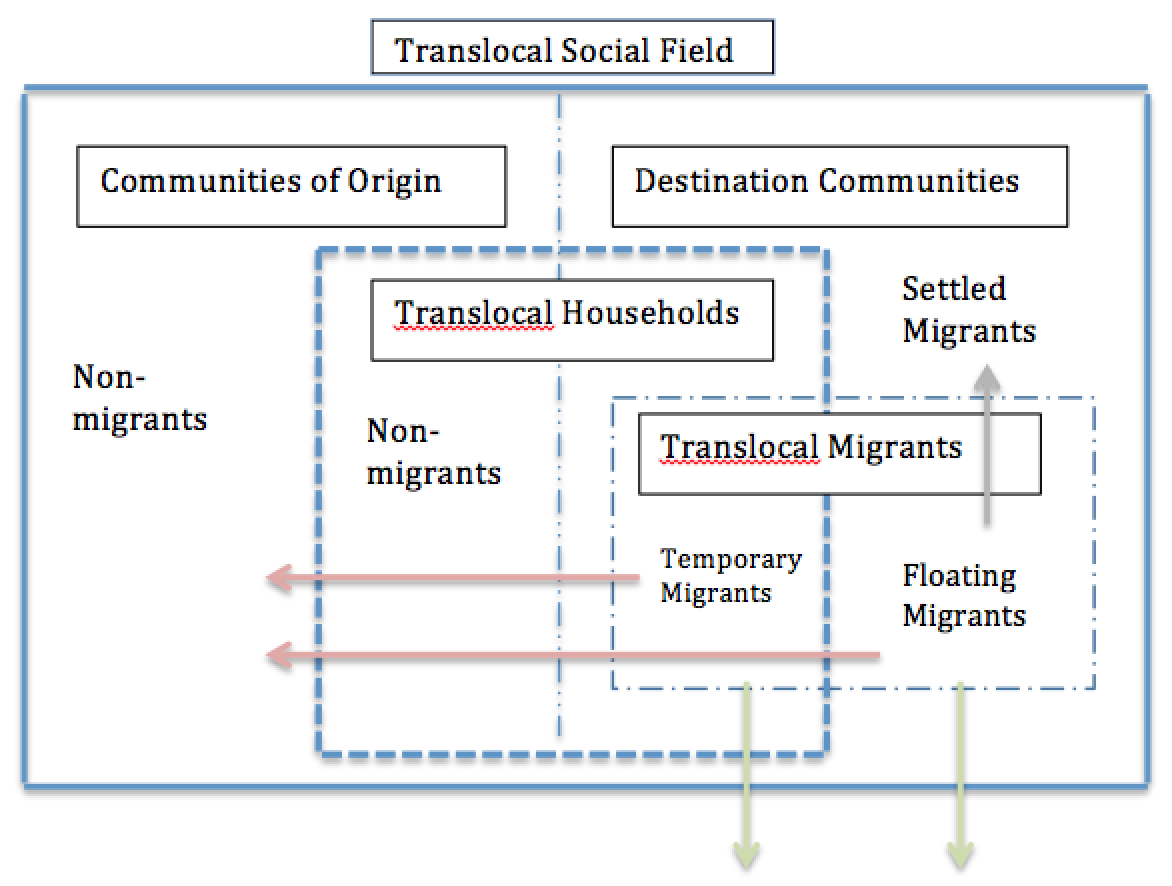
This focus on rural and peri-urban destinations adds to the understanding of translocality in two main ways. Firstly, it has brought these somewhat peripheral locations into the discussions about translocal livelihoods, highlighting how further nuance is needed when thinking about migration destinations and the social fields they create. A further point here is that in the web of connections that forms the translocal field, urban locations may represent an earlier point on a migrant’s trajectory, or a desired future destination once enough money had been saved. This reinforces the importance of the temporal dimension of translocality. Secondly, studying locations with a low population emphasised the impact that highly mobile livelihoods had on the discrete places within the translocal social field. The unstable nature of the local communities was illuminated because people were more exposed to population changes than they might be in a large city. However, while this provides insight into community dynamics in rural and peri-urban destinations, it also has potential implications for urban destinations. We know from other work on migration that migrants tend to congregate in smaller areas or enclaves of cities, such as slums or other informal settlements, or locations on the periphery of cities (Brøgger, 2019; Cockburn, Romero, & Lucci, 2015; Garland et al, 2007; Guo, 2007). The temporal frictions seen in Madre de Dios between those on different livelihood trajectories are perhaps symptomatic of a more general problem in localities with a dense migrant population.

This observation of divergent livelihood trajectories necessitates that a temporal dimension is incorporated into conceptualisations of translocality. To my knowledge this has not been previously explored and constitutes an important theoretical contribution of this research. The concept of translocality was initially defined as the embeddedness of people in more than one place and society (Appadurai, 1996). When applied to livelihoods, it denotes an individual’s movement between multiple locations through the practice of his or her livelihood. There are therefore inherent spatial dynamics within this conceptualisation as the individual moves between various, discrete locations. Within the highly mobile social field of ASM then, relative embeddedness in these places can contribute to one’s position within the field just as much as their relative capital endowments. However, what we have seen throughout this thesis is that each individual’s relative embeddedness in these locations is not static, and is instead dependent on their livelihood trajectory. Moreover, these trajectories differ between individuals, leading to temporal frictions that come to characterise society in the most transient locations within the social field.

Returning to the migrant typologies identified in chapter 6 - permanent, temporary, floating and non-migrant – it is worth noting that the permanent migrants were settled in Laberinto and had no desire to move anywhere. Instead, they were keen to invest in their local area and hoped to develop a strong community spirit amongst the residents. While these individuals remain within the translocal social field of ASM, they are no longer continuing their own livelihood in a translocal manner. We can think of them as having *diminishing translocality*. In a snapshot in time, both the temporary miners and the floating miners are highly translocal, regardless of whether they are part of a translocal household. Over time however, they may either return to their community of origin or choose to settle in the local area. This may be any number of reasons, but is particularly linked to the stage of life they are at. In section 6.4.3 it was shown that the main reason that floating migrants choose to settle in a destination community is because they find a husband/wife and have a family, thus highlighting further nuances of translocal livelihoods. As they become more embedded in one or other location they also have *diminishing translocality*, but this may occur in either direction. I think it is therefore helpful to think of *diminishing-returning* and *diminishing-settling translocality.* Finally, we have seen that many migrant miners in Madre de Dios eventually hope to move on to a new location entirely when they have saved enough money, usually in an urban centre. I refer to this as *reorientated traslocality*, which may or may not itself diminish over time.

In chapter 4 I introduced a very loose framework for conceptualising the translocal social field, which brought together ideas of translocality and translocal livelihoods and rooted them explicitly in Bourdieusian theory. However, not only are differentiations between migrants in terms of their relative spatial movement generally not considered in the translocality literature, neither is this temporal dimension of mobility. This is interesting, as Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of social fields allows for changes over time. In fact, the realities of divergent livelihood trajectories require us to think different about translocality and consider its temporal dimensions, which inherently brings it more in line with a Bourdieusian analysis. To illustrate this, in figure 5 below I have adapted the diagram that was presented earlier in section 4.3.2.

**Figure 5: The Translocal Community as a Social Field**



Similar to the diagram presented earlier in section 4.3.2, here we can see the translocal social field encompasses both destination and origin communities and, crucially, both migrants and non-migrants. Also important to note is that not everyone who conducts their livelihood translocally is part of a translocal household, but those that are maintain an active orientation towards home. For this reason, I have added an additional box for translocal migrants, acknowledging that many migrants may not feel a strong connection to a household in their origin community. Furthermore, while the diagram in section 4.3.2 provided a static snapshot of the social field, here I have plotted the divergent livelihood trajectories that result in the temporal frictions that we see emerging in Madre de Dios.

One significant change in figure 5 from the diagram presented in section 4.3.2 is that I have added a box for translocal migrants. The people occupying the ‘translocal migrants’ box can be thought of as having a high level of translocality. Drawing on the typology introduced in chapter 6, this would include both temporary migrants and floating migrants. I have mapped these into the diagram. The diagram also has broad livelihood trajectories plotted on, which are coloured to correspond to the types of translocality discussed above; *diminishing-settling* (grey), *diminishing-returning* (red) and *reorientated* (green). For example, we can see that floating migrants may choose to settle in the destination community, perhaps after meeting a husband/wife, to return home to their community of origin, or to eventually move on somewhere outside of the social field, such as to an urban center to start a new business. There may however be some years before they do any of these things, preferring instead to remain for some time as a translocal migrant.

The levels of crime and violence present in the mine sites of Madre de Dios means that the area provides an interesting lens through which to view contestations. Although Bourdieu’s ideas about social practice have been applied to livelihoods in the past (Etzold et al., 2012; Sakdapolrak, 2014), such analysis has not considered the emerging contestations to the extent that they have been explored in the criminality literature (Shammus & Sandberg, 2016). I have found that concepts such as labelling and neutralisation are useful for understanding how these contestations manifest themselves within the translocal community. Furthermore, adding to work done by Sandberg (2008) and Sammus and Sandberg (2016), I have shown that while social fields are ruled by their own internal logic, this does not mean that the internal norms cannot be broken. There are rewards and penalties available to those that break the rules, and this manifests itself in the crime and violence observed in mining communities. Thus again while academics have noted the gains that can be made by going against the dominant society (De Boeck, 1998; Fisher, 2007), here we can see that this extends to the norms of the social field rather than just those external to it.

10.2. Future research

Although this research has added to our knowledge of ASM livelihoods and made important theoretical contributions to our knowledge of both translocality and social fields, many questions remain. This is mostly due to time and resource constraints which limited the scope of fieldwork but the dynamic and constantly evolving sector of ASM also continues evoke further questions. There are therefore several avenues for further research that would build on the findings of this thesis. I will present here first the theoretical ideas that could be explored and developed further through additional research, before considering the questions that remain about ASM in Madre de Dios. These questions have arisen both through the process of fieldwork and analysis, but also due to recent events which are likely to have had big impacts on the translocal ASM community.

Given the theoretical contributions that have been made to the concept of translocality and translocal livelihoods, an important avenue of research would be exploring the extent to which this is generalizable to other contexts. There are three distinct contexts where this could be tested. The first is other ASM contexts, including elsewhere in Peru as well as other countries with a high levels of mining activity. However, it is also important to understand how far the theoretical concept of ‘temporal frictions’ and the divergent forms of translocality identified here are generalizable to non-ASM contexts. For this reason, I suggest exploring them in the context of rural-urban migration, with a particular focus on the marginalised migrant communities that reside in slums, often on the edges of the city. Such a study could retain a focus on Peru and Latin America, but there are also many other contexts where migrants find themselves living together in precarious locations. In some cases, such as in the case of migrant rickshaw drivers in Bangladesh for example, they may even share a livelihood.

The recent developments outlined above and the impact on local people also warrant further investigation. Operación Mercurio undoubtedly changes the rules of the game within the social field with massive implications for the people that depend on the sector. It would be particularly interesting to return to Laberinto and revisiting the interview respondents to ask for their reflections on what has changed. Although the Government’s intervention is aimed at clearing out mining activity that happens outside of the *Corridor Minero*, the residents of Laberinto, Boca Union and numerous other settlements are likely to be affected in numerous ways. Firstly, the Government’s policy will still prohibit the use of mercury and working in rivers (Leas, 2019), which many of the miners I interviewed object to. Secondly, the formalisation processes is likely to continue to be long and difficult, particularly for temporary miners. Thirdly, the clampdown on mining in La Pampa is likely to lead to an influx of miners into the mining corridor. In section 7.3, I noted that some of the permanent miners in Laberinto feared that the criminals currently residing in La Pampa would eventually find their way to their town and questioned what this would mean for the local community. It was also mentioned that previous clampdowns in La Pampa had led to an increase in crime rates, primarily because fewer employment opportunities meant that people had no other way to make money. This suggests a potentially negative outcome for the residents of Laberinto. It would also be interesting to see how the narratives and discourses discussed in chapter 9 have changed as a result of the intervention’s outcome.

This research was restricted somewhat due to violence and insecurity in La Pampa. If Operación Mercurio is successful, we might expect many of the miners and other residents of La Pampa to start working within the *Corridor Minero.* Interviewing them would therefore become much easier. This would allow for a more thorough exploration of life within La Pampa and also an understanding of their reaction to being forced out. Understanding why people choose to relocate to another mining settlement rather than returning home or switching livelihoods is important for understanding the implications of policies and interventions aimed at reducing mining activity. There is however some cynicism around the potential the current intervention has for success. The structural factors that lead people to work in La Pampa in the first place have not been resolved. Rather than eliminating mining activity, the presence of military and police forces is perhaps more likely to push illegal mining deeper into jungle (DuPée, 2019). This also poses interesting questions for the success of such interventions that could be explored through further research.

The possibility of failure for Operación Mercurio reinforces the need to take a translocal approach when both problematising ASM and looking for solutions. As noted above, the intervention does not address poor economic development in the Andes and the structural inequalities that lead to so many people migrating to the Amazon’s ASM sector (Leas, 2019). Although the provision of alternative livelihoods is suggested, the success of these has been shown elsewhere to be limited (Banchirigah, 2008; Hilson & Banchirigah, 2009; Tschakert, 2009; Wilson et al., 2015). Furthermore, the governor of Madre de Dios has openly acknowledged that it is not possible to provide jobs for all of the 20-30,000 people residing in La Pampa (Collyns, 2019). While this will inevitably have an impact on mining settlements in Madre de Dios, it will also be felt in Andean towns and villages. A separate strand of research could look in more detail at this, understanding how households recover when a ‘shock’ occurs to their ASM livelihood. Regardless of the ultimate success or failure of Operación Mercurio, ASM is an inherently unsustainable activity and many of the temporary miners in Laberinto particular were already aware of the decreasing profitability of the sector.

A related point here, although one not necessarily linked to the impact of Operación Mercurio, is the links between mining areas. Although this research focused on Madre de Dios, Peru’s other large zone for informal mining is the town of La Rinconada. At 5,100m above sea level in the Andean region of Puno, the town is home to a population of around 30,000 people and is the highest permanent settlement in the world. Although I was able to take a short visit to La Rinconada I did not have the logistical support necessary to conduct research. However, several households in Ocongate incorporated migration to both La Rinconada and La Pampa into their livelihood and the connections between these places have not been explored. La Rinconada remains under researched, due to a combination of high insecurity, inaccessibility and the relatively low interest of the area for conservationists when compared with the Amazon.

END

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1. The informal mining town of La Rinconada is high in the Peruvian Andes, over 5,000m above sea-level, and here mining takes place inside the mountain. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ‘Mestizos’ are people of a mixed European and American Indian descent [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. While Quechua and to a lesser extent Aymara are spoken in the Andes, there are also hundreds of native Amazonian languages [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Obrero* is the Spanish term for a mine worker or labourer [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A *chifa* is a restaurant which sells Chinese-Peruvian fusion cuisine. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Guinea-pigs have a high ritual value in Andean folk culture. Many families breed them for household consumption (Gade, 1967). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The valley of the Apurimac, Ene and Mantaro rivers (also knows as the VRAEM) is a geo-political area of Peru which is extremely poor and produces a lot of cocaine, and is therefore known as being violent and dangerous [↑](#footnote-ref-7)