Failing like a state

Preventive resettlements as climate change risk reduction and adaptation strategies, and the curious case of Belén

Master thesis in Development, Environment and Cultural Change

Centre for Development and the Environment

UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

November, 2019

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2019

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http://www.duo.uio.no/

Trykk: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

Abstract

This thesis studies an on-going state-implemented climate-changed induced preventive resettlement process in the Peruvian Amazon, implemented as a risk reduction and adaptation strategy. The thesis examines the resettled population's experiences, and asks why the process was implemented in such a way that it left the resettled population worse off than before. The answers are sought in the ideas, practices and capacities of the Peruvian state.

Resettlements are meant to move populations to enhance their quality of life, and the particular advantage of preventive resettlements is the possibility of planning ahead. However, these are complex and multi-dimensional processes that often exceed the state's capacity to plan and execute, with potential disastrous impacts in the population whose lives they were meant to improve.

Drawing from a multi-disciplinary perspective that includes state theories, postcolonial perspectives on development and security studies, the research aims at analyzing the process and impacts of the resettlement, and unveiling the reasons that explain the outcomes.

The conclusions highlight the significance of state capacity, political power, adequate policy approaches, and recognition of cultural heritage, in the implementation of resettlement processes.

Acknowledgements

Yo hubiera sido Premio Nobel de Física,

pero el sol, el vino, la música, la playa, los amigos,

el amor, y el desamor, me lo impidieron.

- adapted from “La Novela de La Isla. Cuarteto de mi vida. Chapter the first: El cine” by Peruvian poet Luis Hernandez Camarero.

Well, this was fun.

First, I want to thank the amazing community of Belenians for sharing their lives, hopes and struggles with me; and everyone that contributed with this research, especially Belén, Lucía and Martín. I could not have understand this as deeply without your help. Also to the pishcotas/os that made my time in Iquitos colorful and unforgettable.

I also owe a huge thank you to Benedicte Bull, my super-supervisor, for her guidance to translate my tangled ideas into a *legible* project. Benedicte, you and I surely speak different languages, literally and figuratively, so thank you for your infinite patience too. To the nerdiest group of friends I have had- my SUM family, and to Grete, Johanna, Terje, Erin and Una, thank you all for your friendship and encouragement. To Sarah, for the dinners and treats dropped by during my long writing nights, and for all those laughs that surely kept me from writing this thesis any faster. A Andrea, mi amiga improbable, gracias por estar siempre ahí: bárbara. Santi, my SUM roommate, and chocolate and memes provider extraordinaire, you were great company. Casi nos pica, but we made it!
And to the friendships that survived this thesis: thank you. To those that didn’t: I’m sorry.

To my parents, to Giuli, Coqui and Patty, thank you for always rooting for me and for the long-distance hugs. Also, to my loyal life companion, Sonqo, for keeping me sane, taking me on walks, and letting me borrow her bed for emergency naps. I hope she knows that this is all to give her the backyard she deserves. To Gudrun, Anne-Line, Kristoffer and SUM, thank you for allowing me her company throughout the program. You are the best.

And last, a big shout-out to myself for keeping it up despite the rain. And to all students out there feeling like they’ll never make it after starting their thesis with a “how to write a thesis” google search, you got this.

So, here we go: Mitosis es…

List of Acronyms and Key Definitions

CAL	Loreto Architects College (CAL)
CENEPRED	National Center for Estimation, Prevention and Reduction of Disaster Risk *(Centro Nacional de Estimación, Prevención y Reducción del Riesgo de Desastres)*
CSOSS	The Copenhagen School of Security Studies
DRRR	Disaster Risk Reduction and Response
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
IRR	Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction
MVCS	Ministry of Housing, Construction and Sanitation *(Ministerio de Vivienda, Construcción y Saneamiento)*
MIDIS	Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion *(Ministerio de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social)*
MIMP	Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations *(Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vunerables)*
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PCM	Council of Ministries *(Presidencia del Consejo de Ministros)*
SINAGERD	National System of Risk and Disaster Management *(Sistema Nacional de Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres)*
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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1 Introduction

Planned resettlements are carried out for a variety of reasons, such as development, environmental degradation, man–made disasters or natural disasters, including those consequence of climate change. When it comes to the latter, it is the most vulnerable who bear the major effects of it. In light of the current global climate crisis, international agencies are encouraging states to implement preventive planned resettlements within borders as part of their climate change adaptation strategies, in order to reduce risks, promote sustainable development and thus, enhance people's quality of life (Opitz Stapleton et al. 2017). Although planned resettlements have been widely studied, those that are meant to prevent climate-change risks have been given less attention.

As adaptation strategies, preventive resettlements are considered great opportunities to "build a new urban area that provides an adequate setting for the possibility of obtaining resilience and improved livelihoods for future dwellers" (Desmaison 2015, 5). Moreover, since these are complex processes that involve the removal of people from one physical space to another, affecting permanently their social relationships and access to resources, they are also environmental and sociopolitical processes. Therefore, due to their potential to completely transform people's lives in all dimensions, scholars and international agencies recommend these to be implemented only after exhausting all other alternatives (Ferris 2012, Wayessa and Nygren 2016). When resettlement resulted unavoidable, the recommendation is to plan ahead, involving the community in the decision making and implementation processes, for these are key to mitigate their impacts.

Nonetheless, despite all the international guidelines and recommendations, there is still skepticism within academia in relation to the potential of preventive resettlements to improve communities' livelihoods based on the great number of failures around the world. Though these processes are meant to increase people's options and enhancing their livelihoods, often the opposite occurs and resettled communities often find their well-beings, agency and options diminished. In fact, the failure of resettlements seems to be the norm rather than the exception. What can explain this? (De Wet 2001)

Resettlement processes, due to their potential to change social behaviors, attitudes, and environments, may be considered social-engineering processes, or even totalizing processes. Moreover, these are often implemented with top-down approaches and ignoring social elements or local contexts, with blind reliance in science and technology, and in narrow notions of development and progress that do not adjust to local realities. Such approaches to resettlements, inspired by what Scott has called a high-modernist ideology, have been widely criticized, particularly in the context of authoritarian states with strong state capacities. These seek to control society and the environment by making them legible, and thus possible to dominate (Scott 1998).

However, there is less literature on the same kind of ambitious approach to resettlement implementation in scenarios of democracies and states with weak capacities. In these contexts, it is not only climate change related hazards that put communities at risk, but also socioeconomic and political vulnerabilities, such as poor governance, weak institutions, or lack of infrastructure and services that may bring communities to an even more vulnerable situation.

On the other hand, since climate change disasters entail significant risks to people, they have the potential to set off the alarms and be treated as security issues, opening policy windows, reducing democratic accountability and allowing the bypassing of regular processes, which may result in detrimental measures to alibi underlying interests (Warner and Boas 2017). These situations are facilitated by scenarios of weak statehood, where it is often that informal politics and private agendas motivate state action for political or economic gain, rather than for an actual desire of control. The consequence of these private benefit motivated interventions may result in badly planned or unnecessary programs or projects, having deep implications in the people. Thus, all of these factors enhance the potential of preventive resettlements to fail, even when their main advantage is that these allow for thorough long-term and holistic planning.

The empirical case object of analysis in this thesis pertains to a case-study of an on-going, state-led, climate change related preventive resettlement process in the Peruvian Amazon rainforest, in which most of the community to be relocated resists to move despite the better conditions that the government has promised to provide. The area to be relocated is called Bajo Belén and serves as the main port and market in the

Peruvian amazon. It has been built in the floodplain of a river that floods 6 months a year, turning it into a floating city in which its habitants have lived for over 50 years.

In year 2014, the Peruvian government presented to the citizens of Bajo Belén a plan to rebuild their city and enhance their living conditions due to the imminent hazards of flooding and the extreme contamination it faces. Later that plan was dropped under the claim that it was technically unfeasible, and a decree declaring Belén in emergency state was published in an expedited process, leading to a relocation plan for its citizens. Nuevo Belén *(New Belén)*, a satellite city situated about 21 kilometers away from the original location, was promised to be built with all facilities and basic services that were lacking in the original location. Additionally, occupational training would be provided to start entrepreneurships that would allow the community to earn their livelihoods, and new houses and property rights would be granted to the transferring people in exchange of their old houses. The resettlement project was informed to the citizens once it had already been decided by the authorities, leaving them out of any planning or consultation, which created tension between both.

After certain resistance, less than 30% of the population has been relocated in an area that does not have basic services yet, generating widespread discontent. Finally, due to various reasons, political and budgetary, the project been advancing intermittently, much slower than originally projected, leaving hundreds of families in a transitional state in this unfinished settlement.

1.1 Rationale and research questions

This thesis aims to contribute to the understandings of preventive resettlement processes and the complexity of its impacts in the context of a weak, centralized state. I also attempt to shed light on the implications of combining top-down approaches and weak statehood. In addition, I analyze the implications of unidimensional development approaches informing policy design and implementation. The underlying issues are related to the potential for the (mis)use of climate change narratives, and the elements that influence these, such as political or economic interests.

In relation to the above, my research questions are:

- How has the resettlement process impacted on the livelihood of the population of Bajo Belen?
- Why was the resettlement process implemented in such a way as to produce these impacts?

The analysis product of these questions can lead policy and rule makers to reconsider or strengthen the guidelines in relation to planned resettlements, and hopefully encourage them to take careful consideration of the ideas that ideas that shape them, especially within culturally and geographically diverse countries. It also aims at inspiring those in charge of implementing adaptation strategies to find less disruptive alternatives to resettlement; and in unavoidable cases, to address it with holistic approaches. Finally, it hopes to raise awareness to the potential dangers of instrumentalizing climate change narratives by those in power, especially in scenarios of weak statehood, considering that for the great challenge it represents to the population worldwide, climate change is now embedded in notions of security (Blair 2006).

1.2 Resettlement processes in Peru

The history of resettlements processes in Peru has been generally a history of failed government interventions carried out with statutory authority and for reasons mainly related with development and natural-resource extraction investments. However, preventive resettlement processes as adaptation strategies to climate change risks have surged as a new measure within national regulations.

The release of the country's first policy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Response[1] (DRRR) in 2011 aimed to keep populations away from sources of harm. It also encouraged the creation of the National Center for Estimation, Prevention and Reduction of Disaster Risk (CENEPRED), as a public governmental agency part of the National System of Risk and Disaster Management (SINAGERD). These institutions are in charge of the formulation and implementation of the National Plan

[1] Policies aiming at anticipating and reducing risks (PreventionWeb 2015)

for Risk and Disaster Management and of advising the central government, as well as the different public and private entities that integrate the SINAGERD on policies, guidelines and mechanisms related to the processes of estimation, prevention, risk reduction and reconstruction. These programs and institutions promote interdisciplinary and multi-sectorial approaches to DRRR by encouraging the participation of different institutions, such as the Ministries of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) and of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP), among others that are relevant for their purposes (CENEPRED).

According to CENEPRED preventive resettlements processes are a practice that aims at protect the lives of the community from risks, guarantee their rights, public services and private goods, as well as their economic and social sustainability and development (CENEPRED).

A regular preventive process in Peru starts with the local government preparing a technical feasibility study, together with the municipality of the province or the district affected, in order to identify the receiving area, the public services compromised and the population to be resettled. The study also analyzes the status of the territory to be effected and assesses the budget required for the resettlement process. After this is completed, the municipality declares the target area at high immitigable risk and submits the declaratory to the Ministry of Housing, Construction and Sanitation (MVCS) (CENEPRED 2016). With the favorable opinion of the MVCS for the viability of the process, this is submitted to CENEPRED for its conformity and only with it, submitted to for evaluation to the Council of Ministries (PCM). If the project met the technical requirements, it would be approved by a ministerial resolution that mandates the resettlement of the selected population (CENEPRED 2016).

The implementation is in charge of the local government unless it lacked technical or economic resources, in which case the regional or national governments take over. Additionally, a multisectoral committee formed by representatives from: a) the local government, b) the regional government, c) technical/scientific institutions, d) ministries and e) population, is required to be in constant coordination with the institution in charge of the resettlement, in order to assist, monitor and follow up its implementation. CENEPRED provides technical advice in all stages (CENEPRED 2016). Thus, according to my informants at CENEPRED, preventive resettlement

processes would usually take at least one or two years to design, considering the number of entities that must be involved, and the assessments (feasibility, community, soil, etc) that must be carried out before deciding its aptness.

Finally, resettlement processes in Peru must –theoretically- follow these principles: a) decision-making processes must be done close to citizens and local governments, b) development opportunities and access to basic services must be generated, c) constant monitoring of risks must be performed, d) recognition of communities' input as the best input, e) disaster risk reduction and adaptation measures must be sequential processes, f) "processes must be multi-sectorial and comprehensive to guarantee transparency, effectiveness, consistency, coherence, and continuity" (Desmaison 2015, 20, PCM 2014, CR 2012).

Although the spirit of the national regulations that guide all stages in these processes are aligned with the recommendations issued by international agencies, institutions and academia, there seems to be a twist when it comes to their implementation, as I will show with the analysis of the case-study.

1.3 Theoretical framework and structure of the thesis

This was a multi-disciplinary master's program. Hence, this is a widely multi-disciplinary thesis.

Resettlement processes are complex issues that involve not only the consideration of physical displacement but the socio-political and economic processes, and relations of power they entail. Therefore, they must be explained, analyzed and understood taking into account the context in which they are executed, from a broad variety of disciplines. Therefore, this thesis is developed with a feminist approach, drawing from insights on human mobility, Weberian concepts of authority, state theories, postcolonial perspectives on development and modernity, political ecology, constructivism and security studies. With the support of these theories and concepts, I attempt to analyze and interpret the resettlement and its outcomes, and respond to the research questions.

This thesis is organized in six chapters. The following Chapter 2 describes the methodology and research design used to collect the information for my research,

based on a case study approached with qualitative methods. I also reflect upon my position as a researcher and expose some ethical considerations.

In order to set the foundation for the analysis and discussion in this thesis, Chapter 3 presents the literature review of the topics from which I draw the theoretical framework for the analysis of the case study that will allow me to respond to the research questions. First, I discuss human mobility linked to climate change, and narrow down the scope to preventive resettlement processes and its multidimensionality. Then I present high-modernism, development and modernity, centralism and weak statehood, concepts I will use to analyze the ideas and structures in which the resettlement takes place, and that influence its impacts. The last section of the literature review explains a possible agenda-setting process for this resettlement.

Chapter 4 contains the description and context of the case study, which I analyze in Chapter 5, building up from the theoretical framework. The analysis refers to the impacts of the resettlement in the population and the interpretations for it in the context of the ideas, processes and practices of the Peruvian state. Chapter 6 follows with the conclusions to my research and its meanings in a broader picture.

2 Methodology and research design

This chapter aims to explain the methods chosen to analyze the case study object of my research project, which has been approached by using qualitative research methods.

I chose to carry out my research for this thesis using qualitative methods as they allow for a deeper analysis. They also allow a thorough understanding of the relocation process, the policies related to it and the dynamics within the government and the community. These are said to allow the researcher to explore a broader spectrum of the everyday life, the motivations, the way our research participants conceive life and "the way that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meaning that they generate" (Mason 2002, 1). Additionally, qualitative methods also enrich the comprehension of the contexts and realities in which the data is gathered because it stresses the intimate relation between the researcher and the object of study (Rettberg et al. 2018) (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). The qualitative methods used for the production of this thesis are a case study, semi-structured interviews, literature review, analysis of gray and secondary literature, and participatory observation, which I will describe below.

2.1 Case study

Moses and Knutsen define case-studies as stories with the purpose of generating cases of something (Moses and Knutsen 2012). Case study research is a method that becomes handy when the issue of study is related with community-based issues, for example poverty or unemployment, to understand a phenomenon from the actor's perspective and "explain both the process and the outcome of it" (Zainal 2007, 1). It allows researchers to examine the data from "within its real life specific context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin cited in Zainal 2007, 2). I have chosen a single case study design, since I aim at analyzing how the resettlement process carried out by the Peruvian government has affected the population and what explains such outcomes. Although the drawback of this type of approach is that it makes it hard to generalize the conclusion, triangulation makes possible to overcome this issue, as I

explained in 2.3 below. However, Yin explains that rather than thinking about a case-study only as a generalizing sample, it is relevant to think of it as an opportunity to illuminate on theoretical concepts, and that way generalize the findings at conceptual levels beyond the specific case study (Yin 2014).

2.2 Semi structured interviews

Qualitative interviews are described as "conversations with a purpose", where participants unfold a situation from their point of view, and the researcher has the task of respecting the participants framing of the topic, albeit providing certain guidance not to deviate much from the phenomenon of interest (Marshall and Rossman 1995, 80). Semi-structured interviews bring the possibility of being flexible while still addressing key "fixed" questions. The deviations the key questions tend to enrich the conversation by making follow up questions that may arise in the moment, unlike structured interviews that do not allow such a space (Bryman 2016).

However, interviews hold limitations and weaknesses. There is a risk of our interviewees telling us what they think that we want to hear is always present. It is also possible that the way the researcher frames questions make the interviewee uncomfortable, or even that the inexperience of the interviewer does not lead to any rich answers. Therefore, other research methods to complement the data gathering result of importance (Rettberg et al. 2018). On the other hand, I understand the data gathered from the interviews as constructed personal realities, since they come from the different realities and positions of each interviewee. Thus it is the subjective aspects of the information gathered the one the researcher can rely on through interviews (Silverman 2010).

For the purposes of this research, I traveled to Peru for 8 weeks to gather information and carried out 39 semi-structured interviews. In Lima I had the opportunity to interview individually two former MVCS Ministers who were in office during the design and execution of the resettlement process. Talking to them was particularly relevant because the law and policies that originated the process came from the central government, without an active intervention from the local or regional authorities. Through these conversations, I learned how, and under which circumstances the government planned the project and thus, got a better understanding of their rationale

and their perspective on the situation in Belén. These interviews were conducted under an elite interviewing methodology, since these informants had expert and specific knowledge of the resettlement process as they had personally been in charge of it. Their perspectives allowed me to get a most complex understanding of the case study. Other elite interviews were made to bureaucrats of the governmental bodies that took part in the resettlement, for they held positions of power and key knowledge on the field. Elite interviewees can provide an "overall view of an organization" and have the knowledge to report on policies in past contexts and specific perspectives. Therefore their participation has been key and relevant to understand the governmental perspective of the project, the way they relate to the vulnerable communities and the level of understanding they have on their way of living (Marshall and Rossman 1995, 83). The interviews in Lima with governmental bureaucrats explored mostly the ideas and rationale behind the resettlement project, as well as the ideas of the original project, Belén Sostenible *(Sustainable Belen)*.

In Iquitos, I had access to an interview with the district's major, who provided me with the administrative and political details of the relocation process. The Peruvian Navy Admiral and the river experts in charge of the Amazon region also agreed to talk with me and explained to me the (in)famous report that on which the resettlement is partially. These were treated also as elite interviews. In addition, I interviewed key people positioned for and against it with the purpose of analyzing perspectives and sensations around it. Among them were historians, teachers, journalists, anthropologists, other academics and architects that had a connection with the resettlement. Some of them provided me with extra gray literature which was extremely useful to complement with the interviews. I also had long talks with several residents, merchants, and community leaders; and was able to get in contact with volunteers and workers of NGOs that had been working directly with the people from Belén even before the relocation process started, and that had been part of the ideas that shaped the intervention.

The interviews worked as a snowball for me-, as the initially contacted people proposed other informants who for their experience or information may also result relevant to interview, and these suggested others and so on. As snowball sampling may be biased in the sense that usually the referred informants may come from the same

backgrounds, I made sure that referred my interviewees had different social, economic and academic backgrounds (Bryman 2016).

2.3 Participatory observation

Participatory observation implies "first hand involvement in the social world chosen for study" (Marshall and Rossman 2006, 100) which allows the researcher to experience reality in their same way. Participant observation is a process through which the researcher learns about the object of study by being exposed or involved to their daily routines or activities (Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte 2013). I spent 4 weeks going to Belén and Nuevo Belén, studying its dynamics related to commerce, social life, security, citizenship, and its relation with the main city of Iquitos. While I was doing interviews, I realized that in order to understand the livelihoods of the people from Belén and Nuevo Belén, I had to get more involved in it. This is what lead me to take an everyday life approach on my research, which "suggests value in a framework (…) specifically focused on the physical, social and emotional domains within which everyday life is conducted", including housing and neighborhood (Speak 2012, 349). This approach would allow me not only to understand different ways of knowledge and experience, but to reflect upon how and why the project was failing on meeting their needs (Speak 2012). Therefore, I participated a little bit in the life of the district by attending the workshops, political rallies for the upcoming elections, shared smoothies, beers and lunches with the neighbors, sat with the women to eat together, and shopped around the market while talking to the people and getting a feel of the situation.

This allowed be to build a social relationship with some members of the community who were familiarized with me after a few long visits, and thus, gave me a more intimate perspective on the resettlement process and their lives in Belén and Nuevo Belén. Additionally, on my last day in Nuevo Belén I attended a neighbors' assembly along with the researchers from another project. On this meeting, the residents of Nuevo Belén discussed the issues they had been facing in the last years and how it was affecting them. They talked about the newcomers as well and how they not only lacked all basic services, but also often even electricity. No one from the Ministry attended

the meeting so they seemed to feel confident about actually speaking their minds, "*without fear*", they said.

2.4 Secondary sources

Researchers supplement their interviews, participant observation, surveys and other research methods with the gathering and review of documents that result relevant to their object of study (Marshall and Rossman 1995). This unobtrusive method gives place to a better understanding of the situation or group studied. Therefore, although the interviews I carried out were rich enough to allow me to understand the context and situation of Belén, I found important to review secondary data and sources in order to analyze and develop a better understanding of the data collected during my fieldwork.

Considering the qualitative framework of this research, I have reviewed literature and collected various types of documents. In that sense, I have reviewed gray literature such as official government reports, studies, strategies, policies and guidelines issued by the Peruvian entity in charge of relocations, disaster and risk reduction policies, as well as Peruvian regulations and laws related to relocations. On the other hand, I have also gone through local political magazines, reports issued by global entities such as the United Nations Development Programme and other NGO reports. Key informants have also provided me with verbal data related to historical facts such as rebellions, strikes, the beginning of the city, among others. All of this allowed me to understand the approach that the government uses to policy design and implementation, and analyze the aspects that these prioritize in relation with the community.

2.5 Positionality and ethical considerations

Researchers hold a certain position in relation to the social and political context of the community they are researching on, and to suppose that our presence as researchers will not influence the data gathered is unrealistic (Silverman 2010, Rowe 2014). Both positions, the researcher's and the participants' affect the research for they influence our perceptions of reality, of the others, and how we want others to perceive us (Bourke 2014). It does so from the start until the end and in also in the ways the "knowledge is

constructed and acted on"; therefore, our won biases are important to keep in mind during the process (Rowe 2014, 2).

Despite the fact that I had already a preconception on the matter, and that I had formed an opinion on the resettlement process, and on the relation between the government and the population from reading the news and casual conversations with people, my goal was to avoid bias in relation to Belén and Nuevo Belén. Thus, I had to act as an observer in order to try to understand the relations between the people and Belén as a territory, and their resistance to move to Nuevo Belén, as well as the new dynamics in Nuevo Belén. To remain as an outsider, in all contexts and dimensions, I had to adjust my identity according to my audience. Rowe explains that "the closer the researcher is positioned to the participants, the more likely that there are common expectations, intentions and power equity" (Rowe 2014, 3).

Therefore, in order to get in touch with the former MVCSs, I mentioned that I was a graduated attorney, the university I came from, and that I had retired from the law practice and was now a student in Norway. That also put me in the "same level" as them, although not professionally for an obvious age difference, but in the same educational level and sphere of connections. Hence, in a power balance.

In contrast, when I was in Iquitos, I avoided mentioning to anyone I interviewed my academic background because I did not want certain privileged status to create a distance, especially because my education is business oriented and places me in an unwelcomed group. At the same time, I also avoided mentioning I had worked for many years for a private oil company that operates in the Peruvian Amazon. I thought that this might have a negative effect for my research with people not wanting to talk to me, or believing I came for on behalf of the company, or perhaps on behalf of the government for oil related issues. I thought this was strategic mainly because of my law background and because the people from the Amazon have a predominantly negative attitude towards the extractive industries, and because part of the rumors around the relocation say that the reason behind it is because the government had found oil in the area.

I believed that the power imbalance it could create, could make me lose credibility and people would distrust me or disregard me as someone worth talking to. Therefore I decided to only mention that I was a Peruvian student in a Norwegian university

researching on relocation policies. Bernard suggests that in order to successfully use methods such as participant observation, it is important to create a bond with the community that is object of the research, mingle and gain their trust so that the information can be naturally obtained; and by returning to the researcher original setting, and distancing oneself, this information can be analyzed and understood (Bernard 2006).

Moreover, it was important for me to first gain people's trust rather than immediately trying to record them. I visited Belén daily and almost daily Nuevo Belén, ate there, walked around, talked with the children, the women, and the men, and started being recognized in the area so people could trust me. During one of my interview days, a researcher from a university in Berlin joined me for the day and came along to my interviews. While I was wearing regular clothes that allowed me to blend in, she was wearing an expedition outfit that made obvious that she was not only a foreigner but also a researcher. Up until then, while doing my interviews alone, I had only gotten positive responses for people when I asked to talk to them and record our interviews. On the day she joined me people refused talking to us. I attribute this to the fact that as a group, we were both now perceived as foreigners that created a distance between "us" and "they", positioning the community as an "object of study" that people did not seem to feel comfortable with. Being aware of my position during my stay in Iquitos and in Lima made my research flow naturally and I think I was able to collect the information I believed relevant for my analysis.

Additionally, my research was made from a feminist approach, seeing the project from a marginalized perspective and giving voice to the oppressed, I must admit that my distancing from the issue did not last for too long. "Feminist thought directs attention to and admits a broader range of experience as legitimate and valid knowledge", which in policy making results fundamental to acknowledge and address with sensitivity our diversity, differences and inequalities (Speak 2012, 346). Therefore, as I began getting close to the people of Bajo Belén and Nuevo Belén and caring for them, the more I understood the richness of their culture (even though I do not share many elements of it) and their daily struggles, and thus, the more I shared their resentment towards the government. Thus, I must inform the reader that my bias is against the detached way in which the resettlement is being implemented rather than against the measure itself.

Moreover, since my research would involve direct contact with people and personal interviews, I had to request the NSD-Norsk Senter For Forskningsdata to evaluate and approve the measures I was planning on taking to maintain the confidentiality of the data gathered in relation to my research. Since I also knew that I would wish to record the interviews, I prepared a document that all my interviewees signed in order to give me their consent for the interview and the recording of it; however only one of my interviewees did not accept to be recorded so I had to take notes on the interview instead. While most of my interviewees did not have a problem with the use of their names in this thesis and some were even actually excited to be specifically mentioned, a few preferred to be maintained in anonymity which I have honored by giving this persons pseudonyms or by simply not identifying them by names.

Finally, in order to check the accuracy, validity and reliability of the data, I have analyzed it in combination with other research methods (Silverman 2010, Marshall and Rossman 1995). Therefore, while the information obtained through the interviews was vast, I used other sources of information to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomena studied.

3 Literature review

3.1 Understanding resettlements in connection with climate change

“No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark (...)” – Warsan Shire

Climate change is on the rise and increasingly of global concern, putting survival and livelihoods of people at risk. Not only that, it has also become an imminent phenomenon that influences human mobility worldwide, often disabling people from having a secure livelihood and pushing them to move from their homelands, by own will, or forcefully in some cases (McAdam 2015). According to the UN Report, over 24 million people were displaced as a consequence of climate change hazards (Opitz Stapleton et al. 2017).

Migration studies involves multiple disciplines such as political science, sociology, economics, human rights, geography, among others. It is estimated that more than 200 million people have had to flee their houses in the last decades (Opitz Stapleton et al. 2017). The reasons for this have historically been many. Some communities are forced to move from their lands because of war, civil conflicts or persecution happening in their territory. Others move because of large scale projects created in the name of development such as dams, ports or highways, that require land expropriation to be executed, or because of tourism purposes such as parks or malls; and others that move to escape from the risks of climate related hazards, such as flooding, abnormally high temperatures, droughts, etc. This phenomenon can take place within borders or outside of borders and though it can be voluntary, it is in most cases involuntary (Opitz Stapleton et al. 2017).

The UN Report on Climate change, migration and displacement (the “UN Report”) defines three relevant concepts within human mobility:

• Migration: moving within or across borders, temporarily, seasonally or permanently. Considered voluntary for its usual association with choice.

• Displacement: Usually referred to as forced in nature, it can be deemed as an involuntary migration. For example, severe floods affecting a community or conflict forcing people to flee from their homes.

• Planned relocation: a form of organised movement, often permanently, of people typically promoted, supervised and carried out by the state. Ideal features of this process are to be taken with community consent, transparency and adequate measures and policies to restore livelihoods (McAdam 2015). It is most likely to be permanent and intended to "protect people from risks and impacts related to disasters and environmental change, including the effects of climate change. However, it is not without controversy, as other non-climate factors can motivate a state to relocate people, including land use change or natural resource extraction." (Opitz Stapleton et al. 2017, 6).

De Wet, suggest a more restricted definition to involuntary resettlements, defining them as situations in which (a) a development intervention is taking place (b) the people who are in the way of the intervention are moved forcefully to a new site (c) in compensation for moving they get either new houses or new lands or work opportunities; (d) the interventions transforms the area where they use to live in a way that they cannot return to it, making the relocation permanent (De Wet 2001).

For the purposes of this thesis, I will use the concept of planned resettlements, which I define as permanent state-led processes that involve the voluntary or forceful, physical moving of people, settling them in a new location within national borders, the replacement of their livelihoods, access to resources and the enhancement of their living conditions (McAdam 2015). This concept will be looked at within the preventive framework, as a climate change adaptation and risk reduction policy, and within the involuntary modality. I have purposely avoided using the term "planned relocations" because I subscribe to Ferris argument about the complexity of *resettlements* versus *relocations*. While relocations imply the physical movement of the people, resettlements entail a more ambitious project that covers not only people's physical movement but also replacing their livelihoods in all its comprehensive dimensions, including the restoration or improvement of socio economic conditions, which are often overlooked by material and merely economic criteria (Ferris 2012). I have also avoided the term displacement because it usually entails a phenomenon

where the people are involuntarily denied his or her surroundings and deprived of land often without receiving anything in return, and thus, left without their primary area of economic, cultural and social reference, which is not our case in this thesis (Terminski 2011).

There is no agreed category or terminology to describe processes that compel people to move due to climate or environmental changes. However, Ferris categorizes three different types of people who need to be relocated due to the effects of climate change: a) those who need relocation because they live in areas prone to sudden-onset increasing natural disasters as a result to climate change; b) those who need to be relocated because of slow-onset effects of climate change and; c) those who need to be relocated because climate change can cause destruction in their countries or parts of it (Ferris 2012).

To refer to the people affected by such type of mobility, although I will refer to them indistinctively as relocates or resettlers, I subscribe to the definition of internally displaced persons developed by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: "Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border" (The UN Refugee Agency 2004). The status of internally displaced ceases when the displaced a) return to their original location or b) are resettled in another location, as in my case study happens (Mooney 2005).

Regardless of the definition, resettlements projects are characterized for impoverishing people. Furthermore, they may change completely peoples' lives imposing new conditions, not only in their daily happenings, but also in their environment, their occupation, the way they earn their livelihood, social organization and dynamics, habits and ideology (Oliver-Smith 2010). Therefore, those in charge of these processes must not put their focus only in the material aspects and physical components of these, for it is fundamental not failing to notice its socio-economic aspects and to pursue the reconstruction of these.

3.1.1 Human mobility in the international climate agenda

The world's interest for human mobility has increased considerably in the past decades and its global treatment has spread along many international bodies that seek to guide countries to ensuring the wellbeing of their citizens in resettlement processes (Cernea and McDowell 2000). In the international arena, the fears mainly consist in the potential that large scale migration caused by climate could have in security concerns and the tensions it could bring to international relations. These concerns are basically related to "resource competition, ethnic tension, distrust and existing socioeconomic fault lines" (Elliott 2015, 18). On the other hand, in relation to internal migration, the concerns are linked to security in terms of social order, internal social conflict and instability in countries with little capacity to adapt, socially and economically, and where the affected communities lack adequate support mechanisms and resources to resettle.

The majority of the research has been carried out by institutions and agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Brookings Institution or the Refugee Studies Programme (RSP) of the University of Oxford (Cernea and McDowell 2000). In 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognized that climate change would have its strongest impact on human mobility (IPCC 1990) and while reports from diverse institutions have different projections in terms on timing, scale and consequences in political and economic levels, they all agree that policies to the phenomenon must start being considered for the near future (Ferris 2012). Moreover, the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement from 1998 recognizes the right of all human beings to not being arbitrarily displaced from their homes and the obligation of States to guarantee information and protection to those being displaced, especial those who <u>depend on their lands or have a special attachment to it</u> [emphasis added] (McNamara 1998). Additionally, the non-binding international Cancun Adaptation Framework from 2010 (the "<u>Cancun Framework</u>"), for the first time treated human migration related issues within the UNFCCC. It suggests that adaptation measures should have the same priority as mitigation measures[2], and that states should undertake enhanced action on adaptation, following a "country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach,

[2] Mitigation measures aim at avoiding the increase of pollutant emissions, while adaptation measures aim at reducing vulnerability to the effects of climate change (Acciona).

taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems" (UNFCCC 2010, Paragraph 14).

Literature suggests that human migration processes "should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional and indigenous knowledge, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, when appropriate" [emphasis added] (UNFCCC 2010, Paragraph 14). The fact that human mobility has been recognized within the climate change context provides a legitimacy to its links with it and introduces the idea that risk reduction and adaptation will possibly require societal transformations in the way people live, not only marginal terms but in general (Warner 2012).

On its side, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, also a non-binding agreement, which the Peruvian state is part of, establishes that the policies that arise from the risk-reduction strategies should have a gender perspective, having into account cultural diversity, and vulnerable groups when being planned. It encourages states to get local communities and authorities in the implementation of the risk-reduction actions, and recognizes the importance of decentralizing "responsibilities and resources for disaster risk reduction to relevant subnational or local authorities, as appropriate" (UN 2007). Furthermore, the Cancun Framework gave place, in 2011, to the Nansen Conference on Climate Change and Displacement (the "Nansen Conference"), with the aim of setting a guideline for policy responses to human mobility induced displacement at national, regional and international levels. These frameworks have recently encouraged governments to promote planned resettlements within their borders, as risk reduction and adaptation measures to climate change (Arnall 2019).

Notwithstanding the above, despite the dozens of guidelines and treaties that establish the minimum standards that should be followed in any case of resettlement or displacement, most of these have ended up in misery and have worsened people's living conditions (De Wet 2001). Scholars increasingly agree that resettlement have the same potential negative impacts that disasters themselves, therefore suggest that planned resettlements should be the last option to resort to when all the alternative solutions to risk reduction and adaptation strategies have been exhausted, and when the community affected has consented it freely and has been provided with all the

necessary information related to it (McAdam 2015, Boano and Astolfo 2017). For that reason, scholars resettlements are not only the physical action on moving, but also the displacement of livelihoods, which sometimes undermines and deprives people's "means of production and socio-cultural milieu" (Stanley 2004). Therefore, the Nansen Conference remarks that planning resettlements "in anticipation of climate-related hazards may precipitate vulnerability rather than avoiding it, and should only be considered when adequate alternatives that enable people to rebuild their lives is available" (NRC/IDMC 2011).

3.1.2 Planned resettlements as adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies

The increasing disaster risks and the actual disasters happenings are leading states to consider planned resettlements as risk reduction and adaptation strategies (Mortrerux et al. 2018). Adaptation occurs in response to "expected changes in climate and in climate variability – which includes the frequency and intensity of extreme events-through actions that reduce vulnerability to climate-related impacts" (Rosentrater 2016, 1). Hazards only become disasters when vulnerability and adaptive capacity meet, for which it is then difficult to put the blame only on climate change, since it is most likely the combination of factors, including climate change, what makes resettlements necessary (Petz 2015). As McAdams explains, human mobility is a multi-causal event, impossible to pin down to disasters alone (McAdam 2015). Thus, events that may originate resettlement are diverse, such as drought, desertification, sea-level rise, floods, landslides, among others, which when combined with socioeconomic and political vulnerabilities, and population pressures, such as poverty, landlessness, unemployment, contamination, unplanned urbanization or poor government policies, generate the necessity of moving outside their countries or more often, within their borders (Myers 2005). Ferris explains that one of the biggest challenges around climate change led resettlements is to agree on an internationally accepted definition of what determines an area to be uninhabitable or at risk of becoming so, and when the cause of such situation is actually a result of climate change (Ferris 2012). According to Petz, planned resettlements occur in three types of situations: "1) in anticipation of disasters, environmental change, and/or the effects of climate change; 2) as a response to disasters, environmental change, and/or the effects

of climate change; and 3) as a consequence of measures related to climate change adaptation or disaster risk reduction measures" (Petz 2015).

Under international law, states are responsible for taking the necessary preventive or remedial measures to protect its citizens and their human rights (McAdam 2015). These measures often mean moving people to a different location despite the disaster not having occurred yet, which can be deemed by the affected community as arbitrary displacements, creating tension between the will to stay of the people and the protection obligation of the state (Ferris 2012). These measures often seem premature but when the people's "physical survival and cultural sovereignty at risk, the stakes are high [for which] planning in advance can save time, money and lives" (Lopez-Carr and Marter-Kenyon 2015, 266). Therefore, when disasters can be predicted with anticipation, planning for the potentially affected populations should be done several years in advance, and thus, the significance of having adequate and integral communication plans that enable dialogues between the those to be resettled and the government (Ferris 2012).

Peru is one of the first countries in Latin America that have put preventive resettlements in its agenda through risk reduction and adaptation plans against disasters. The intention of it is to reduce vulnerability, enhance communities to make them responsive to climate related hazards and support the resettled communities (McAdam 2015).

Preventive resettlements are different from reactive ones essentially in terms of their momentum. The first type occurs before disasters happen and therefore, it contemplates the possibility of a longer and more careful planning period and enables people to stay in their homes until the resettlement date; while the latter occur as a response to a disaster, thus acting fast becomes a priority over the rest of the aspects to consider (Petz 2015). Reactive resettlements, on the other hand, often require the urgent need to act within a short timeframe conducts to impractical and inappropriate housing projects resulting more challenging to implement. Nevertheless, regardless of the momentum, both types have significant effects in various aspects of communities' lives which is why scholars agree that they should be undertaken only as a last resort when there is no other alternative left, and including a roadmap for sustainable development that restores the peoples' livelihoods. (Boano and Astolfo 2017). For the

purposes of this thesis and in relation with the case study, I will focus on the understanding of preventive resettlements, which according to Petz, represent a new topic and therefore a limited amount of literature on these is available (Petz 2015).

The theory behind resettlements says that these processes are thought and planned to enhance people's livelihoods. However, as I show throughout this research, even well-intentioned projects often can have negative effects when badly planned. The impacts can affect people's physical and mental health, their economies and can disrupt the communities' internal dynamics and culture, making them more vulnerable than they were before (Fainstein 2010, Stanley 2004). The impacts of any type of resettlement will depend on how it is designed, negotiated, and executed. In some resettlement scenarios, for example in the context of processes driven by tourism development models, the incorrect planning creates unequal distributions of resources, where some get benefits like land value increase from others moving and changing their lives, and often being impoverished (Cernea and McDowell 2000, Xue, Kerstetter, and Buzinde 2014). Due to their only recent popularity, literature is still scarce in relation to the challenges and impacts of climate-change induced resettlements in the context of disaster risk and adaptation strategies, in comparison to the existing literature on development-induced resettlements. Thus, the registries and reflections on the first ones and their effects in livelihoods are also still limited (de Sherbinin et al. 2011).

Across the literature on these topics, not everyone agrees that the knowledge acquired through development-induced resettlements could or should be used for the understanding of climate-induced resettlements. However, while they have different scenarios and contexts, there is also commonalities to both in terms of how they impact populations in every single aspect of their lives. I subscribe to the argument that one can inform the other, and that it is relevant that policy and decision makers learn from the past experiences and their similarities (de Sherbinin et al. 2011). Indeed, there is a growing tendency to use the learnings and tools from development-induced resettlements for preventive ones. As De Sherbinin explains "this is vital because the scale of displacement is likely to be much greater than in the past, yet resettlement praxis is only beginning to benefit from systematic study of past resettlement efforts, let alone application of this knowledge to the peculiarities of climate-related resettlement" (de Sherbinin et al. 2011, 456).

(1) Planned Resettlements as a multi-dimensional process

While resettlements can mean development opportunities for vulnerable communities, they also entail various risks and potentially hinder the formation of sustainable livelihoods in the receiving location. In fact, they have been historically proven to be complex processes that often fail to achieve their main purpose of enhancing the affected resettled communities (Arnall 2018). Their failure can have its origins in different causes such as the urgency of the situation, lack of land, lack of participation of the population, poor institutional performance, inappropriate housing design, among others. Boano and Astolfo identify nine dimensions to resettlements, which, in contrast with the models by Michael Cernea described further below, do not focus in analyzing the risks and opportunities, but instead in the dimensions that may explain the whys of such outcomes.

a) **Poor choice of site:** Oliver-Smith suggests that the choice of new location is the most common reason why resettlements fail. Often governments choose poorly due to the urgency of the matter, or for budgetary reasons, or the difficulty to acquire territory. An important consideration is that even when the receiving land is identified, sometimes bringing the services and infrastructure to that new site results a quest.

b) **Participation:** Participation and engagement of the community in resettlement processes brings a better understanding of the people's needs and expectations, and therefore facilitates the implementation and execution of these processes. It is a key element to achieve the restoration of people livelihoods, because through the understanding of their cosmovision, the possibilities for thriving in another location are higher. Tanaka suggests that thinking about community participation in abstract, without considering the contexts leads us to ignore the differences within communities, and thus to the implementation of inapplicable -and often even-counterproductive models of participation (Tanaka 2001). For the states, participation often means a mere bureaucratic process, a formality, or only a rhetorical acknowledgement used simply to conceal technocratic implementations. At the same time, it is often considered a synonym of higher costs and delays in the execution of projects. Moreover, it often becomes a means to legitimate the state plans rather than a process to collect concerns and hopes (Wayessa and Nygren 2016). Furthermore, it may also become a sort of alibi for a highly politicized management, which gives rise

to external influences and clientilist[3] practices that establish ties of dependence with the state to obtain political support (Boano and Astolfo 2017). Participation thus, has the potential of becoming a type of currency for particular interest-driven agendas of elites or other power spheres, a utilitarian element rather than an empowerment strategy for the communities. Thus, it results fundamental to design adequate models of community participation that allow the real involvement of the affected population (Escobar 1995).

c) **Governance**: Over-bureaucratization and centralization of processes, lack of organization of government structures, little inter-institutional collaboration and conversation amongst agencies, and poor coordination between national, regional and local authorities contribute to the failure of resettlement processes (Lavell 2016). Moreover, states with these characteristics tend to generate distrust among the people, which can exacerbate tense relations between governments and communities.

d) **Disaster Risk Management ("DRM") and planning:** DRM may be understood as the implementation of DRRR strategies, including adaptation strategies. DRM and that must be understood as sustainable development policies so that livelihood restoration becomes an essential objective in them, along with all the aspects that surround it such as health, education, jobs, among others (PreventionWeb 2015).

e) **Land and tenure**: The guarantee of land ownership for the resettled community is key to enhance their will to stay in the new location and to give them a sense of security after leaving their previous houses behind. Lack of land tenure "exposes the population to continued risk of eviction" (Boano and Astolfo 2017, 12).

f) **Housing design:** There are various reasons why inappropriate design of the housing can lead to the rejection of a resettlement process. It may be that the resettled families see that they will have to invest in the adequacy of the house, in terms of design, sizing and typology, and these families do not always have an extra budget for these expenditures. Moreover, climate and geographical contexts play a determinant role in the comfort that the houses can provide the families, leading them to move out if these

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[3] For the purposes of this thesis clientilist practices and populist practices will be indistinctively in relation to a top-down manipulation, a demagogic rhetoric that involves measures taken by an individual without any major justification, for own benefit and to gain popularity (Stokes 2011, Jansen 2011, Viguera 1993).

did not meet minimum standards. “Bad design and poor construction often results from the combination of these factors: urgency and/or emergency in which the plan is carried out, lack of involvement of local population, poor understanding of the local context and funding availability.” (Boano and Astolfo 2017, 13)

g) **Livelihoods:** The restoration of livelihoods to at least the same level as the people were before their dislocation is a key determinant to understand why these processes fail. The loss of jobs, income and social networks can affect deeply the communities during these processes which is why governments must carry out assistance programs that do not end when the physical mobilization is done, but when they can assure that the people at better or as previously mentioned, in the same conditions as they were before.

h) **Social capital:** This concept to refer to the everyday activities and interactions that occur in a community and that build up a safety network among neighbors, giving place to feelings of solidarity and safety (Jacobs 1961). It is based on a buffer of mutual trust, shared efforts, and resilience[4]. Therefore, although the community links and community assistance mechanisms that can be disrupted during resettlement processes are not quantifiable, these are as important as the other elements. Solidarity within a community is an element that acts as an enhancer for recovery in the contexts of post disaster reconstructions. Tanaka explains that “participation and collective action appear to be tools used by excluded and vulnerable sectors to compensate for their situation” and obtain the goods and services that they cannot obtain otherwise (Tanaka, Zarate, and Carrion 1999). Thus, it is evident that resettlement processes have the potential to disrupt the community, breaking these ties.

i) **Planning ahead, size of resettlement, cost-benefit analysis and post-resettlement evaluation:** As previously mentioned, preventive resettlements have more time to be planned than reactive resettlements, and thus, are likely to have a better outcome, because these do not require the affected community to live in temporary settlements and instead, they get to stay in their homes until the new site is completed. Planning ahead is thus, a fundamental elements when it comes to any type resettlement processes. Even in reactive processes, if governments plan in anticipation they diligently resort to these when required. On the other hand, planning at a small level,

[4] Defined as “the capacity for adaptation to emerging circumstances”(Adger 2006, 269).

is less ambitious than planning a whole new big city. Small scale resettlements may have the benefit of a more thorough and carefully planning, thus are more likely to have successful results. Moreover, when governments make cost–benefit analysis of their projects, soft characteristics should be taken into account instead of only material aspects.

Moreover, the UN Refugee Agency argues that the internally displaced are often the most forgotten (The UN Refugee Agency 2004). Therefore follow up on resettlements is a key tool to determine the results, failures and successes of resettlements, which allows for learnings and improvements when replicated in other locations. According to De Sherbinin, it is usually around a thriving second and third generation post-resettlement that the success of a resettlement can be claimed (de Sherbinin et al. 2011).

j) **The importance of spiritual and emotional elements: place and space:** This is an element that I consider crucial but that is not included in the recognized dimensions by Boano and Astolfo. In resettlement policy discussion, programming and implementation, traditional beliefs and attachment are underrated and overlooked. These are elements absent in most of the existing bodies that regulates these processes. Gozdziak explains that researchers tend to "neglect the role of religion and spirituality as a source of emotional and cognitive support, a form of social and political expression and mobilization, and a vehicle of community building and group identity" (Gozdziak 2002, 1). The disregard of the emotional attachments to land and other elements in the case of resettlements often may generate resistance and even conflict and obstruction. Especially in Peru, policy makers, influenced by the hegemony of Western ideas and knowledge, and the generalized contempt for traditional cultures, tend to ignore these elements, which often enhance the stress of an already traumatic experience. In relation to the Amazon signifiers, one of the MVCS bureaucrats I interviewed said: "*These people have these beliefs, you know, they think that the river is their God or something, that the land is the reincarnation of their grandparents. It's just a matter of teaching them different, but sometimes they're so stubborn with these things…"*.

In words of Oliver-Smith, "place and space are key concepts of resettlements" (Oliver-Smith 2010, 11). A geographical area is simply a piece of land until it is filled with

history, people, their stories, their memories and identities that make it a *place*. Places are spaces permeated with meanings and sociality (Himmelfarb 2012, 176). In relation to this, Oliver-Smith talks about how he discovered -and in my own research I did as well, the "emotional power of one's place in the world" (Oliver-Smith 2010, VIII). A place is composed of a geographical location in which people and things assemble, and give it meaning and value and making it a unique spot in the world (Gieryn 2000). Places are full of memories, values, practices, representations, and meanings that belong to the community that inhabits the place, collectively and individually. The importance of place in a community is that it is the medium through which the societal phenomena materializes, in which our lives happen. They reinforce certain patterns and conditions (such as poverty or marginalization) or weaken them, depending if the community is located in a "salutary or detrimental spot" (Gieryn 2000, 474). The longer people live in one place, the more they get attached to it; and moreover, places with specific landmarks, like rivers or mountains, generate stronger bonds in people.

Therefore, the loss of a familiar place hurts the collective and individual culture, history and identity. In relation to this, Oliver-Smith argues that "the human need for an environment of trust is fundamental to the sense of order and predictability implied by culture, and threats of removal from these spatial and symbolic environments are profoundly disrupting" (Oliver-Smith cited in Himmelfarb 2012, 177). Therefore, especially in cases of resettlement, the importance of doing a complete urban planning for the new location where the relocatees are meant to start their new lives. Scholars argue that the personal identity is constructed in relation with our material entourage The reasons why we become attached to our entourage can be explained by the time spent in such space, informal social relations that it allows, and the comforts and resources that entourages provide, which inform the feelings we develop towards the spaces we inhabit. These feelings are closely linked with our collective identity *in situ*, where reinforce each other's identities (Vidal et al. 2014). This evidences that land not only has an economic dimension, but also has a social, psychological, cultural and symbolic significance. Its different meanings, values and uses depend on the context and cultures; and especially in traditional systems like the ones of pastoralists or indigenous people these bonds and cultural attachments with the land and nature are stronger (Stanley 2004). Thus, losing their land effects their identity and culture, sometimes even dissolving them (Ferris 2012). Any attempt for urban planning must bear in mind the attachment and embedded knowledge that places hold, and therefore,

involving the community affected when planning, will most likely lead to an adequate outcome rather than enhancing structural inequalities and marginalization. As Harvey argues, “just planning and policy practices must empower rather than deprive the oppressed” (Havery cited in Fainstein 2010, 52). These concepts are useful criteria for evaluating public policy and to assess whether human rights violations have taken place in processes like resettlements (Fainstein 2010). Relocations thus, “disrupt and even destroy the sets of relationships, the patterns of resource allocation, and the marketing relationships on which productive activity depends. It also undermines the territorially based sets of social relationships of family and neighborhood, from which much of the rural people’s sense of their world, and thus of themselves, is derived” (De Wet 2001, 4640).

On the other hand, house and home are also two concepts used indistinctively, based on a unidimensional connotation of “shelter”. In modern notions of dwellings, or more technical contexts, house and home are one same concept merged in terms of spatial and technical characteristics, like a commodity. However, previous resettlement outcomes generate the need to highlight its physical and social bidimensionality. While house is a concept that we can associate more to an infrastructural and material aspect, Saegert explains that home is a place with psychological resonance and specific meaning, how we interpret life in a geographical space (Saegert 1985). Replacing home for a house unit without considering the user’s needs in terms of location and design, triggers a sense of lack of control over the individual’s environment, leading to “psychological stress and social disruption” (Fahmi 1993, 109). In addition, the new insecurities that arise from losing a home often hinder the possibilities of the communities to reconstruct their livelihoods (Himmelfarb 2012, 178).

(2) Risks linked to the analysis of resettlement response

Diverse models to unfold and measure the aftermath and impacts of resettlement processes have been explored by academia. Scudder and Colson proposed in the early 1980s a four stage model to analyze voluntary displacements and how people respond to them. The stages of this model are: 1) recruitment, 2) transition, 3) potential development and 4) hand over. However, their model was strongly criticized by scholars because it lacks a feminist approach and ignored the peoples’ participation and role in the resettlement processes. On the other hand, it neglected the socio-politic

and economic losses, also overlooking the political and cultural disturbances that may arise from it (Stanley 2004). Although their model was first intended to explain the stages in voluntary resettlements, it also tried to explain involuntary displacements, taking successful cases as a reference. However, the evidence that a bigger number of involuntary resettlements did not meet these stages made it clear that a new model was necessary to explain the effects and fails on involuntary displacements (Cernea 2004).

Later in the 1990s, in response to the above described model, Michael Cernea and his colleagues, suggested a model called “Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction” (IRR) which identifies the impoverishment risks and the possible measures to be taken to reconstruct livelihoods of displaced communities. It emphasizes that “unless specifically addressed by targeted policies, forced displacement can cause impoverishment among the target community. The variables to consider in order to determine if a resettlement process has brought about misery are: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, loss of access to common property resources, increased morbidity and mortality, and community disarticulation (Stanley 2004). Most of the critics towards this model is that it is too general, does not consider political motivations and governmental budgets, nor other contingent agents outside the resettlement. Moreover, it presents resettlers as passive subjects ignoring the agency of these and their roles when building their new lives and also focuses too much on economic risks. In addition, some state that this model embraces displacement measures “as a necessary force for the promotion of human wellbeing and the collective good” rather than placing it as a last resort, as suggested in most of the literature (Himmelfarb 2012, 14). Notwithstanding, the IRR “remains the most stable conceptual model in resettlement research today” (Gizachew 2017, Vivoda et al. 2017, 20). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that these are not a set rule on each forced displacement and not all communities and households are affected in the same way, but they constitute a good starting point of the fundamental variables to consider, which if left unaddressed may become massive impoverishment precipitating factors (Ferris 2012). Of course, as there could also be others, I will add them if applicable according to my experience in Belén. The IRR model has been taken by scholars as a model that helps analyze what could go or have gone wrong involuntary resettlement processes. It helps identify risks and turn them into opportunities for development and reconstruction (De Wet 2001).

I agree with Cernea's argument that "adherence to social justice and equity norms, and respect for civil rights and people's entitlements should remain paramount whenever development brings about risks and exacts predictable tolls" (Cernea 2004, 8). It might not be possible to avoid every single hazard within resettlements. However, it is possible to take measures and adequate policies and practices that reduce the risks of affecting negatively people's civil rights and the sociocultural aspects in their lives. The IRR model is thus, a sort of checklist to consider when designing and implementing resettlement policies with which is possible to understand the potential cumulative effects of resettlements on communities.

The model has four main functions. The predictive function allows the executers and resettlers to recognize and anticipate the possible risks of the potential or upcoming resettlement based on past processes, making the planning more predictable and thus, responsible. "Governments, agencies, and planners that omit the explicit identification of the risks in advance expose themselves and the populations affected to more unmitigated negative outcomes" (Cernea 2004, 16). The diagnosis function of the model refers to the possibility of explaining and assessing the risks that it gives place to, and by weighing these, it allows not only the government officials but also the community to acknowledge the possible outcomes of such a process. Therefore, it also serves to inform the planning for the "preparation and planning of the counter risk measures." (Cernea 2004, 17). The third function is the problem-resolution and planning function, which calls for action to the actors involved in resettlement processes and becomes a potential guide to strategically turn these risks into opportunities. Lastly, it serves as a baseline for researchers conducting fieldwork, and make comparisons across similar processes in different cultures and countries. By allowing the possibility of hacking the challenges of resettlement processes and tackle the hazards of impoverishment, the model works best to prevent these risks when the communities participate actively in all stages of the resettlement process, since they are the ones who hold the first hand information. Otherwise, if the data that informs the design and implementation comes only from those implementing the processes it results limited. Moreover, ignoring the insights of the affected people hinders the possibility of identifying these variables. The main impoverishment risk components inherent to resettlements according to Cernea are:

a) landlessness: land is the most essential foundation on which people build their livelihoods. It is often taken away permanently and without compensation when resettlement processes take place (productive systems, relations, etc) (Vivoda et al. 2017, Cernea 2004).

b) joblessness: moving territories often implies the impossibility to go back to the previous job or that the job itself has disappeared. Cernea explains that unemployment and underemployment often linger among resettlers even after the processes has been completed because it is usually addressed in unsustainable ways (Vivoda et al. 2017, Cernea 2004).

c) homelessness: this is a component closely linked with the notions of place and space that I described above. Cernea suggests that alienation and status deprivation might result from the loss of the community's cultural space. On the other hand, when the original houses of the resettlers are destroyed, they face risk of worsening their housing conditions if their new houses do not meet the standards that the previous ones had, or if the money they get as a compensation is based on market value and not replacement value (Vivoda et al. 2017, Cernea 2004).

d) marginalization : this is related with social mobility and the loss of economic power that makes people move to a lower social level, which usually brings social and psychological affliction, and a sense of injustice and vulnerability. This phenomenon can also occur when the skills individuals have cannot be used in the location where they are resettled or they become obsolete which strongly links it to joblessness (Vivoda et al. 2017, Cernea 2004).

e) food insecurity: this is a product of a poorly carried out resettlement, which means that the calorie-protein intake is below the minimum a body requires to function properly and have a healthy life (Vivoda et al. 2017, Cernea 2004).

f) increased morbidity: after a resettlement process and the social stress it implies, health levels might drop, and secondary effects of the process might arise. Cernea explains that these include "psychosomatic diseases, diseases of poor hygiene (such as diarrhea and dysentery), and parasitic and vector-borne diseases caused by unsafe and insufficient water supplies and unsanitary waste systems." (Cernea 2004, 23). (Vivoda et al. 2017, Cernea 2004).

g) loss of access to common property resources: for example the loss of access to water bodies, agricultural lands, etc, might represent also less income and a thus a lower livelihood level, which Cernea suggest is one of the causes for social conflict and often even environmental degradation. On the other side, the fact that people do not have common property secured, puts conservation areas nearby in danger on intruding (Vivoda et al. 2017, Cernea 2004).

h) community disarticulation: as previously mentioned, resettlements are by nature disruptive, of communities, cultures and lifestyles. The dissolution of intimate bonds, and intimate networks and lower cohesion to family structures can also contribute to impoverishment. "Forced displacement tears apart the existing social fabric. It disperses and fragments communities, dismantles patterns of social organization and interpersonal ties" (Cernea 2004, 25). The social capital is diminished, there is a new sense of distrust and changed dynamics, resulting also in a new source of social stress. This is an element that can have impact also in the work force, the security of the new settlement, and the sense of belonging (Vivoda et al. 2017, Cernea 2004).

i) loss of education: while the IRR model did not initially include this component, it has recently been added since resettlements often interrupt schooling, for example, if the new location lacks educational facilities (Cernea 2004).

j) new dangers: an additional component that I have identified after my fieldwork is the emergence of new dangers. While resettlements may put the population in a safer place away from natural hazards, or in a place thought to improve their lives, the new place can have a backlash by becoming an arena for new ways of endangerment, such as violent, or increased criminality.

Cernea explains that these components are an integral group and should not be considered separately, for they are interconnected, and people have to deal with them all at the same time. This model is deemed as a matrix of risks and variables that affect or may potentially affect resettlement process, and at the same time works as guide that planners should follow in other to strategically implement policies and take action to reverse the materialization of these risks, or actively avoid it. In relation to it, De Wet, argues that if we were ever able to turn the risks into opportunities, as Cernea suggests, we should first understand the nature of involuntary resettlements and the

reasons why throughout history, they have been having negative impacts in relocatees. De Wet suggests that involuntary displacements have a heavy element of disempowerment, as people have not had the option to choose whether or not they want to move, to which Cernea adds that “forced displacement epitomizes social exclusion of certain groups of people” since it represents a combination of physical exclusion from a specific territory with social and economic exclusion from a set of social institutions, structures and dynamics in society (Cernea 2000, 3659). Moreover, the economic exclusion includes not only not having a job at one specific point in time, but also the little possibility of getting one in the future, therefore it is embedded in the understandings of impoverishment (Doherty 2011, Giddens 2013).

Optimistic perspectives argue that adequate policies and enough funding can help overcome the failures of resettlements. However, this perspective does not consider that since the resettlers are usually people that come from marginalized sectors, they are less likely to get governmental commitment to reconstruct their environment and allocate resources for such purposes. On the other hand, countries like Canada and the USA, who have enough resources unlike developing countries such as Peru, have also failed at implementing resettlement processes, resulting in impoverishment and community disruption (De Wet 2001). Therefore, while resources are necessary to plan and implement a thoroughgoing receiving location, the fact that even countries with enough resources also fail, evidences the complexity of these processes and the importance, of implementing policies that allow the reconstruction of their livelihoods beyond having sufficient economic resources.

According to De Wet, the few resettlements that had fair success share the following characteristics: a) comprehensive planning with local governmental participation, 2) involvement of community in the decisions related to their relocation and employment, c) commitment by the government to create jobs, d) assurance of income restoration e) strategies to cope with planning and budget deficiency and f) coherence between policy and practice [emphasis added] (De Wet 2001). However, despite the few success stories, there is wide skepticism towards the capacity of governments to design resettlement projects that succeed and De Wet recognizes that to assume that “resettlement problems can be erased by improvements in planning is overly optimistic” (De Wet cited in Stanley 2004, 14).

So, these type of processes are extremely sensitive and have serious impacts on people. Therefore, it seems crucial for the sake of the resettleres that not only experts and specialized organizations be involved in the planning and implementation of them, but also the local governments and the affected communities, so they together can discuss and address the risks and in words of Warner, "take advantage of the opportunities of environmental migration" (Warner 2012, 1074).

3.2 Modernity in theory and practice

3.2.1 High-modernist social-engineering in statecraft

Resettlements are a way of organizing society from scratch. It entails the complete transformation of a space and therefore, a community. They also represent the state's "power to shape environments for human action and interaction" (Wayessa and Nygren 2016) Therefore, as I will explain in this section, resettlement processes are a manifestation of high modernity ideology in statecraft. Although high-modernism is situated between 1830 and the World War I, it gives us a useful analytical concept for understanding the rationale behind these types of projects and contributes to the overview of the present ideas of modern development that will follow (Bichsel 2012, Li 2005). However, I do not intent to give a comprehensive account of modern development theories, since it is not the main focus of this thesis.

High-modernism, according to James Scott, is based on a modernity that relies in technology and science; that tries to master nature (including human nature) and looks for the maximization of productivity. It is "a particular sweeping vision of how the benefits of technical and scientific progress might be applied (…) in every field of human activity", disregarding cultural, social, and historical elements, and justifying political projects of legitimating state rule (Scott 1998, 90). As Bichsel explains, under high-modernism "the structures of the past become the products of myth, superstition and religious prejudice" (Bichsel 2012, 80).

Scott documents the social costs of rigorous centralist state planning, arguing that the power of states can only be applied over what they can know about, and obtaining such knowledge implies measuring, codifying, and simplifying local practices (Boudreaux et al. 2010). His arguments are a critique to high-modernism ideology in centrally-

planned social-engineering[5] state projects and policies such as resettlements. These ideology implies top-down approaches, which refer to processes led from an upper level in hierarchical structure within an organization, only progressively involving the lower levels (i.e. the state) and relying on a central authority and control. Bottom-up approaches in contrast, consider initiatives that are born in lower levels of the hierarchy, such as the community developed gradually by the progressive involvement of the higher levels (Alverti et al. 2016).

Under such an ideology, he explores the imposition of policies, utopian projects and governmental efforts to understand and control society, and to transform nature to suit man's purposes. These objectives are achieved through what the state's three functions -conscription, taxation and prevention of rebellion- adding that the cost of accomplishing these purposes is the reduction of the complexities of real life and the elimination of local practices and institutions that interfere with its goals. (Regassa and Korf 2018, 1, Tauger 1999, Hayek 2007). High-modernist ideology thus, can be understood as a driving force of governmental actions and an architectural trend originated in the West, that trusts in pure logic and science without considering human factors (Scott 1998). In large scale schemes, the endeavors to make legible societies have often had unforeseen consequences that led them to fail (Scott 1998).

Scott refers to human factors as "metis", which he defines as a set of practical skills and knowledge learned through practice and human adaptation, by responding to dynamic changes in the natural and human environment. He uses this term to describe how goal-oriented interventions and homogenization intents often ignore the metis of the communities intended to arrange, relying only on the "techne", defined as technical knowledge. These concepts are not mutually exclusive, however within resettlements, the latter, while it surely is necessary knowledge, is often considered to have a higher hierarchy than metis. Therefore, one of the common patterns that leads these processes to failure is ignoring the metis of the affected population since this one cannot be replaced by science. Oliver-Smith argues that when states guided by high-modern ideology pursue to extend their power over territory, these tend to impose processes of simplification and standardization over the citizens, "reducing local, cultural, social,

[5] Social-engineering in this thesis shall be understood as state-led efforts to influence human behavior and human dynamics on a large scale, through scientific methods, using the latter to understand social systems and formulate the methods for change.

and economic complexity to a format dictated by the state", achieving control and rationalization of local systems in accordance with state priorities. Thus, an incomprehensible diversity ends up being boiled down to a comprehensible unity resulting into: legibility, which promotes a homogeneous view of citizens, which has globally influenced states into oversimplifying underlying realities which then are reflected in the universal and standard measures that high-modernist states use (Oliver-Smith 2010, 163, Scott 1998).

Scott argues that "the legibility of a society provides the capacity for large scale social-engineering, high-modernist ideology provides the desire, the authoritarian state provides the determination to act on that desire, and an incapacitated civil society provides the leveled social terrain on which to build" (Scott 1998, 5). Resettlement processes thus, have characteristics of high-modernist ideology since they often entail changes in people's living patterns, work habits, morals and views; they tear down social arrangements to replace them with new ones, with the expectation that improved conducts will arise from it (Li 2005). Precisely for that reason, the most common trait in Scott's examples of high-modernist influenced state planning is the failure of those in charge of the projects to acknowledge the role of local and practical knowledge, resulting in unforeseen consequences. Examples of these social-engineering projects have occurred -and failed- globally in authoritarian states, such as the implementation of forced resettlement and villagization by the Tanzanian government, which ended up disempowering people and failing to improve their lives because local knowledge was undervalued - although Schneider strongly questions the extent of the influence of high-modernism in it (Bichsel 2012). Moreover, the utopian standardized planned cities resulted in soulless cities like Brasilia, where people did not connect with the new space nor felt identified with it. Another example is the governmental intervention in Russia in order to make land taxable and manageable, resulted in the disruption and homogenization of a system of communal land tenure while ignoring the local politics and customs that considered different factors such as family conformation, ecology, wildlife (Scott 1998).

In that sense, Scott argues that state-led social-engineering usually has terrible results when four elements combine: a) a state that seeks to order nature and society, b) high-modernism ideology, c) a state capable of using its coercive power to achieve its goals, and d) a prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist state's actions (Scott

1998). Tauger, on the other hand, argues that while the state takes, it also gives. He refers particularly to the fact that in some of these examples of high-modernism, the purpose of improving conditions for the people were real, although Scott portrays a notion of the state as this Machiavellian actor that abuses its power unproblematically all over its territory, and seeks control of its people (Tauger 1999, Li 2005). In agreement with Tauger, Scott's view of the relationship between the state and the citizens is somewhat adversarial. It is depicted as binary category and does not allow room to explore the role that other non-state actors -who do not use force measures- play in the design and implementation of the state's actions (Li 2005). Furthermore, Scott's view works to explain high-modernist ideology in authoritarian and strong states, which in his words, "have for the most part vanished or have drastically changed their ambitions" (Scott 1998, 8). Therefore, his accounts of the state briefly touch on democratic states, but are not focused at all on the notion of a rather less-manipulative state, a kind of improvised and sloppy machinery that aims at enhancing its citizens' lives through projects that follow high-modernist principles, failing after all. Furthermore, while he explains the extent of these failures, he does not explain systematic causes of it, nor what can explain states taking such direction. In addition, the role that private agendas and individual interest by those with power play are also overlooked in his analysis.

Moreover, Scott also argues that high-modernist social-engineering may not be dangerous in itself, since it could actually lead to positive reforms if correctly negotiated with the citizens, without overlooking key elements of nature and society when designing and implementing large-scale projects; although, he fails to address how even local initiatives can also have predatory effects (Li 2005). Thus, he emphasizes that while state actions may be well-motivated, they become problematic, likely to fail, and can turn into a source of tensions, when over-simplification takes place, and governments do not acknowledge that humans organize and disorganize themselves within their own, heterogeneous dynamics.

On the other hand, Scott's work has been broadly criticized for lack of accuracy by some, the anachronism of his focus and his limited state's depiction, and for doing a "thin simplification of high-modernism" (Bichsel 2012, 102). However, I agree with Bichsel and consider that despite it all, Scott provides us with interesting concepts to analyze large-scale schemes of social-engineering, and especially because

resettlements programs features from high-modernist ideology, I find his theory relevant for my case study (Bichsel 2012). Despite the criticism, high-modernist traits are still found within resettlements now. For example, the case study that I will present in the following chapters in more detail was centrally planned, with little to no involvement of the local community, and entails the mobilization of an 18,000 people community to a remote location with a different geography. Moreover, as I will explain thoroughly in section 4, the new satellite city to be built in the Peruvian Amazon entails the construction of a standardized city with identical, little housing units for the relocated families. These units are being allocated to each of the resettled families regardless of their number of members and without taking into consideration the local habits, cultural knowledge or how they earn their livelihoods, being all these characteristics that fit into a high-modernist thinking, where Scott's "social bulldozing" happens in both, a material and social level, treating the community as a reified homogeneous unit (Scott 1998). In relation to it, De Wet argues that it is important to acknowledge that communities are never homogeneous, and that these differ in various ways, including the ways they access to resources, agency and lifestyle (De Wet 2001). The UN Report remarks that when executing these plans, states "must acknowledge the heterogeneous nature of those moving" (Opitz Stapleton et al. 2017, 7).

In any case, it seems like Scott's accounts of the states are limited to authoritarian schemes that seek for control. Therefore, to analyze the resettlement case in this thesis, I believe necessary the support of other concepts that allow us to understand high-modernist social-engineering within a state that is far from being a perfect apparatus, and can rather be considered to lack infrastructural power[6] or to have weak statehood, a concept that I will explain in the another section. Moreover, adopting Scott lens allows us to reflect on the state's rationale to design and implement such projects, and the characteristics that were a reflection of the ideology that prevailed, and of which we can still see traces. However, to properly analyze the complexity of the case study it is necessary to move beyond authoritarian high-modernist social-engineering, to the

[6] Infrastructural power is the "power through", which means that states have power infrastructures in society that enables them to reach out to society and that allows the decisions taken on a state level, to be implemented and enforced logistically across society. It means territorial reach and penetrative and extractive capacities (Mann 1984, Weiss 2006).

notions of modern development that we need to look at with the support from a post-colonial approach.

3.2.2 The influence of modernity in development

Modernisation theory, developed by Western academics in the 1960s, started the first notions of development, which suggested that in a world moving forward towards modernity and technological industrialization -thus wealth- it was the West that was ahead of a slow-paced East and South. However, by the late 1960s, a more critical perspective was born among scholars focusing on the economic ties and political dependencies with the former colonial powers that created adverse effects on their political and economic systems, called dependency theory. By 1970s, the neoliberal paradigm left behind dependency theories giving place to new narratives pro aid and investments from the wealthy and advanced countries (the West) to the former colonial subjects (Rowden 1998). Parallelly, in response to state-centric schemes and the neoliberal paradigm that advocates for the assimilation of the Western ideas, a new wave of thought developed, seeing the need of the recipients of development aid programs, to actively participate in them, as well as the need of acknowledging cultural elements when dealing with development matters (Simon 2005).

Later, during the 1980s and 1990s the role of the development discourse had light shed on it by the post-structural current, which analyzed its effect on dynamics of repression and domination. Development can now be commonly understood as one, or a set of interventions, changes and transformations on economic, social and cultural spheres that pursue the improvement of quality of life of a community. These interventions are guided by different discourses that have historically meant, in a nutshell, "becoming modern, like the West", and that have had homogenizing purposes based on such model (Omar 2012, Simon 2005). Escobar argues that these discourses have legitimized Western domination over the South by the North, culturally, economically and socially deeming them as "underdeveloped" (Escobar 1995). However, poststructural approaches opened the door to questioning basic stances on the concept, for example, its desirability, especially in developing countries where it is implemented, and to question development in itself, as the central issue of domination.

The notions of development have shifted through time from focusing in economic growth in the 1940s to structural reforms in the beginning of the 2000s as stated in the Millenium Development Goals informing the practices and policies today that aim to improve people's lives (Omar 2012). Therefore, postcolonial and postdevelopment approaches result necessary to understand and spot the hegemonic notions of modernization and development shaped by Western ideas, in order to reclaim the value of non-Western ways of knowing and knowledge, which have been historically disparaged as primitive by colonial systems and ideas of European and North-American supremacy (Rowden 1998, Escobar 1995).

Arturo Escobar explains development as a hegemonic discourse of domination, and argues that these prevalent beliefs of development and modernity have taken a toll on ancient cultures, social and political structures. "Development was – and continues to be for the most part – a top-down, ethnocentric, and technocratic approach, which treated people and cultures as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the chart of progress" (Escobar 1995, 44). In words of Omar, development has often been a tool "aiming at satisfying the needs and desires of its 'objects', namely the underdeveloped populations, but an instrument for serving the hidden agendas of some hegemonic powers vying for global domination" (Omar 2012, 45). Thus, programs and initiatives informed by this thinking have perpetuated and exacerbated global poverty instead of combating it.

Drawing from Escobar's postcolonial approach to development, I will analyze the resettlement of Belén in the context of the domination and discrimination of the Amazonian cultures and tradition by the high-modernist influences, which seem to be invalidated by the Peruvian government, who should on the contrary, protect and procure the conservation of these. Postdevelopment perspectives allow us to think of alternatives *to* development "that incorporate non-Western concepts of what constitutes a thriving society", instead of pushing for the so called *development alternatives*, such as participatory development or integrated rural development, considering that the "development" concept has a history of distorted notions, still influenced and informed by modernization theory that have not always worked out as intended, often adversely affecting the targeted populations (Escobar 2018, Q3). The postdevelopment approach, results useful to liberate ourselves from notions of the Third versus the First world, traditions versus modernity and validate other ways of

knowing and being, even within their "non-modernity" (Sillitoe 2010, 1998, Escobar 1995).

In relation to this, Foucault follows the idea that power produces knowledge, and knowledge produces truth. Therefore, truth being ultimately created by power, power relations are fundamentally embedded in knowledge. According to Foucault, truth does not only mean facts universally accepted as truths or facts according to realities, but "an abstract system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements" (Michel Foucault cited in DuBois 1991, 7). What results problematic about this is that Western societies design and legitmize the "regimes of truth" based mainly on scientific knowledge. Thus, Western societies get to decide what constitute valid knowledge or true knowledge, and as a consequence, in words of DuBois, "a whole set of knowledges is rendered suspect, discredited, excluded and disqualified, while another [the Western], in the case of development, becomes the basis for policy formation" (DuBois 1991, 7). Therefore, local knowledge remains in the bottom of the hierarchy perpetuating the power relations between the development expert, the policy maker, or the state, and the local, peasant communities in rural or semi-rural areas like Belen. DuBois in that sense, argues that this is one of the foundations for well-intended development to fail: the devaluation of the traditional knowledge, which generates discordant solutions based on "superior" knowledge. Escobar points out, that as long progress, development and life enhancement is also based in transforming people's thinking, any group who thinks different will be deemed as someone who understands less and thus, whose knowledge does not constitute a truth (Escobar 1995). In a Peruvian national level, this superior knowledge often comes from the circles of power that are usually located in the capital city, which is why centralist governance may result tricky, as we will see in the next section.

3.3 When it rains, it pours: centralism equipped with weak statehood

Centralist schemes are characterized by the fact that most of the political and institutional decisions are accumulated in the higher levels of the government, entailing little participation of the citizens and poor power delegation. Central

authorities manage the resource allocation and coordinates development in national and local levels. These concentration of the political power often generates overload and congestion in the administration of the central government. In contrast, decentralization is the delegation of faculties in relation to public social planning, resource allocation, and management functions to regional and local governments, which also comprehends the transference of political, economic and administrative functions (Peruzzotti 2015). It entails higher levels of citizen's participation in the decision-making, allowing policies to be designed from the "inside" by regional-local instances, also promoting multicultural states. Boffa, Piolatto and Ponzetto suggest that when local governments open to bottom-up approaches, they improve the design of their plans to particular conditions and provide a better service than the central government, especially in countries with highly diverse regions (Boffa, Piolatto, and A. M. Ponzetto 2016). Moreover, as decentralized governments would ideally spread their power throughout the territory, they would be able to reach more people than just the ones in power concentrated areas.

However, both ways of governance have downsides. Porter and Olsen explain that "decentralized systems provide participation, access and responsiveness; [while] centralized systems favor efficiency, accountability, professionalism and the use of advanced or expensive technologies" (Porter and Olsen 1976, 75). Decentralization encourages delegation to local governmental agencies, for which interagency coordination is key. However, even despite good coordination, decisions more time to be taken, and while local governments understand better local scenarios, sometimes lack the capacity to fully comprehend the complete political reality of a situation, ultimately leading to mismanagement (Porter and Olsen 1976). The down side to centralisation is that the public policies based in the center of power ignore local practices and involve little citizen participation, which creates governmental programs that often are not capable of satisfying the communities' necessities, as these do not adapt to their contexts. Additionally, it can generate overloaded bureaucrats who lack information, interest and often even capacity to make diligent decisions or assess what is relevant (McConnell and Hart 2014). Moreover, within centralism, poor intersectoriality among the central and regional and local levels is often found, which hinders the development and implementation of adequate and coherent policies and programs.

Intersectoriality is defined as the coordinated way of working and communicating, among actors from diverse sectors, with different faculties and know how, with the purpose of facing complex issues (Akerman et al. 2014). This form of management takes a holistic approach to the planning of policies, programs or projects for a specific target community, with the aim of "meeting needs and expectations in a synergetic and integrated way (…) to respond effectively to the problems of the population in the specific territory" (Warschauer and de Carvalho 2013, 144). In contrast, the disarticulation of a centralist governmental apparatus, the power struggles within, and the lack of communication, not only emphasizes the inadequacy of policies, but also hinders the possibility of identifying conflicts and consequently finding their solutions. Moreover, Scartascini and Tommasi suggest that "one of the factors increasing the likelihood of less institutionalized policymaking is the asymmetry of power within formal institutions" (Scartascini and Tommasi 2012, 788). The more institutionalized the policymaking arena is, the better the communication and exchange of information, and therefore, the better the outcomes. For that reason, when a social program falls in the hands of a centralized government, where often the infrastructural power of the state is insufficient, the core of the issues may not be fully understood as if for example, they would fall in the hands local governments, who are more likely to be aware of the local realities. Another important consideration on centralist states is also that, "sometimes centralized governments let "political considerations" overshadow their professional judgements" (Porter and Olsen 1976, 79). In addition, centralist countries also tend to apply homogeneous formulas such as the ones we find in Scott's social-engineering and high-modernism critiques, which are often influenced by narrow notions of development. In scenarios of poor infrastructural power, the public institutions and those in charge of the design and implementation of projects, at national and international levels, often ignore the most basic environmental, ecological and socio-economic aspects of the local realities and their history, thus making the same mistakes repeatedly, losing objectivity and with it, the initial purpose of enhancing people's lives.

In centralist schemes, the political apparatus and specifically the legislative power, has the potential of becoming another way to reinforce the power over the marginalized populations. In the normalization of the hegemony of the capital over the periphery, laws become a tool to execute a deontic power discourse that enables the enforcement

of certain governmental actions, as I will explain in the next section, which may end up being a form of cultural oppression. Such a system of oppression is possible in centralist states because significant political decisions that impact the lives of all citizens are taken in one specific territory, within one group that holds the economic and political powers. These political decisions entail socioeconomic elements that too often are forgotten or deemed as irrelevant, having a negative impact in the citizens lives. Due to the poor intersectoriality and poorly engrained institutions, centralized states tend to have poor penetration in society which often results in a deficient provision of goods. Top down approaches are also often found within centralized schemes, and these in combination with policy implementation with limited knowledge of local realities, translates into the application of homogeneous formulas which end up being reductionist interventions that can be perpetuate paternalism and assistencialist practices and behavior (Larsson 2005).

Paternalism is domination and protection in the same action. It entails the exercise of power from a subject “A” over a subject “B”. It implies the interference of B's liberty of action justified by reasons related exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests or values of B, and that often justify B being persuaded by influence, or coerced by force. When it comes to state paternalism, B may also be coerced by statutory power. (Dworkin 1972, 181, Alemany 2005). Assistencialism on the other hand, is a term used mainly in Latin America to describe policies or practices that are grounded on paternalism, that provide social or financial assistance to people in poverty situations. The main critique to this type of practices is that they do not deal with the underlying structural problems, leaving the beneficiaries with temporary solutions and depending on governmental assistance (Freire 2005). Policies and practices rooted in paternalistic assistencialism are also based on the belief of backwardness of the affected group and shaped by one-sided knowledge held by the providing body, which is often alien to the affected group. Moreover, these practices stand on the notion of a passive society that cannot possibly know what is best for them, and thus, cannot become an active and participatory agent that takes a role in the planning of the policies that affect them; although ironically, "most states are, broadly speaking, 'younger' than the societies they purport to administer" (Scott 1998, 18, Tanaka 2001, Tecnológico de Monterrey 2014). This aligns with the notion of high-modernist ideologies discussed in the previous section where the government is above

the citizens and therefore, knows best what is good for them, which meets the type of approach that Belenians claim that the Nuevo Belén project had (Scott 1998).

In addition, by maintaining the dominant power structures they limit the capacities of the citizens instead of allowing self-determination. Therefore, they are considered authoritarian but at the same time benevolent, designed for the well-being of the people, nonetheless with a top-down approach to policy design and implementation that excludes insights from non-governmental actors (Tecnológico de Monterrey 2014, Santana Aguilar and Cofré-Lagos 2014, Ben-Ishai 2012). Furthermore, when these practices come into play, the demands of the citizens for measures that meet their necessities become less vivid and valid, because paternalistic policies tend to generate a sense of conformism and dependency of the good will of "father state", who provides palliatives as social actions instead of structural reforms, ultimately preserving the status quo (Lima de Olivera 2019). "It's a kind of social anesthetic, able to defuse, on the one hand, possible demands from the population and, on the other, the start of any process of social inclusion that would inevitably challenge the consolidated power structures" (Felice and Serio 2019, 1). In fact, some argue that the underlying purpose of these measures is to neutralize demands from the popular masses and because these practices reduce governmental actions to services and goods provision, perpetuate oppressive power relations, and inequality (Treccani Encyclopedia). It results undeniable that people accept these interventions, most of times without objection. However, this can be explained by a sort of inertia of the beneficiary communities, who often do not have the civil capacity to demand the structural changes and public goods they are entitled to. Thus, they end up falling in dynamics of assistencialist and paternalist practices that perpetuate the status quo and foment informal politics, ending up with policies that address issues under inappropriate approaches that are prone to failure (Tecnológico de Monterrey 2014). The ignorance of local realities by institutions and the populist and clientilist practices evidences a lack of penetration of the state. The fact that traditional ways of organizing societies such as the prevalence -in many cases- of social norms rather than formal rules, are characteristics of a state that has a rather "weak statehood".

If the state is a cluster of institutions regulated by a constitution, with supreme jurisdiction over a specific territory and population, statehood can be defined as the presence or absence of certain features that enable the correct institutionalization and

performance of the state (Peruzzotti 2015). According to Rotberg, the states' function is to provide public goods to the people living within its borders, and it is this capacity what differentiates strong states from weak states (Rotberg 2003). In contrast with the concept of state's governance capacity as the "government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services", weak governance can be understood as the inability or reluctance of a government "to provide essential public services, which include fostering equitable and sustainable economic growth, governing legitimately, ensuring physical security, and delivering basic services" (Rice and Patrick 2008, 5, Bull 2016). While there is not one dogmatic definition of what a limited or weak statehood entails, most scholars have a common agreement about certain characteristics. In contexts of weak statehood "the monopoly over the legitimate use of force and the ability to successfully make, implement, and enforce rules and regulations across all policy arenas within its territory is weak" (Bull 2016, 91). A deficient institutionalization of the state that results in poor coordination and regulation of the state's operations of its administrative and political machinery is also common. Another feature of weak statehood is displayed when patrimonial, clientilist relations dominate the state. These informal politics give place to little accountability scenarios.

Although the states' most important goal is to provide security to its citizens, from crime, threats, or any danger that could affect their integrity, it also must provide other political goods such as structures that enable commerce and communications. While strong states accomplish this pretty well, a state with weak statehood performs well in certain areas and poorly in others. Rotberg explains that the weakness in their performance can lead to their failure. Capable states, additionally, provide their citizens with environments that enables opportunities for economic growth, while states with weak governance capacity cannot assure such a scenario. Minimum state institutional capacity is the basis for any kind of development and progress (Bull 2016). Failed states on the other hand, are defines as states that provide only the essential political goods and "delegate" the role of providing these to other non-state actors for they have flawed institutions that lack coordination among them (Rotberg 2003, Larsson 2005).

The Peruvian state, for example, has weak government structures and holds nuances of what literature considers failed states. For example, for failed states, infrastructures like roads in distant areas like Belén, do not seem to be a priority (Rotberg 2003).

Another characteristic of failed states, or in the process of failing, is that public services are poorly provided and therefore the privatization of these in order to make them effective arises, which gives place to questionable private providers. In Nuevo Belén, for example, water is intended to be provided by a private company, which can hinder transparency and effect negatively on the people if the contracts were not properly regulated. On the other hand, in failed states, corruption flourishes "on an unusually destructive scale. There is widespread petty or lubricating corruption as a matter of course, but escalating levels of venal corruption mark failed states: kickbacks on anything that can be put out to fake tender (medical supplies, textbooks, bridges, roads, and tourism concessions); unnecessarily wasteful construction projects arranged so as to maximize the rents that they generate" (Rotberg 2003, 8). Moreover, failed states possess a judiciary system on which citizens' cannot rely (Rotberg 2003). Although Peru meets the abovementioned characteristics, which correspond to failed states, it would be a stretch to categorize it as such. According to Jackson's definition of failed states, to be considered as such, Peru would have to fail to "safeguard minimum civil conditions", such as security, order, peace, not being to overcome constant domestic threats to the government's authority's. However, these are still guaranteed (Jackson cited in Hehir 2007, 313). It is important thus, to note that while a state may have set significant capacity in one sector or state institution, it may still be we in others (Bull 2016). Therefore, limited statehood can occur only in some policy arenas, or only in a territorial level, temporally or in a specific social level (Polese and Hanau Santini 2018).

Therefore, from the discussion above, in this thesis, Peru will be referred to as a state with weak capacity, weak statehood and poor infrastructural power, since it fails to meet the indicators of strong governance, but it is not a failed state, since it does not perform poorly permanently nor in all areas. Moreover, its political freedoms and civil liberties are not endangered, the public services provision perform mostly well in the capital city, but poorly in the periphery, it has a yearly growing GDP, and it has certainly not lost its legitimacy (Rotberg 2003, Durand 2007, Larsson 2005). Peru's disarticulation of its institutions and its lack of intersectoriality, which takes the toll on the way that programs meant to improve its citizens lives tend to fail. Weak statehood, in a centralist scheme, reflects enhances the lack of infrastructural power. When this happens, informal politics prevail, giving place to corruption, prioritization of

individual agendas, populist practices and, lack of accountability, and the neglect of the less favored communities, perpetuating systems of oppression.

This is important to keep in mind for later, when we analyze how states with weak statehood perform when they try to implement high-modernist schemes, taking Peru as an example. At the same time, this concept will help us understand the context of the case study, why the outcome of the resettlement process turned out the way it did (Larsson 2005).

3.4 Securitization and climate change threats

In the previous section, I discussed centralist schemes that tend to have top-down approaches, and the weak statehood and lack of infrastructural power that enable scenarios of little accountability and informal politics, such as populist practices and the prevalence of individual agendas. In this section, I will introduce one theory that helps explain how elites may potentially use their power to achieve specific purposes.

Traditional definitions of security relate the term to power, considering it as a freedom from any military threat to the state. A popular definition of security studies by Walt is “the study of the threat, use and control of military force” (Nye and Lynn-Jones cited in Walt 1991, 212). However, this definition results narrow and too focused on warfare. The Copenhagen School of Security Studies (hereinafter, the “CSOSS”), moves beyond Walt’s realism and military-political view, understanding security as more than a military issue, touching upon political, economic, environmental and societal issues. Consequently, the CSOSS the Securitization Theory by which security is deemed in a spectrum that studies how potential problems become security threats. When threats become crises, they hold an urgency, danger and surprise nature that requires critical decision making in a short time span, because they represent a serious threat to the pillars of a social system (Rosenthal cited in Warner and Boas 2017). Thus, Trombetta and Von Lucke agree that that “security is about survival, urgency and emergency”; it is existential, imminent and direct (Trombetta 2008, 588, von Lucke, Wellmann, and Diez 2014). However, recent literature on securitization has relaxed the concept of “existential threat” and “emergency” allowing “risks” to hold a space within the security studies, specifically in the context of climate change (von Lucke, Wellmann, and Diez 2014).

In relation to climate change, Olaf Corry suggests a distinction between securitization and riskification. Risk is often linked with the concept of vulnerability, posing a "long-term potential threat that is characterized by a radical uncertainty and leads to a more diffuse sense of unease". While he argues that security is less manageable and identifies a specific threatened population or area, the notion of risk has a more diffuse referent object, and implies control by allowing "the calculation of the incalculable", and deems risk as only *potentially* a threat (von Lucke, Wellmann, and Diez 2014, 682). Additionally, security threats -due to their destructive nature- require defense and emergency strategies for they must not materialize; whereas risks call for risk-reduction strategies and precautionary measures, for they need to be reduced, mitigated and prevented. However, Von Lucke et al. argue that when a risk is invoked as a threat, it corresponds to the notions of security of the CSOSS, because ultimately, security and risk assessments are usually concerned about the things that *might* happen (Warner and Boas 2019). Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, I will use risk and threat indistinctively to refer to the possibility of climate change of threatening people's lives in Bajo Belén.

Securitization theory explains "the politics through which the security character of public problems is established", the social commitments that arise from the acceptance of a situation as a threat, and the possibility that it results in a particular policy, as well as "the effects this process has in the life and the politics of a community" (Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2015, 494, 495). The securitization act can be conceptualized as a process of social construction of crises and threats that allows a tracing process that responds who securitizes, what is securitized, under what circumstances and with what effects. Securitization, according to the CSOSS, is a "theoretical tool for the analysis of security policies" (Floyd 2010, 38).

This theory argues that it is "a matter of choice, that certain events are considered crises while others of equal gravity are not"; that treating something as a security issue is a political decision (Weaver cited in Šulović 2010 4, Warner and Boas 2019). Buzan argues that "a security issue emerges not necessarily because there is a real existential threat but rather because the issue is presented as a threat, and therefore security is a self-referential practice", and presenting threats as catastrophes may be instrumentalized for ulterior purposes, political, economic, or moral. (Hama 2017, 7, Warner and Boas 2017).

Thierry Balzacq explains that in the securitization process, the mere enunciation of *security* is the element able to break the normal course of politics (Balzacq 2005). It can be synthetized as a “discursive process –understood as a series of speech acts ultimately accepted by the wider societal audience-through which an issue could be represented as an existential threat to a specific referent object legitimizing extraordinary, “emergency” measures” (von Lucke, Wellmann, and Diez 2014, 859). When securitization is invoked, governmental dynamics change. There is an oligopoly of decision-making, political options are limited as well as public deliberation.

Moreover, Balzaq explains that a creation of deontic powers occurs, that enables authorities to take any measure that they consider necessary to neutralize the threat, such as “budgetary resources, withholding information, launching military operations, suspending civil liberties, changing the political regime” and “install governance instruments that have marginalizing effects”, including sidelining accountability (Warner and Boas 2019, Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2015, 518, von Lucke, Wellmann, and Diez 2014, 876). Thus, the declaration of the matter as urgent and a threat for the survival and security of the referent object, legitimizes these new dynamics, once this threat is accepted by the audience, which can be the affected population, press or other interest groups (Karafoulidis 2012).

Consequently, when an issue is represented and accepted as a security issue, it is securitized and thus, “depoliticized” by being removed outside the normal bounds of democratic political procedure, and put on the “panic politics” agenda, in which “a kind of political manipulation” is present (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998, Biswas 2011). If the issue is contested, it remains within the normal, deliberative politics. Weaver argues that securitization is an antidemocratic and undesirable process, for which in the opposite side of securitization, there is desecuritization (Hama 2017). This happens when an actor proposes that there is no longer an existential threat, and thus the problem is politicized again and managed within normal politics (Salter 2008).

In relation to the exceptional measures, while not denying that these may arise from it, Trombetta argues that the CSOSS has an overemphasis in emergency and exceptional measures based on traditional notions of security that involve military threats and responses; but for example, in the environmental sector, it is more related to prevention and risk management than exceptional measures (von Lucke, Wellmann, and Diez

2014). Moreover, the Paris School of Security, orients its attention also in mundane, even hidden routinized practices, including those outside official policy (Waever 2004).

In relation to the process, Balzaq explains that in order to succeed at securitizing an issue, two rules are necessary: “1) the internal, linguistic-grammatical – to follow the rule of act; and (2) the external, contextual and social – to hold a position from which the act can be made (the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked)” (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998, 32). The CSOSS bases securitization theory on the use of speech acts. Others, like Huysmans, from the Paris School of security, are is less oriented towards discourse, argue that “whoever speaks or writes ‘security,’ be it an actor or analyst, is involved in the production of knowledge regarding a security issue and becomes part of the political technology used to manage it” (Huysmans cited in Charrett 2009, 15).

Nonetheless, scholars suggests that there is no dogmatic securitization theory, and an approach that accommodates both spoken words and non-discursive practice is possible since all the different approaches to securitization theory “negotiate their position within a common framework of thinking and are all characterized by conceptual apparatuses that ultimately derive from the analytics of government” (Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2015, 517). Indeed, the most updated version of securitization theory by the CSOSS, they have moved away from the focus on the speech act allowing the techniques of government to be a way of performing the securitizing act. Moreover, Basaran suggests that laws are an important tool for securitization processes, since ultimately these may establish the policies, including administrative practices risk assessments, or population profiling, that help us identify if a securitizing move has occurred or not (Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2015).

In that sense, the CSOSS argues that securitization is a negotiation between the securitizing actor and the audience, who can accept or decline the referent object as an urgent matter. It conceptualizes the act as an inter-subjectively constructed process rather than simply a productive process based on the power of the *security* act. Thus, the audience is presented as “those the securitizing act attempts to convince to accept exceptional procedures because of the specific security nature of some issues” (Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2015, 499). Its critics argue that the CSOSS is not

clear to define what would be the signs that tell that the audience has accepted the securitizing move; however, a clear indicator may be a consequential change of policy. Moreover, while there could be a multiplicity of audiences, there is always one particular, enabling audience that ultimately empowers the act of securitization. A good example of this given by Balzaq is when the British government decided to invade Iraq and the former Prime Minister did not have the support of the public, so he secured the agreement with the Parliament, the enabler audience. The CSOSS thus, argues that the audience as well, has certain power over the act, depending on the context.

Furthermore, the extent of success of a securitization move depends on the capacity of the actors to perform effective declarations of threats. The CSOSS argues that for securitization to work, the securitizing actor needs to have certain capabilities or means. In that sense, securitizing actors are often political elites. Moreover, since individuals alone are in no position to manage and provide for their own security, it is logical that the CSOSS centers its analysis in the state, for still "most securitizations are performed by state actors, as these –unlike most other securitizing actors- have the capabilities to make securitizations happen" (Floyd 2010, 41). Bigo, from the Paris School criticizes this view precisely because it centers in the state and argues that it reinforces realist views of security and the notion that force and power are necessary to mitigate threats. In contrast, Charrett argues that since security is like a tool, it is a political concept that can provoke fear and that often materializes as oppressive acts beyond the law, that can ultimately generate exclusion, both social and political (Charrett 2009).

The context in which the securitization act happens is also an element that plays a role in its success or failure. Context can mean the sector in which it occurs, or political regimes. Buzan et al. argue that the context is a variable, facilitating condition that affects the success or failure of a securitization move (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998). However, criticism to this suggests that the securitization move cannot be affected by context as it can by audiences, since the sole claim of security matters is strong enough to be unaltered by the context (Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2015). While there is somewhat discussion over the ontological and epistemological significance of context, and what exactly defines it, most securitization analysts agree that context does have a strong effect on the production and reception of the

securitizing moves. Arguments that in one context are powerful, may seem absurd in others, thus “context empowers or disempowers security actors” (Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2015, 504).

Under the CSOSS, the referent object of the securitizing move, has been fundamentally the state’s security. Within the national security conceptions, the state’s order and legitimacy also includes the state’s territory as a referent object. In the context of climate change, the territory is threatened by the effects on socio-economic aspects and social orders from violent conflicts that may arise from scarce and degrading resources. However, as the securitizing theory has been revised, the CSOSS has shifted allowing individuals to be considered the referent objects, as well as the actors (Floyd 2010). The CSOSS now assumes that there a duality of security, state and societal (Hama 2017).

This shift has given space to different sectors of security and thus a broader variety of what can be the object of security. In that sense, the human security approach to securitization, suggested by the Human Development Report from 1994 developed by the United Nations Development Program, refocuses the concept of security from the protection of the state from military threats, to the protection of the citizens from any threats to their well-being, and their capacity to cope with adverse effects to their rights, their needs and values (Coates 2014, Oels 2012). Thus, the object of security under this approach is the lives of human beings rather than the state order. “It aspires to address the principal roots of the problems, presents answers, focuses on the poor, powerless, and vulnerable” (Hardt 2012).

In the context of climate change, under this perspective, when there is a threat to human security by climate change, sustainable development measures are taken as a priority in order to enhance the capacity for adaptation and tackle pre-existing vulnerabilities, which enhance the ability to resist and prevent future climate change threats (Oels 2012). Additionally, this approach suggests that security threats can appear in various domains such as food, poverty, health or intra-state conflict, for example. The environmental security approach, on the other hand, in close connection to the human security approach, suggests the individual as the referent object, and the threat represented by the impacts and effects of climate change on the daily lives of people (von Lucke, Wellmann, and Diez 2014). Indistinctively, when their referent object is

threatened, these perspectives include the possibility of states using military force, and specifically human security has been a concept used and "abused to legitimize military interventions in sovereign states in the name of the human security of the population", (i.e. when the US invaded Iraq under the excuse of human security) and the outcomes can be equally "violent, short-termed and undemocratic" (Oels 2012, 197, Hama 2017). Such is the extent of the "free card" that securitization moves enable, that it could even lead to "justified" human rights violations.

Apart from the use of military force, there is another potential danger within securitization moves. Scholars have suggested that the utilization of securitization are double-edge swords since they may turn into a perverse instrument to preserve "power structures or to pursue personal or political interests" (Charrett 2009, 26). In fact, the Marshall Institute warns that the climate-security argument is being dangerously exaggerated ultimately serving domestic political purposes (von Lucke, Wellmann, and Diez 2014). However, the CSOSS argues that the securitization of climate change has been unsuccessful because there is no record of extraordinary measures being taken (i.e. no environmental agreement has turned binding, the Kyoto Protocol was not extended).

Nonetheless, other scholars argue that climate change is being discussed not only at international arenas but also national where measures have been taken, however small, on a variety of levels (von Lucke, Wellmann, and Diez 2014). In fact, Ferris argues that "there are likely to be cases where authorities use the argument of climate change as an excuse to move communities off their land for political, economic, and social reasons unrelated to climate change", and Mooney on the same line explains that too often, internally displaced persons are being "victims of a deliberate policy, targeting them for displacement and forced relocation" (Ferris 2012, 26, Mooney 2005, 15).

It is important to highlight here that demographic displacements caused by policy decisions are also potential triggers for internal conflict, political disorder, strikes and insurgency, not to mention insecurity and vulnerability. Any way of undermining human security generates crises in the states (Biswas 2011). On the other hand, Myers argues that while climate-led displacements and resettlements deal mainly with environmental issues, they affect other spheres such as the political and economic one, which could end up causing confrontation, ultimately leading to violence and conflict,

constituting in the end, a threat to security, which brings us back to the state as a referent object (Myers 2005). In relation with the state as a referent object, there is a discursive trend that labels disasters as “climate change disasters”, known as climatization. Grant et al. define it as “framing disastrous events or degraded environments as caused by climate change, in order to reach an intended goal or to distract the discussion form the real problem which might have a different root course than caused by climate change effects” (Grant, Tamason, and Jensen 2015, 3). Thus, there is a potential of using climatization to cover up negligence and bad management (Charrett 2009). Climatization also inserts climate change in national security debates and defense circles, leading to a “focus on military adaptation and marginalization of policies to tackle the “root causes” of climate change (von Lucke, Wellmann, and Diez 2014, 870, 871). However, climatization is used mainly in the context of events that have already materialized, for the purposes analyzing the resettlement process of my case study, where the threat is still future, I will draw from securitization how it has been defined in this section.

Considering that in the case study object of this research, the individuals’ lives and security is the referent object of the securitization move against the threat represented by climate change and a degraded environment, I will draw from the approach to securitization developed by the CSOSS. The CSOSS provides a security tracing tool that “explains who does what and with what effects in the human security literature”, differentiating between audience, actor and referent object; while the human security approach lacks such a framework of analysis (Floyd 2010, 42). In addition, it results illustrative to show that, although in the case of Belén it is the state who performs the securitizing move, politicians, corporate elites, media, lobbyists, even the President, or any other pressure groups may influence it. It is important to remember that securitizing moves are too often encouraged by powerful interests and use tactics like control over information and media, which enhances the pathos of the security claim and may encourage its acceptance (Charrett 2009, Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2015).

4 Context and case study

4.1 Belén: The apple of their eyes

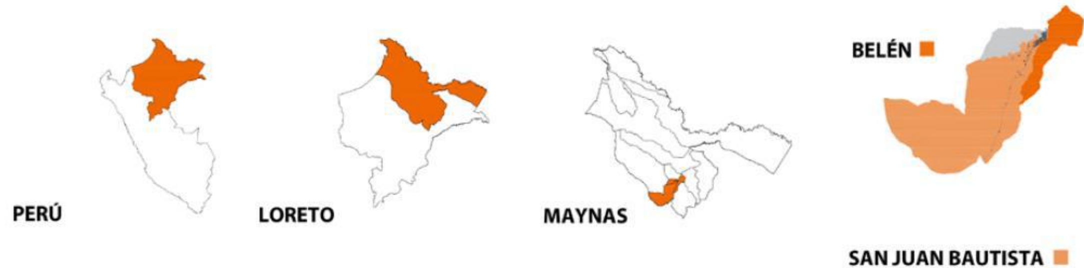


Figure 1. Geopolitical division. Source: (Desmaison 2015)

Belén is a district part of the Maynas province, in main the city of the Peruvian Amazon Rainforest, also the world's largest city inaccessible by road, Iquitos, located in the region of Loreto, eastern Peru. Although the Amazon basin where Loreto is located is rich in biodiversity, natural resources and fertile lands, it is the poorest department in Peru, where two thirds of the residents in the region are around the threshold of extreme poverty (Bernard Van Leer Foundation 2017).

The historical records about the origins of Belén are quite limited, and although government's officials state Belén's history is no older than 50 years, its citizens and the little local literature available tell stories that go back to more than 80 years ago. Indeed, when I interviewed the former MVCSs, they both said that Belén had existed for about 40 to 50 years maximum. Nevertheless, some of the people I had the opportunity to talk with, told me that they had lived there for over 55 years and that their parents had lived there as well. In fact, the oldest person I interviewed told me that she had lived in Belén for at least 75 years.

Regardless when, it is said that Belén was born on the riverbanks of Belén Concha, a branch of the river that now goes through the district, the Itaya. Its original location was set on a street that used to debouch in the Amazonas River and was mainly inhabited by descendants of fishing and hunting communities. There are documents and verbal accounts that state that by 1860, even before the Iquitos port was built, Belén was a tiny slum in the outskirts that served as a fluvial trading port, where the

people from the surrounding areas exchanged and sold their products, functioning as the gates to Iquitos. At that time, people lived mostly in floating houses, but by 1908 some houses already were starting to be built on land, by the area that has now become the “china town” of Iquitos. These houses were built up high, on stilts, to support the wet seasons of the river. The area was occupied by Chinese, Spanish, and Brazilian immigrants, who gave Belén its name after the city of Belem do Para, another fluvial district located in the Brazilian shore.

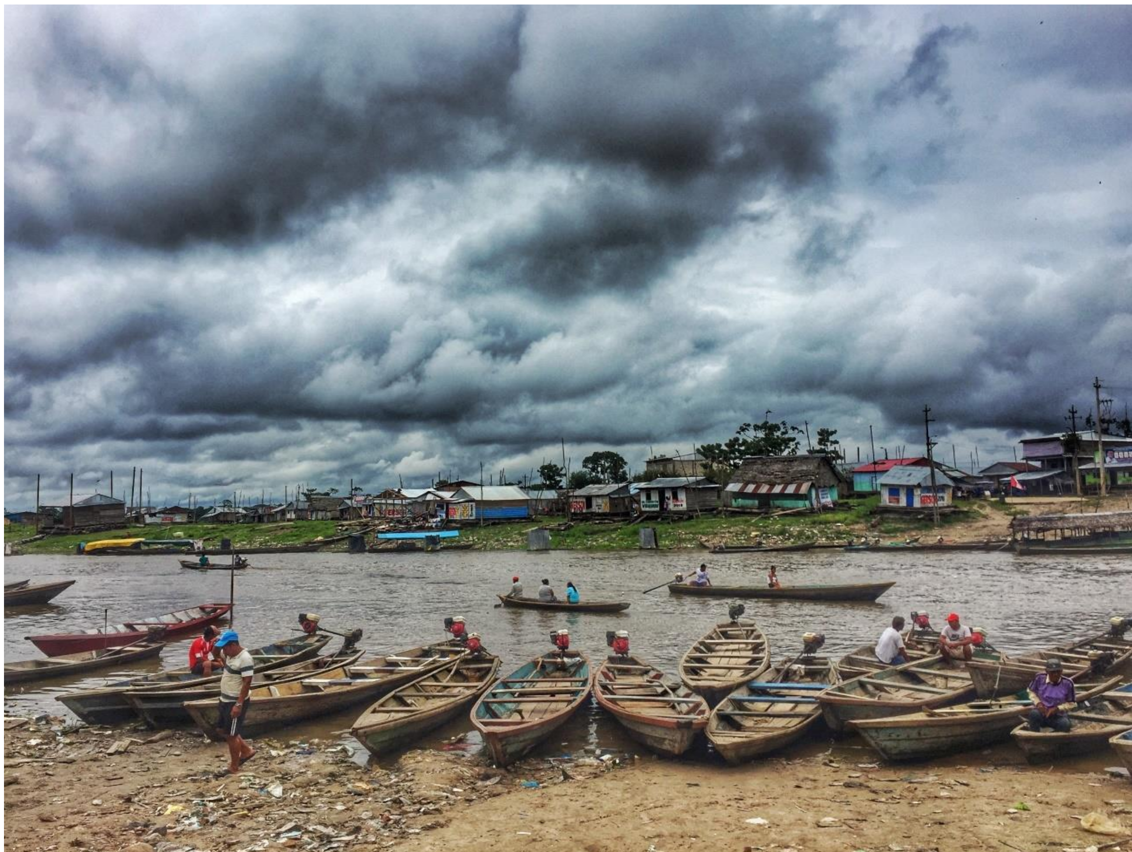


Figure 2. Fishing and taxi boats by the Itaya River. Source: author.

Since the ancestral survival activities in the Amazon have been fishery and hunting, Lozano Soria defines the people from the Amazon as individuals that married the river and the forest but not the dry land (Lozano Soria 1994). Thus, in an Amazon dwelling we can always find a canoe, a paddle, an arrow, and fishhooks. Agriculture has never been the local expertise and therefore bananas, yucca, maze and rice are the most common and popular crops sowed in the area.

In relation to housing, the Amazonians have always settled in the riverbanks because the land around water sources is richer and because it provides means for subsisting

and easy mobilization. Lozano explains that in reality, no Amazon community settles deep in the forest, by paths or highways or anywhere away from water sources (Lozano Soria 1994). The fact that the Amazon people are not completely sedentary and rely mostly on self-consumption activities for their survival, influences a philosophy of “the present”, where the future does not headline the list of concerns. A pragmatic and operative mentality reigns in the Amazon rather than a reflexive or planning one. Moreover, he explains that because the river and the forest provide for their survival, the way they perceive work is also different from the coastal or Andean notion of it. Work is not necessarily a Monday to Friday activity but more of an intermittent activity that covers the needs as they come. In addition, in the Amazon cosmology, the forces of nature have a special relevance in their lives and its contact with nature allows them to understand it in an intimate way, where collective work is common, as well as the solidarity within communities. Belén is vernacular patrimony, it “not only entails infrastructure and material aspects, but also the ways in which life is interpreted within the community, the traditions and expressions related to it” (Reategui Bartra 2015). Belén thus, is not only a geographical area in the Amazon, it is a place, “a force with detectable and independent effects on social life” (Gieryn 2000, 466). “If there’s a territory that is folk and river, it is this one, Belén of Iquitos” (Reategui Bartra 2015).

Amazon families are large, usually between and 5 and 12 members who often live in open houses (*malocas*) that differ from the models in the rest of the regions of the country (Lozano Soria 1994, Desmaison 2015). Most communities in the Amazon have historically been living in mobile settlements adapting to the mutable conditions of the river, in systems based on mobility, diversification of their economies based on available resources and multi-sited territorial appropriation. These un-stationary schemes are far from any conventional notions of spatial organization and from “usual dichotomies such as rural/urban and public/private” (Boano and Astolfo 2017, 35). There is a misconception related to the Amazon that portrays it as a plainly rural area; however, the Amazon is more complex than that, being the rural and the urban areas interdependent from each other, and so are the lives of it its people.

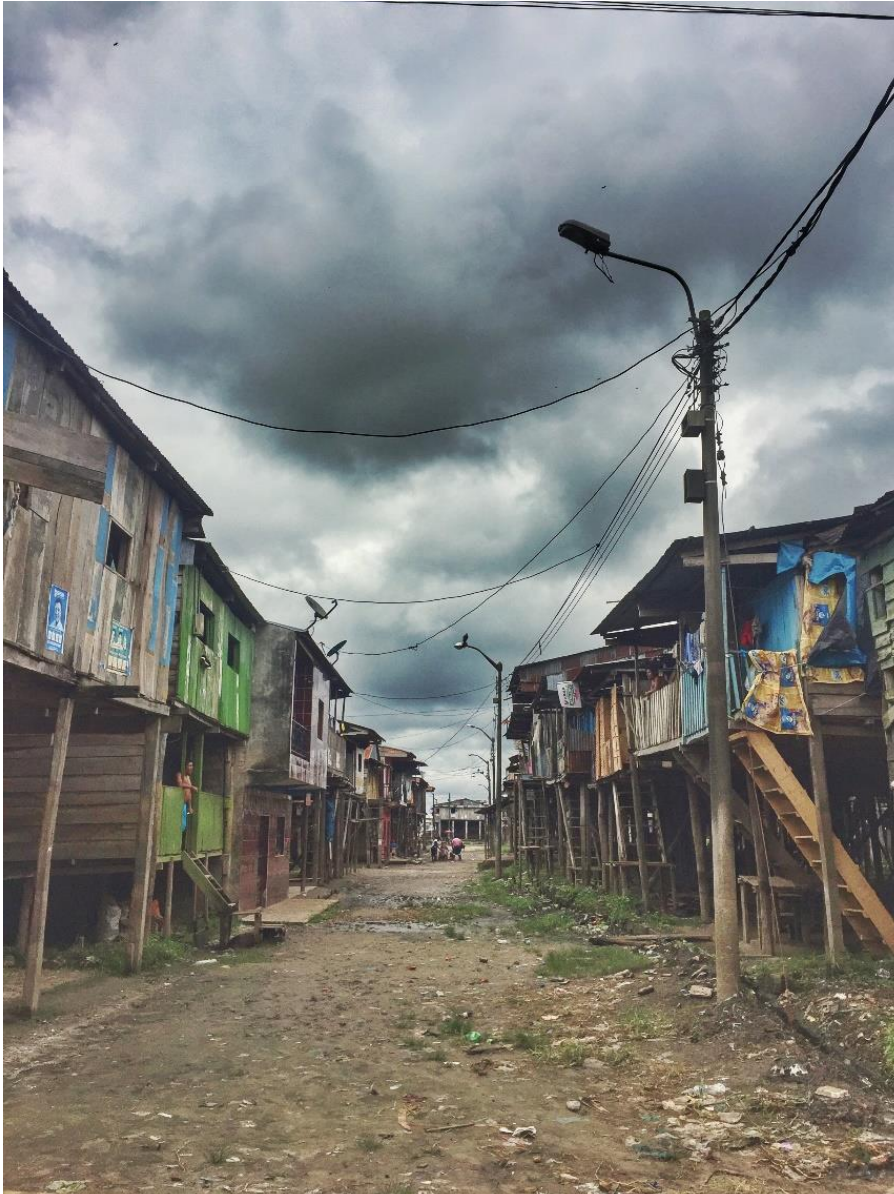


Figure 3. Street in Belén, houses on stilts. Source: author

On the other hand, Belenians are a community that has its roots mainly in the Cocama indigenous tribe, and therefore have a different ontology from the one in the capital city. They are strongly attached to their land and to the river. For them, there is life as we know it on earth, but also life underwater, where a variety of beings exist, like “the big snake”, who is the mother of all bodies of waters, which nurtures both the woods and the waters. She is the one that provides life and death to those who depend on these resource, as Cocamas do; and the one that provokes the rivers rise and fall. The Cocamas tribe has inhabited in the river ecosystems throughout history, therefore getting the name of “people’s of the rivers”. They construct their identities and social relations in relation to the river, which they deem as one of the key living beings in their cosmology (Rivas Ruiz 2011).

Historically, Belén has not only been a place for exchange and trade, but also where the first popular rebellions of the region occurred when food scarcity hit Iquitos in the early 1900s and only people with higher economic resources could access food. These strikes, led in both cases by women from Belén, pushed the government into implementing food policies to benefit the popular masses. Therefore, people also take a lot of pride of their community's resilience and strength, and are deeply attached to their territory.

Its demographic expansion began around year 1918 by immigrants from other regions who occupied areas that went all the way up to the shores of the Itaya River. During the 1950s and 1960s, the withdrawal of the Amazon River from the area allowed people to settle in the beaches that it formed and left behind, which ultimately formed the lower area of Belén. Additionally, the launch of the Amazonian University in Iquitos, the development of the oil industry, and the declaration of the Amazon area as a tax free zone for industrial and commercial activities brought thousands of people to Iquitos, crowding its popular areas, including Belén (Reategui Bartra 2015).

At this point, Belén was not yet recognized as a district but only as a slum, and therefore, during the 1980s, initiatives to promote the official acknowledgement of Belén as a district started, on the basis that this was the most active economic area of Iquitos. As I talked with the residents, they all had the same feeling that they have been always forgotten by the central government. They feel that it leaves them behind due to their little economic power. However, many politicians during campaign talk about Belén as a marvelous place that they promise to take care of, but once elected, they forget about it. Some have the audacity of referring to Belén as "the apple of their eyes".

> *"Good evening to the community leaders of Belén. The purpose of this meeting is (...) to get organized and together fight for the needs of Belén. The authorities have forgotten us (...)"* (Extract from a community leader's speech at a meeting for the recognition of Belen as a district Reategui Bartra 2015, 26)

Only in 1999 Belén, along with other districts of the area was recognized officially by Law No. 27195, which sets its limits and coordinates. Although Belén was already a politically organized community, divided in 12 sectors, each with leaders elected by

the neighbors' assembly, this step to being recognized as a district also entitles it to having an own municipality and a state budget.

By year 2015, Belén had a total 75,685 inhabitants distributed in a higher and lower area, urban and rural, correspondingly. There is high rate of people living in extreme poverty (41,7%) and also alarming rates of schooling abandonment, teenage pregnancy, and physical and sexual violence towards children and women (INEI 2015).

The upper Belén area distinguishes itself from the lower one because their socioeconomic situation is better and the households are connected to water and sewage from the city. For the purposes of this thesis, I will focus on Bajo Belén.

The lower area of Belén (hereinafter, "Bajo Belén") holds between 16,000 and 18,000 people in about 2,600 houses and it's among the poorest neighborhoods in Loreto, with an estimated poverty rate of 70% (F. Faldetta et al. 2014). It is settled on the flood plains of the Itaya River and it is flooded 6 months a year when this one grows, between January and June, becoming a floating city, which gives it the name of "Peruvian Venice". The ancestral knowledge and practices have contributed to the ways people have adapted to the river dynamics and the changes in the terrain. Therefore, their houses and buildings are constructed on stilts and floating logs that keep them above water, and roofs made out of tree leaves.

The river dynamics provide the area with different type of resources throughout the year, but also keeps it exposed to floods. During the wet season, the infrastructure of the houses are buildings is affected, there is less access to clean water and an increase of diseases. Often during the floods, some of the affected houses become inhabitable for as long as the flooding lasts and its inhabitants have to be relocated in tents and the government struggles assisting the people in Belén, among other reasons, because of the limited access to the area. However, Belenians explained to me that a rising river is not the same as a flooding. The rising river is considered a natural dynamic of the river and in their lives, since they have lived adapting to it as long as the first tribes lived in the riverbanks. When the river rises higher than planned, or than expected, ruining belongings such as beds or electric artifacts is when the river "has flooded". Anything else is just the river rising. This differs from the understanding of the river

dynamics in the coast, where people are not used to it rising, nor are prepared for it, representing a threat every time (Rivas Ruiz 2011, Reategui Bartra 2015).

The rising river's water is polluted with untreated sewage from Belén and the communities around it, and full of all kinds of solid waste and garbage. When the river bursts its banks, the street walks become improvised, precarious, aerial wooden bridges and water-taxi businesses become available by anyone lucky enough to afford a boat. About 85% of Belenians earn their livelihoods by fishing in the river, or by small scale agricultural activities, hunting around the area, and working or selling their products in the nearby market (Burbach 2017, Desmaison 2015). This type of housing is part of the popular ancestral architecture of the Amazon and the communities that have co-existed with rivers, lagoons and ravines not only as sources of food, but as places to live in, explains one of my informants. That is how Bajo Belén has adapted its lifestyle as well.

While Bajo Belén has become an emblematic area of the Loreto region, the reality is that this is a highly contaminated area lacking basic services such as water and sewage. It has long been a marginalized territory, economically, socially and politically, despite its commercial relevance, and it's currently considered as the most vulnerable area in Iquitos, and one of the most polluted cities in the country, although one of the government's leaders I interviewed thought that was an understatement. Moreover, the contamination by accumulated garbage on the streets is extreme and no local government has fixed this situation, giving the area a bad reputation around Iquitos. Walking on its streets is walking on mud, food waste and trash.

> *"Sadness. Makes me feel sad to see what it has become. Belén used to be a place where you would find people living in rafts, but not like this (...)It started to grow and no one cared how because these people are poor. Belén has always been there, but not like this." (Nancy Alarcon, local journalist)*

In terms of public services and infrastructure, Belenians have very little. In the lower area electricity is only possible during the dry season, for during wet season it is too dangerous to have any electric connections. However, the alternative sources of light, such as kerosene, petroleum or candles, are also dangerous, becoming a potential hazard that has led to terrible fires and losses of lives in the past. Also, water and

sewage is "*highly expensive*" to implement and "*unfeasible*" as the former MVCS states, because the changing water level is likely to break any pipes or water connection installed, and although there has been a bidding process for its construction, no company wants to engage in such a risky project. So, instead of sewage there are open ditches around the district and water is supplied intermittently.

The Itaya River in which shores Belén is situated, flows out in the Amazon River in a space of approximately 60 meters. In the beginning of the creation of Belén, its shores where occupied by Omagua tribes but the industries that grew around it brought people from different origins and regions, overcrowding the riversides, and causing the loss of their palm trees and soil that constituted a natural way of preventing the river to overflow. The overpopulation of the area and the state's absence has contributed to the high contamination rates in it.

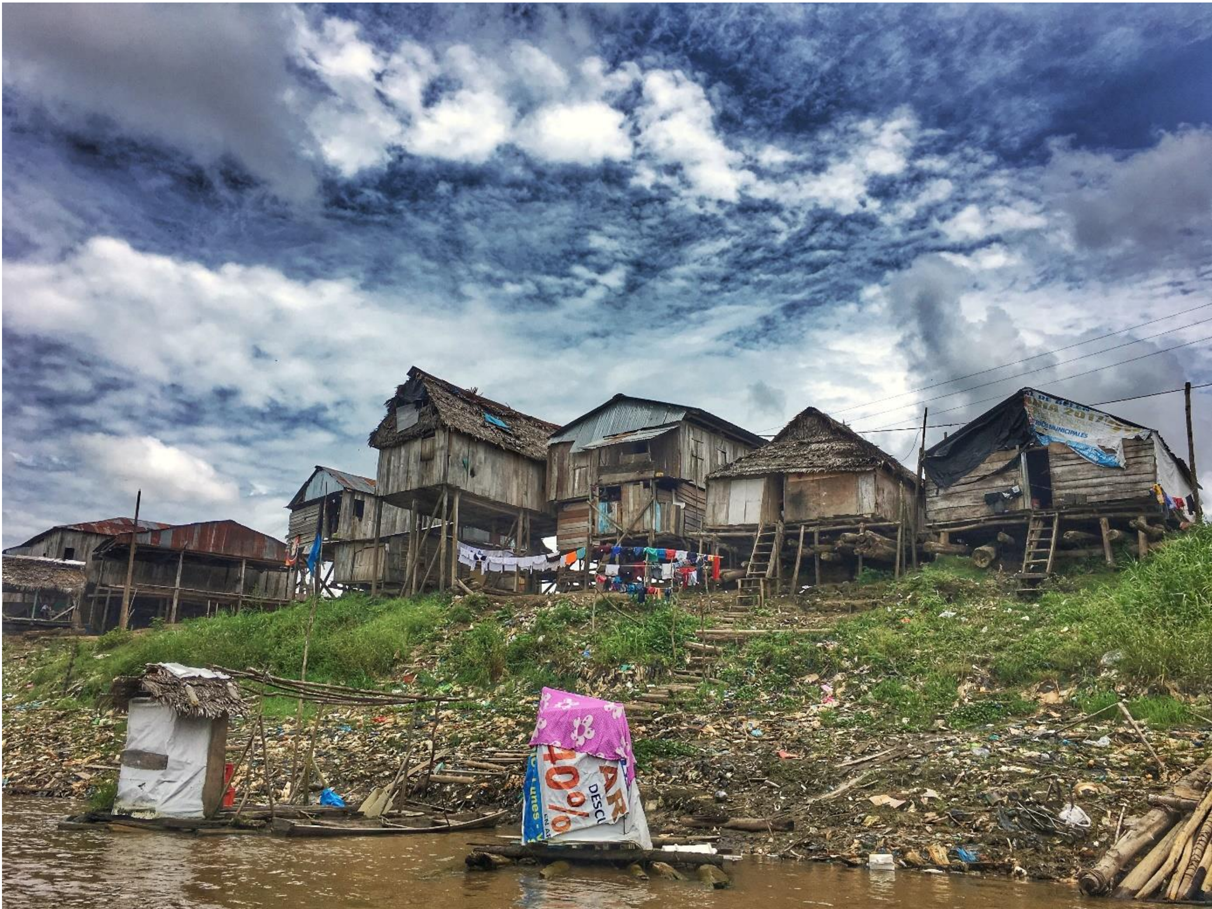


Figure 4. Dry season. Latrines built over the Itaya River. Waste goes directly in it. Source: author.

The Itaya serves Belenians as primary source of, basically, everything. Belenians are intimately related to it. It is where they fish, wash their clothes, and themselves; where

they refresh when the jungle temperatures are too high, while serving as their latrine and dumpster as well. And sadly for some, this is a drinkable water source. *"[I feel] shame and sadness that this is considered one of the most polluted places in the world"* repeats Milton von Hesse.

> "*Life in Belén revolves around this constant rising and falling of the Itaya. However, as remarkable as the river's influence is, life in Belén is undeniably hard*" (Burbach 2017, 2).

Furthermore, Belén has also become one of the most dangerous places in Iquitos, where the law enforcement is not as present as it is in other places. There is micro commercialization of drugs, drug and alcohol abuse, robbery, crime and violence in general, being human trafficking and child abuse the biggest criminal problems (Burbach 2017).

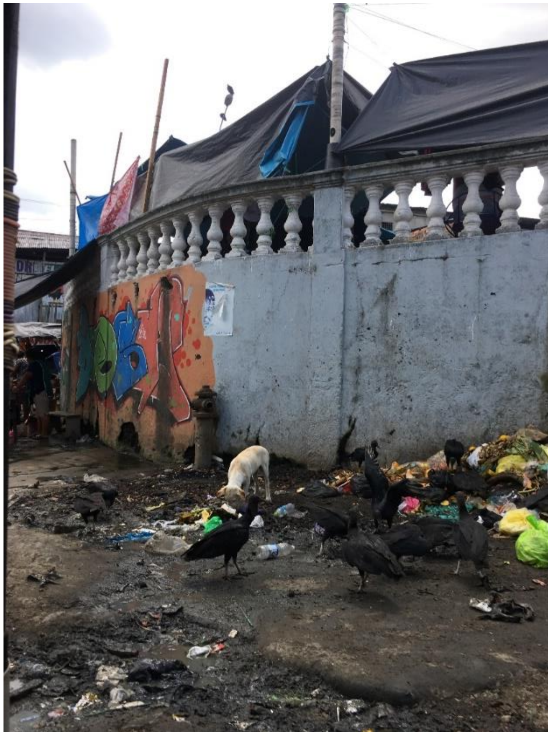
The latter is suggested to have been exacerbated by the fact that, on top of all the issues listed above, Belén has a serious overcrowding problem. Houses often hold an average of 6 to 7 people who most of the times live in a single room, which enhances the children to sexual abuse and violence, often coming from within family members (Burbach 2017). "*The heart of Belén is families. Familiy of family of family. The people living next door is not just your neighbor. It's your aunt, your cousin. Everyone is related to each other.*"

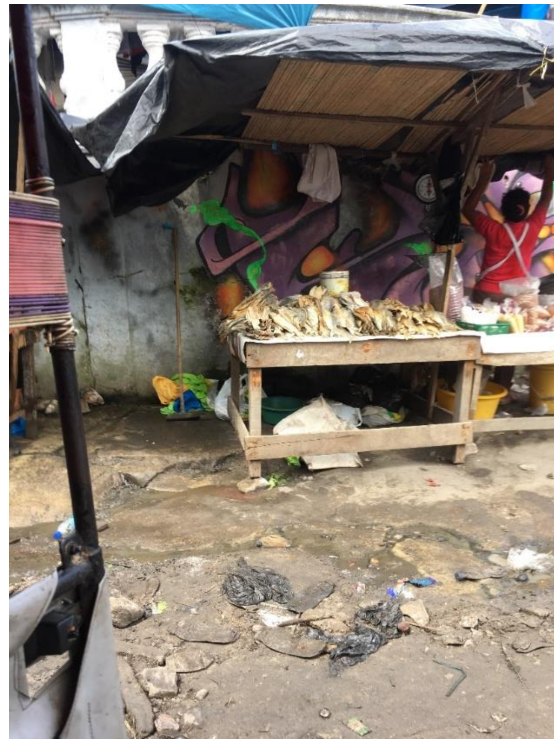
Arriving to Bajo Belén is a difficult panorama to see. It is located a few minutes away from Iquitos in a *mototaxi,* or 20 to 30 minutes walking from the main plaza. The first thing that welcomes people is Belén's market, is, as national chef Ignacio Medina romanticizes, "*a magical and vibrant space in which all roots of Loreto's kitchens set grounds and a space that represents a great part of the Amazon pantry*".

A regular day in the market Belén starts between 2 and 4 in the morning when people, mostly the women, get ready to sell in the market the products the men bring; and it is done between 2 and 3 in the afternoon when they run out of products. Dozens of boats arrive to the port in Bajo Belén with all types of meats, fruits, vegetables, coal, fish, smuggled goods, etc. to provide the market that serves thousands of people daily.

While it is true that Belén's market holds a vast variety of foods from all over the Amazon, and has become an emblematic attraction in the city, its hygienic conditions

are hard to ignore. The market is formed by about 1,000 stands of formal and informal merchants, where all kinds of products are sold and where most Belenians work. It has inadequate services and filthy surroundings. The floors are filled with scraps of foods accumulated in piles everywhere, next to all kinds of garbage, dogs, cats and vultures roaming among the foods, and flies having a feast.





Figures 5 and 6. The beginning of Bajo Belén coming from Upper Belén. Food stands sell food next to the trash. Source: author.

Despite the obvious issues found in Belén, without a doubt, it has a certain *je ne sais quoi*. Its people and its streets turned into rivers give it a magical feeling indeed. But perhaps it is not magical at all; perhaps it is just that there is something romantic about misery to the outsider's eye. Perhaps.

4.2 Making Bajo Belén Great Again

4.2.1 Belén Sostenible

"Belén sostenible" was a project put into action in the beginning of the government of former President Ollanta Humala (2011-2016), with the aim of enhancing the structural aspects of the houses in Bajo Belén, right after a fire that affected more than one hundred houses (Silva 2015).

The project, in charge of the MVCS, consisted in the construction of approximately 2,500 safe and environmentally friendly houses, which would benefit about 14,000 people. These houses would be built with certified wood and were planned to be built with a special technique that would be resistant to the historical maximum height of the Itaya River flooding and covered with special materials to prevent fires (Andina 2013). The idea behind this project was to enhance the livability and salubrity conditions in the district. It was not only going to intervene houses but also upgrade the district's infrastructure, by installing elevated paths and the provision of water and sewage to all of the enhanced houses, as well as their integration to the main water network. The project needed an investment of more than 150 million Soles (about 45'276,461.00 NOK) and was meant to be finished by 2015, after which Bajo Belén was projected to become a touristic area that would bring economic benefits to its citizens and consequently improve their living conditions (Andina 2013).

During the time that the "Belén Sostenible" project was slowly progressing, the community saw more governmental presence than usual and started feeling the support from the authorities. Nonetheless, in 2014 rumors spread around the neighbors that "Belén Sostenible" would be replaced by a new project called "Nuevo Belén", which would mean the end of their district as they knew it.

On December 22, 2014, the Congress approved a new project called "Nuevo Belén" by Law No. 30291, whose proposal was issued by the President itself, Ollanta Humala Tasso, declaring the lower area of Belén in State of Emergency in the light of a national development strategy that is part of the National Plan of Risk Reduction Management – PLANAGERD (Silva 2015). The Nuevo Belén project urged the relocation of Bajo Belénians for the place they knew as home was no longer safe for them based, among other reasons, on a Report issued by the Peruvian Navy - further explained below- which stated that the lower area of Belén was situated over the Amazon's old riverbed which was a potential hazard (Peru 2018).

Urgent law proposals issued by the Executive Branch (the President) usually become a priority for the Congress' evaluation, and therefore take a shorter average time of 134 days to be approved and published, some even taking up to 150 days. However, this law proposal was passed and published in only 40 days since its submission, intending to begin the project in 2015 and finish it by 2017 (Hidalgo Bustamante

2018). This meant that the resettlement plan for more than 16,000 people was to be designed in less than a year and implemented in two. Thus, the project skipped the regular process and evaluations described in Section 1.2 above.

4.2.2 The Navy Report, an Amazon myth?

The one and a half page report (the "Report") that was part of the motives that started the engines of the resettlement plan for approximately 18,000 people, was issued by the Peruvian Navy's Hydrography and Navigation Office. According to the media and the government's officials, this study of the Amazon and Itaya Rivers, concludes that Belén is at risk of being wiped off by the Amazon River, one of the fullest and most powerful rivers in the world, once it recovers its tracks, ultimately meeting the Itaya and making its stream unstoppable. The exact time for this phenomenon to happen is uncertain, and moreover, it is not possible to assess the certainty of the event, but it was estimated that this might occur in about 40 to 70 years.

The Report has been mentioned in media reportages and in official documents, and although it has not been published in any public access platform, I had access to it through one of my informants in the Peruvian Navy. What the Report actually says, is that there is sufficient evidence to believe that the Amazon River had once invaded the riverbed of the Itaya River in the last stretch, which could potentially occur again, in an undetermined future. It also states that as of now, the Itaya River and the Amazon River are set apart, however, the Amazon River, as dynamic as any other river is, tends to shift its riverbed, for which it is possible that at some point in time it will meet the Itaya River.

The time the Peruvian Navy estimates would take for this phenomenon to happen is between 52 to 100 years from 2014, if we take into consideration both the minimum and the maximum erosion speeds. The Report concludes by suggesting that in order to be cautious, the abovementioned timeframe should be best considered conservatively as 30 to 35 years, because climate change effects on the environment may also speed up erosional processes. Therefore, the report suggests that permanent or long-term construction projects should not be carried out in the lower area of Belén and preventive measures to relocate the communities residing in it should be taken. However, the tone of the report seemed to display a less alarming and urgent forecast

than the one that the media and the government reported, and one of my informant from the Peruvian Navy said that they did not mean to dictate the resettlement, but they suggested that preventive measures should be taken.

4.2.3 The project is dead. Long live the project!

Law No. 30291 not only declared Bajo Belén an uninhabitable area under emergency but also ruled the permanent resettlement of its population in a new place, and the allocation of parcels and houses to the relocatees (CR 2014).

According to the government's officials, the State of Emergency declaration and the resettlement would minimize the health and living related risks, provide the people with a safe environment, generate a new sustainable city, increment the school attendance levels and enhance the Belenians quality of life in general. *"The only sustainable way to enhance people's lives here was to build a new city in dry land, so we created the Nuevo Belén project" (Milton Von Hesse, former MVCS).*

The rationale from the Executive Branch to discard Belen Sostenible and suggest Nuevo Belén instead, was based on the Report and a vulnerability assessment made in the area that concluded that a) the basic services planned to be installed in the lower area were unviable because the installation of the water and sewage networks would be quickly deteriorated by the wet and dry seasons of the Itaya, b) the constant flooding of the Itaya River made Bajo Belén inhabitable and dangerous for the life and health of the population; b) the great majority of the houses are built with flammable materials, without technical assistance and with a precarious structure; c) the wooden stoves increment the risks of fire and therefore are potentially dangerous to the lives of Belenians (Construccion 2014); d) more than half of houses have access to water when the river tide is low, and for a limited time of 2 hours a day; e) none of the houses in Bajo Belén do not have access to sewage, but alternative connections directly to the river or to open pits, which can only be used during dry season; f) high contamination by trash and wastewater, and g) most of the health issues in Belén are related to environmental problems, lack of sanitary conditions and overpopulation.

So, in December 2014, the Congress gave green light to the resettlement project, which at the same time counted with the support of the Regional Government of Loreto, the Municipality of the Maynas Province and the Municipality of the district of Belén. In

that sense, through this law, the resettlement responsibility was given to the MVCS through its social program (also in Lima) Nuestras Ciudades *(Our Cities)*, along with all entities that the MVCS would consider relevant to onboard. This program was created in 2014 as an initiative to carry out preventive measures against natural hazards in order to reduce risks in matters related to housing, urbanism and sanitation, and to promote the resettlement of existing cities as well as the creation of new ones, specifically of cities affected by natural hazards (PR 2013). The Program is based on national guidelines for sustainable urban development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with particular emphasis in goal 11, which says: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (UN 2015).

It additionally stated that the project should only be implemented once the new area was provided with the basic services. The budget to be allocated for it was an estimated amount of S/174’000,000,00 (approx. 52’000,000,00 NOK). The Law also stated that each citizen of Bajo Belén who owned a house there, and that had been duly registered in the census, would be entitled to receive a new house, for free, in the new city to be built, which would be finished by 2016 (CR 2014).

The official announcement of the Nuevo Belén project, deemed it as a “satellite city” of Iquitos. Satellite cities are “a phenomenon of population expansion” (Nasir Anuar and Ahmad 2017, 281). Often defined as smaller cities with an own small “city centre”, these are located outside of the larger metropolitan areas, but near to a large city (i.e. Belén) that is the center of a metropolitan area (i.e. Iquitos). Interestingly, the idea of the satellite cities was brought by high-modernist, Le Corbusier, who re-imagined these as cities still dependent administratively of a bigger city, which should aim to recreate a new version of the bigger city, satisfying basic needs of its citizens but trying to avoid the overcrowding found in the latter and using it only as a working area (Nasir Anuar and Ahmad 2017).

The Nuevo Belén project offered the following (Ministerio de Vivienda): a) it would be settled in an area called Varillalito, part of a district called San Juan Bautista, located about 15-20 kilometers from old Belén; b) 2,600 parcels of 120sqm with 40mts of built area for 2,600 families, c) connection to water and sewage; d) water treatment plant;

e) electricity; f) parks, gardens and sports courts; g) health center, h) schools: primary and secondary, i) police station; j) market.

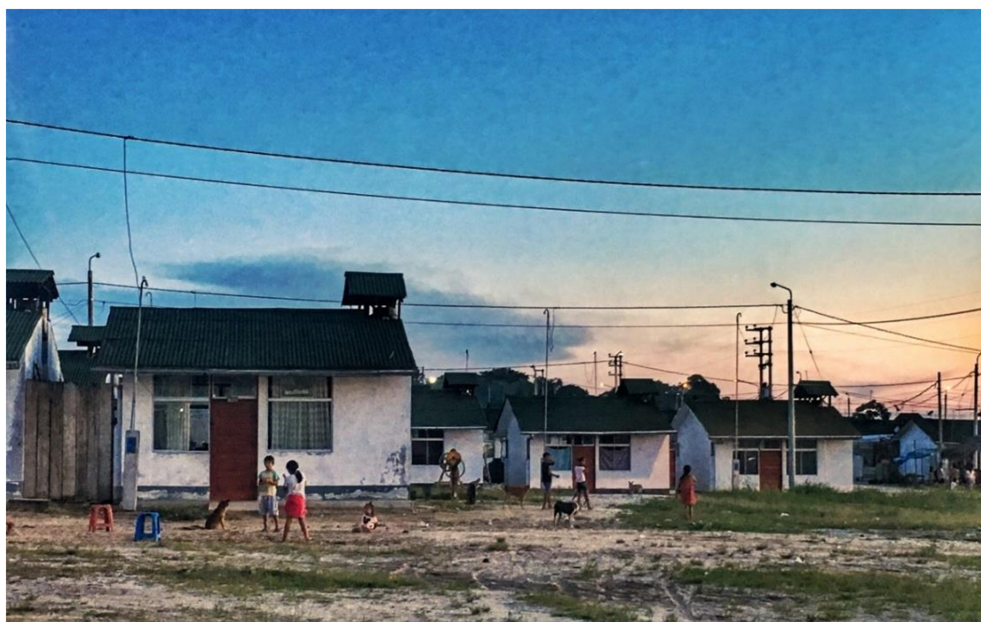


Figure 7. Nuevo Belén. October 2019. Source: author.

Alfonso Silva Santisteban, who has had experience doing social work in Belén and has deep knowledge and understanding of the culture and dynamics within Belén, was asked by the MVCS to participate in the socialization of the project once it started its implementation, the people of Belén had not been informed about it beforehand. Only some had heard rumors around it but no one seemed to know exactly what the government had decided, and the inhabitants went from being incredulous to been puzzled when the MVCS confirmed the news (Silva 2015). Alfonso, who often did volunteer work at the site with a social project called Bola Roja, mentioned that he asked the bureaucrats why there had been such a turn from the first initiative to rehabilitate Belén, and apart from telling him that the territory was not stable enough to install sewage services -despite the fact that part of the area comprehending the resettlement was already completely urbanized- they said that the government planned to build an ecological boulevard in the area so people had to move (Silva 2015).

> *"The quid of the matter is not taking people out of Belén but to face the challenge of a transformation from inside the circumstances and turn this place into a real Venice (...)" – Local Priest Joaquim Garcia*

Later on, the government released the location of the land on which the new resettlement would be built, which according to a monitoring report of the project, was

chosen on costs and opportunity basis, more than on a strategic vision of the city. The area had been a donation from a private person who decided to donate part of his property to the Municipality of Maynas and this one then donated it to the MVCS. The apparent reason for the donation, according to the Minister, was because the donor would eventually benefit from the area being habilitated and provided with water, sewage and electricity at the government's expense.

According to my informants, up to the date the first batch of resettled families come from the temporary camps and shelters built after the fire that took place in 2012, which destroyed about 120 houses. However later, not only I learned that the quantity of people moving from Bajo Belén to Nuevo Belén is actually less than the government officials had reported, but that the latter is starting to be crowded by people from neighboring communities, and that Bajo Belén has not reduced the number of people living there. Moreover, some of the main infrastructural issues reported is that the construction of the city started without topographic information on the area, because it was initially occupied by invaders, for which it follows technical principles of a plain terrain and homogeneous designs, inadequate for the Amazonian geography. In addition, the prevision of green space in the new city is less than 4 meters per person, despite the international standards that suggest 9mt per person, especially in tropical weather. Furthermore, according to one of my informants in the MVCS, the new schedule for the program aimed to complete the construction of the new city and the implementation of basic services by the end of 2019. However, by November 2019 both remain unfinished. The report also specifically states that coordination with the local authorities is not intended at a co-management level but only for specific activities.

4.3 Lights, Camera, Action: An anecdote.

During an interview with one of the former MVCS Ministers, he told me that he thought there had been four main drivers for this project to begin. The first, is because of the Report; second, because it is an extremely contaminated area without water or sewage; third, because it is the area with the highest criminal rates; and fourth, because once during a visit of the former President Ollanta Humala, while playing a soccer match with the community, he was asked by some of the inhabitants to provide them with water, and he made the promise in front of the press, and so he had to comply.

According to him, this is how both the projects around Belén started, and once they realized that the logistics and engineering for Belen Sostenible would be too complex and perhaps impossible, in addition of the costs being too high, Nuevo Belén came up as a plan B.

However, there are many other areas of the country that seemed to me to be under the same or more imminent climate related threats, and that are in urgent need of governmental action. Thus, I wondered why of all places, was Belén chosen to be the iconic resettlement project. Especially considering that the seasonal flooding has been a phenomenon that is part of Belenians lives and that the dangers that they could be mitigated while the project was designed and implemented with more anticipation for a better outcome.

So, I explained my concern the former MVCS Minister and asked him if he thought that Belén had been randomly chosen to make it a unicorn project. This a translated fragment of the answer:

> *"Let's say yes. I would have to introduce you to Humala so you could understand how pushy he can be. He is capable of calling you at 2am and ask you, how's Belen going? I mean, he made a [public] political offer, he sent the technical team to make the studies, and well, it sounded reasonable, due to all the red flags. Nobody can discuss that the area is in need. So, we were in year 2014, we only had 2 years left in office and I was suffering because time was running out (...) And he's asking me, is this solved yet? And I say, well, I got the law, and I have to build the houses now and that takes time. And he tells me, "you figure out how to solve it". So (...) then the plan was, what are our best manufactured houses? We had a large stock for emergencies, earthquakes, etc and the Ministry also had been equipped with a huge float of caterpillars [trucks], etc. that we had bought for risk management in Lima (...) How many houses do we have? Ok, send them over. So, we had the land and we started setting up the houses. But now make them move to the manufactured houses (...) and luckily we had a group willing to move immediately (...) and we luckily got the area lotized quickly (...) and I think it was December 24 when we launched the city with a big ceremony (...) so we achieved to have a group of people moving in (...) Because we were running out of time and I knew I couldn't launch in July [with the concrete houses] because if so, it was the next government who would make the grant of the houses (...). But they haven't completed the construction because the money was used for the north [of the country] (...), that was also a political decision (...)."*

Despite the contamination and the precarious situation of the district that I got the chance of seeing for myself, his answer gave me the impression that the government had set its mind in casually doing “a project” which happened to be Nuevo Belén, and therefore, regardless the obvious errors along the way, it went ahead with the plan, as a political move. A few days later, when I interviewed Alfonso, he told me that in 2014 he and one of his colleagues from the Bola Roja project, who is also a popular TV celebrity, were contacted by the MVCS in order to make them allies of the Nuevo Belén project and help the MVCS inform the population.

> *“The project seemed as if it had been done by first year undergrads. They didn’t even have a receiving location. They hadn’t talked to the people yet, but were planning on dividing them into two different locations (...). They said it was because climate change would make living conditions impossible in the area, but it honestly seemed like they first decided to move them out and then searched for the reasons why. (...) This government is like a father that has never been present, never has given them anything and all of the sudden shows up with this paternalistic approach trying to change things. They have no clue of the reality in the area… It’s a display of disdain for their identities, for their everything.” – Alfonso Silva*

4.4 Oh, false alarm: Law repealing proposals

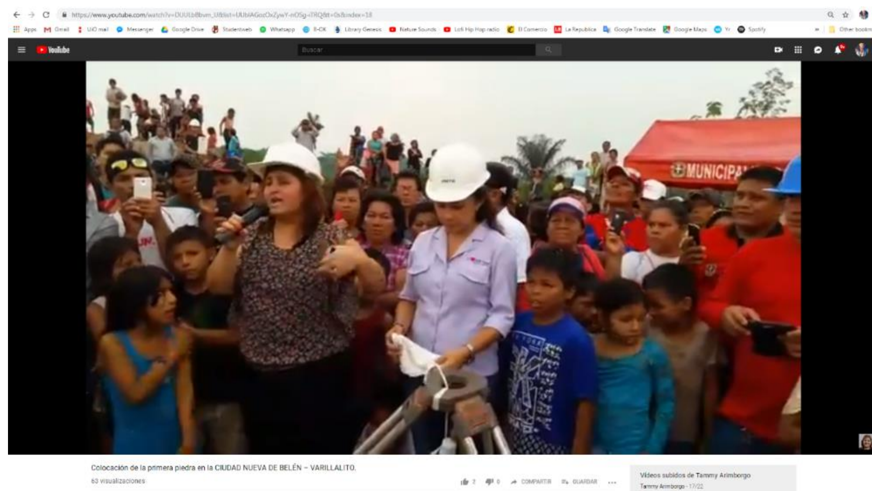
Although the Nuevo Belén project is still in process, and despite the fact that millions of Soles have already been spent in planning and building the new city, not to mention that there are approximately 300 families already living in Nuevo Belén, there have been so far three law proposals to repeal the Law that declares the necessity of the resettlement.

The first proposal No.4209/2014-CR, submitted to the Commission of Housing and Construction of the Congress (hereinafter, the “Commission”), by former Congressman Leonardo Agustin Inga Vasquez from the political party “Accion Popular - Frente Amplio” was presented only two months after Law 30291 was passed. The arguments for this repealing proposal are supported in the fact that the MVCS once in the past had recognized as fit for construction the –now declared uninhabitable- area, reason for which it built houses for Belenians and even granted them title deeds for their lands. Additionally, the repealing proposal suggests that Law 30291 breaches the constitution and moreover, that the new project is inconvenient for Belén’s

population in socioeconomic and cultural dimensions. However, the Commission dismissed this petition.

The second repealing proposal (No. 1266/2016-CR), submitted during year 2016 is an initiative presented by former Congresswoman Patricia Elizabeth Donayre Pasquel who was part of the political party “Fuerza Popular” at the time of her election, part of “Peruanos por el Kambio” when she submitted the proposal, and currently part of a new party called “Unidos por la Republica”. The third and last proposal (No.1290/2016-CR), also from 2016 comes from former Congresswoman Tammy Arimborgo, from “Fuerza Popular”, who funnily enough, was one of the politicians supporting the resettlement project in its beginning and took part in the inaugural event in Nuevo Belén, promoting it as great development for the region.

The arguments that support both proposals are the same as the ones in the first repealing petition, except that both include the fact that if people are resettled to a new location, this would also imply that they would be part of a different district, representing fiscal losses for the Municipality of Belén.



The image above is a screenshot of a video of the inaugural ceremony of Nuevo Belén carried out May 14, 2016, published on September 13, 2016, by Congresswoman Tamar (Tammy) Arimborgo with the following caption: “*It is a pleasure to be here today, because I am sure that Nuevo Belén will be an area with modern infrastructure and good quality of life. Therefore, I reassure my commitment with the families of Loreto”*. She closes her speech with a joyful: *“Let’s enjoy this place”*.

However, one year later she submitted the abovementioned derogatory proposal and the following year she stated before the Commission that it was the executive power who had sneaked in Law 30291 in Lima, and that she did not understand the reasons behind the resettlement project. At the same time - she condemned the lack of discussion of the project with the population, and remarked that it is Belén's inhabitants who would know most about the way they live and that they have happily cohabited with the rising and falling of the river for years. "*Those in charge of the resettlement don't know the reality [of Belén]" - Tamar Arimborgo.*

At request of the Commission, several governmental institutions submitted their opinion on both proposals to the Commission. The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Environment and the MVCS submitted their disapproval to both. The Regional Government of Loreto and the Municipality of Belén, both submitted their approval. On June 13, 2018, the Housing and Construction Commission of the Congress approved both these last repealing proposals, suggesting that Law 30291 should be repealed and that the Belén Sostenible project should be reactivated. No further indications. No further ideas. No suggestions of what to do with what has already been done, or the resettled people, or the budget, or anything. This means that the next step is to discuss this in plenary session at the Congress and if the repealing proposal was approved in this stage, we would be stuck with a half built new district, partially inhabited, with no further projection to become the city once promised. What is worst, the people living in Nuevo Belén would most likely no longer be able to go back to Belén either because their old houses have been tore down by the MVCS, or they have been invaded by new tenants, or simply because they face rejection by their community because they agreed to leaving.

5 Analysis

5.1 The impacts of the resettlement on the peoples livelihoods

This research is not a formal project evaluation or impact assessment. Nevertheless, it is essential to assess the impacts on the lives of Belenians and understand why there is widespread dissatisfaction and opposition.

Barnett and Weber argue that planned resettlements, instead of anticipating or avoiding the risks of climate change, may actually increase the chances of vulnerability if poorly implemented, and therefore, it is crucial to minimize the tolls it takes on socioeconomic and political factors by carrying out community consultation and appropriate planning (Ferris 2012). In that sense, drawing from Cernea's variables, I will unveil the impacts of Nuevo Belén in the community up to November 2018 and interpret them in light of the dimensions proposed by Boano and Astolfo. For such purposes I will use data and information acquired from in-depth interviews, gray literature, and my own observations.

Ther MVCS/Nuestras Ciudades is the sole entity in charge of the resettlement, with limited support from the local governments. The project was managed as an anticipatory, preventive resettlement plan. The preliminary stage of the project was delivered with pre-fabricated houses that were given to the first relocatees temporarily, until the concrete houses were finished. Later, 169 houses were built and the project was put on hold, which caused a major delay. According to my informants from the MVCS, this happened because part of the funds allocated for Nuevo Belén had to be used for the emergency happening in the north of the country, when Peru suffered unprecedented damages from floods and mudslides by the El Niño phenomenon in 2017. Thus, it is only fair to ask ourselves at this point, if Belen an emergency situation that required immediate action, and was on top of the government agenda, how come it had its funds withdrawn to take care of other emergency? If an emergency can be paused, was it even an emergency?

5.1.1 An IRR approach to the impacts of the resettlement process

In this section, based on the interviews I carried out in Nuevo Belén, my own observations and my participation in the neighbors' assembly, where the inhabitants made their complaints and demands over the lacks in Belén, I will analyze the resettlement impacts so far in the implementation of the project, using Cernea's components featured in his IRR model. It is worth mentioning here, once again, that these components are intertwined and often blend one in the other. For example, as we speak about landlessness, similar effects can be seen as when exploring joblessness and food insecurity. Therefore, although I will intend to analyze them separately, it is crucial to bear in mind their wholeness. As of now, only about 250-300 families have moved to Nuevo Belén out of 2,600. This however, is data that considers the number of families living in Nuevo Belén, and not the amount of people that have left their houses in Bajo Belén. Therefore, the number of people that have indeed moved from one to the other could be less.

(1) Landlessness:

As previously explained, landlessness refers to the dispossession of the land where the people were originally located. This element relates to the de-territorialization and re-territorialization, which entails "the changing status, power and meaning of territories for the refugees and displaced persons" (Boano and Astolfo 2017, 34). Re-territorialization implies adjusting to a new area and accepting the new dynamics tied to it. It is the loss of one's territory, and the re-construction of a community eroding the connection within people, and between people and land. Evrard and Goudineau therefore, state that resettlement processes are double-sided coins: they build, but also destroy (Evrard and Goudineau 2004).

Law 30291 has a provision that prohibits any type of construction or intervention in it, from any private or public actor. This means that no works can be done, not even the enhancement of the public services provided in Bajo Belén, under risk of being criminally processed (CR 2012). Therefore, once the people leave their current houses and move to Nuevo Belén, these are to be destroyed and the land not allowed to be re-occupied.

In exchange, the Peruvian government has granted anyone that has been duly censed and that owns a house in Bajo Belén, a brand new 40mts2 house, built in 120mts2 parcels, free of cost. At first glance, this looks like a seamless deal. The problematic thing about it is that some of the people that live in Belén, do not own property there. Some rent, some live in their relatives' houses, and therefore, are not eligible to be registered in the list of beneficiaries of the new houses in Nuevo Belén. Thus, if the project was ever to be completed, and Bajo Belén was eventually fully relocated and demolished as planned, there will be people left without land or a home both in the old and new location. The resettlement plan fails to include measures that guarantee that the people with informal or precarious land rights get housing assured and not be left out without a roof, which is essentially a human rights violation.

Moreover, one of the main causes of impoverishment is the loss of productive land because, which in the case of Bajo Belén has a crucial role for those who get their livelihoods from the small scale agriculture around the area. As Terminski explains, the loss of land leads to the loss of the economic base of the community (Terminski 2011). The government said that in Nuevo Belén they would still be able to do it. However, it is not the case considering that the area where they would plant their crops will be covered in houses by the completion of the project, and also because the surrounding area of the project is the buffer zone of Allpahuayo-Mishana, a protected national reserve where expansion for agriculture or any other activity other than conservation is not allowed. As a result, the reserve is now at risk of being encroached and exploited by the newcomers.

One of the leaders from Bajo Belén told me that he has been born and raised there. His parents were born and raised in there and as far as he is concerned, no one will make him leave the place. Under the Cocama cosmology, the land and river are part of their identity and their way of living. One of my informants explained that the rising river is not a problem for them. It does not represent an issue in Bajo Belén because they have lived with it their whole lives. In his opinion, the problem is the basic services provision and the precarious houses that have been allowed to be built there. Therefore, the thought of being about over 20 kms away from the river, in dry land, gives them the sensation of dispossession and despair. However, it is mostly the adults that have the feeling of being stripped from their identity. When I asked young people below 30 years old what they thought about the relocation, they were mostly neutral or planning

on leaving Belén towards Iquitos anyways. In relation to this, Ferris also suggests that the people that are more prone to move are often more skilled and younger, and with more opportunities ahead than the ones that prefer staying (Ferris 2012). "*This people would kill for their land",* told me one of the candidates running for Belén's mayor. "*The government has no idea the social conflict they'll face here. That report from the navy? That's all lies. If they don't take back their resettlement ideas, they'll see conflict."*

(2) Joblessness:

"Displaced persons should be assisted to regain their productive activities and to restore and improve their livelihoods and incomes at least to the levels they enjoyed before the displacement" (Ferris 2012, 15). According to one of the former Minister of MCVS, in order to help people from Bajo Belén to be employable once they have moved to Nuevo Belén, the government vaguely announced would implement training programs in several fields, including the construction industry, which would be made through the National Service for Training in the Construction Industry (SENCICO). In theory, through these trainings, the newcomers would be able to start entrepreneurships and find jobs at the construction companies that were awarded the construction of the project. While these construction companies had in fact employed some of the people I talked to, these were only temporary jobs without guarantee of continuity. Additionally, the leaders of Nuevo Belén informed me that the promised trainings had not happened (up until November 2018). Eliseo, my informant, says that Nuevo Belén might be a better place to live, but surely not a better place to work.

"What's their great plan? A fake lake so we can fish?" asked me one of my informants in Bajo Belén when I commented the job situation. About 85% of Belenians work in activities related to the market and the river. The fact that the market is located right by the Bajo Belén area allows people to walk back and forth from their houses to the market, or take a quick *mototaxi* ride in the case of the ones living further away. For some of the families with more than one bread giver working in Belén's market, moving to Nuevo Belén represents now a hardship for two main reasons. The first is that the cost of transportation from Nuevo Belén to the market and then back is a completely new daily budget and time to consider. My informants told me that this situation has led some families to being unable to afford more than one person working

in the market anymore, especially since carrying goods on the bus has an extra cost. Consequently, some of these families are getting less income. Additionally, only very few busses are available during the night when the commercial activities in the market begin, so missing a bus would often mean losing working hours. Thus, money. Others have night shift work schedules, which means living their houses late at night and coming back at dawn but at the time I did the fieldwork, there was no available transportation at those hours. On the other hand, one of the benefits of living near the market is having the children close when parents need to be absent for long periods of time while working. However, living in Nuevo Belén often implies that one of the adults or the oldest child has to stay home and watch the children, thus, either missing income, or missing schooling.

On the other hand, most of the men from the area work in activities related to the river, fishing or hunting. Nuevo Belén has no water source available for them to perform their activities unless they commute to Bajo Belén, and once again, transport to Bajo Belén becomes an issue in terms of availability and extra costs. The men that work building boats, or in boat surveillance are also struggling finding new occupations because they are far from their element and because most of them are not educated people that can easily be employed anywhere they live in. In addition, the people that work in the city also have found new obstacles getting to their jobs since the busses are uncertain in terms of availability and frequency.

Furthermore, the lack of inhabitants in Nuevo Belén is also hindering the commercial development, so there is less work opportunities in the area and less commercial flow. *"If there was a market, the story would be different, but here…who's going to buy? We can't sell to each other our same products, no? So we're competing over few clients all the time"*, tells me one of the women. It has been about four years into the Nuevo Belén project and the market has not been built yet. People sell their homemade foods in little stands that they place on the side of their houses or in the alleys, and everyone sells basically the same. Few others have kiosks where they sell candy and some basic goods, and only a couple have fridges that give them leverage over the other stores by selling cold drinks and ice cream. This would be fine in Bajo Belén, but considering the number of inhabitants in Nuevo Belén, business is not good.

Moreover, one of the neighborhood leaders of Nuevo Belén explained to me that because of the little job opportunities in the area, specifically for young men who have only occupational training, violence and criminalization has risen. My informant told me that since the boys have so much free time, they have started forming gangs, bringing about new dangers for Nuevo Belén inhabitants. "*We may have escaped the rising river, but now there is something new to worry about*" Resettlements produce social dislocation and therefore, the factors that contribute to violence can be amplified by it (Oliver-Smith 2010, Warner 2012). The risk of widespread unemployment is becoming higher as the authorities are not taking measures to alleviate this.

(3) Homelessness

"Home is an expression of values and attitudes with which societies and individuals relate to their surroundings" (Boano and Astolfo 2017, 35). Moving Belenenians to a different space may result emotionally traumatic as they risk losing their identities through the loss of their sense of belongingness, which I touch upon in 3.1.2. Moreover, My Belenian informants explained that some of the newcomers were unable to make a living in Nuevo Belén and therefore had to move back to Bajo Belén, abandoning their new houses, or renting them out behind the government's back due to a prohibition of profit from the governmental aid (CR 2012). Since the people moving back to Bajo Belén gave up their old house, upon return, they have had to move in with relatives or friends, reinforcing -once again- the overcrowding issue that the MVCS had identified as a recurring problem and creating a new vulnerability situation for those living in the limbo. Moreover, some people have been unable to return because their old community and neighbors have rejected them and in some cases deemed them as traitors, which has forced them to move somewhere else. On the other hand, this is a particular situation because the government trades the old houses for new ones, however, it does not give a monetary compensation for the given up houses, meaning that either people move to Bajo Belén, or no other alternative is given, and this evidences the non-existent space for self-determination that the government allows and is risking worsening their house conditions.

(4) Marginalization

Susan Fainstein argues that “social exclusion and economic exclusion are intertwined” because resettlements distance people from essential access to social, cultural and political resources (Fainstein 2005, 14, Oliver-Smith 2010). Marginalization holds back people’s ability to reconstruct their livelihoods and makes them feel socially excluded. In this case study, it is highly related to constrained community mobility since the fact that people has lost access or encounters difficulty to have access to the market, translates into the deprivation from resources, and therefore into impoverishment.

Transportation enables human interaction. For communities located in remote or inaccessible areas, it is extremely important to have access to promote an exchange of goods and ideas (Andnet 2017). The first thing that caught my attention on my first trip to Nuevo Belén was the distance between both sites. Nuevo Belén is located over 20kms from Bajo Belén, thus the round trip lasted for about 2.5 to 3 hours and costed S/6 (20 NOK approx.) though it would have been more expensive had we been carrying goods with us.

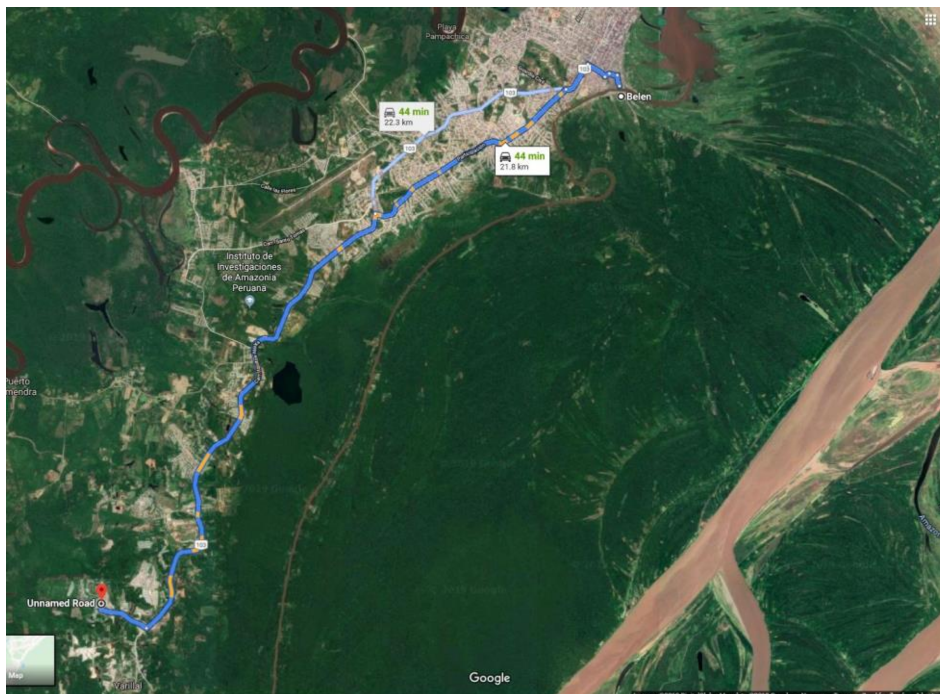


Figure 8. Route from Bajo Belén to Nuevo Belén: 44 minutes by car/approx. 90 minutes by bus. Source: Google Earth 2019.

Morevover, the busses were not as frequent as I had initially been told they would be, so I had to wait for about 20 minutes at the bus terminal before finding a ride to the site. As the former MVCS ministers had told me, there was a road indeed, but the last 20-30 minutes of the ride were done on a trail where busses got stuck when the rain turned it into mud and in which smaller vehicles could hardly transit.

Up until November 2018, Nuevo Belén held about 170 houses, not all of them were inhabited and more were being built. Some of them because their owners have not yet moved, some because they have moved back to Bajo Belén or some to other places. The fact that Nuevo Belén is still a semi ghost area, affects the community in different aspects of their lives. In particular, the abandonment of Nuevo Belén has slowed down the commercial flow that was intended to happen to revive the city, leaving it in some sort of limbo for the people that are already living in it. Jacobs states that the reason why slums remain as such is because people leave from there as soon as the option for it is available, and thus, do not develop neighborhoods (Jacobs 1961). This results particularly alarming because the idea behind Nuevo Belén is to develop a satellite city with its own facilities, but the permanency of people in it is uncertain. "*People are leaving, they don't want to be here*", told me one of my informants. This could explain why Bajo Belén was neglected to the point of being the most contaminated slum in the Peruvian Amazon, and may prevent Bajo Belén from following the same fate, considering that the same patterns can already be spotted.

Eliseo, a shop owner, was the first person I talked to in Bajo Belén and he told me with sadness and bitterness: *"It's just going to be another slum. But this is what we always get, no? A little bit of nothing".* He and his family have not moved to Nuevo Belén yet, mainly because his house has not been built yet, but he says he is going to wait until there is no other choice. He still hopes the government changes their mind about the resettlement.

At the neighbors' assembly I attended, people expressed their discomfort and the isolation they often experience in Nuevo Belén. The frustration of the people because Nuevo Belén was not thriving was visible and their resilience despite having to endure the difficulties and unfulfilled promises was overwhelming. One of the things that they mentioned the most was the lack of available transportation. I was told -and experienced it myself too- that regular busses only run until 7 or 8 in the evenings.

Later than that, finding a bus that would go all the way to Nuevo Belén was just too difficult. Additionally, the lack of alternative routes meant that they could only rely on one bus company, but that if there was a blockage for a strikes for example, or it became muddy from heavy rainfall, then other way to get to or out of Nuevo Belén was basically impossible. When the weather conditions are extreme, the gauge that leads to Nuevo Belén becomes impassable for mototaxis or small vehicles.

Furthermore, the fact that the transportation from or to Nuevo Belén is not always reliable forces people to sometimes spend more money than budgeted to get collective or individual taxis to take them back home, which also contributes to the loss of economic power. On the other hand, the use of these taxis or mototaxis at night, is particularly dangerous for the women because the ride from the city to Nuevo Belén is an isolated highway, without any lightning and with poor mobile reception, if any. Some people walk about 30 minutes to the entrance of the Nuevo Belén area to wait for their children and wives when they come back from school late at night or from work, since often the transportation will not go all the way in to Nuevo Belén, and otherwise they would have to walk alone from the highway to the housing complex, risking their safety.

On the other hand, the neighbors complained about the lack of water and sewage in the area, which was one of the main pre-conditions that Law 30291 established had to be accomplished before people moved to the satellite city. *"There's water only when the Minister comes. Once he sees believes the story, we are back to being dry"*, said one of the speakers at the assembly. *"This is not a slum, this is a city created by law! Why are we being treated as an informal settlement? We were supposed to be a city, have basic services!"* They argue that Law 30291 is not being complied because the institutions who are in charge of the resettlement do not show up or pay visits to see the development of the project and do not care about their situation or complying with the promises made nor the obligations they have by law. *"We've been betrayed by the government again, no one knows anything about anything, in Lima, the Ministries, they don't see us"*. The sense of despair felt by the people attending the assembly is enormous, and the distrust in governmental institutions by the lack of assistance and the constant unfulfilled promises is high. The handling of the resettlement by the authorities deteriorates the relationship between then and contributes to the stress the community feels. A history of political patronage makes community leaders working

close to the government become untrustworthy too, as they see some of them receive special benefits from keeping the community quiet from complaints. Consequently, this distrust creates polarization among the community. "*Is it only Lima who has the right to progress? We are the oxygen of the world, and this is how they treat us. We send letters, we ask for solutions, and these letters go to the bottom of the pile, because in Lima they only care about Lima."* Nonetheless, while they acknowledge they have the right to demand at least basic services, the condescending ways in which the government treats the less favored, make it seem sometimes as if the provision of the bare minimum conditions to live were a charity gesture that the government is making for them and can be withdrawn at any time. Thus, they often fear that if they complaint too loudly, the ones in charge of the program will retaliate against them in some way. The status of the project so far risks re-marginalizing an already vulnerable community.

(5) Food insecurity

The impossibility to grow crops, rely on the river for fish, and a lower budget for food is risking the quantity of food that some of the families have available for themselves. The scarcity related to food and resources to obtain food generates a new problem since it contributes health deterioration, the children pay less attention in school and it can contribute to parents fallen ill which makes the situation worst if they stop working (Doherty 2011). An alarming fact related to this is that research shows that the food insufficiency in a household, the lack of resources and little income-generating opportunities leads to higher rates of prostitution and sexual exploitation among women and children (Mooney 2005).

Some of the people I had the chance to talk to said that since the promised market had not yet been built, they sometimes lacked certain foods in the area, specifically, fish. *"Happens often that it's already rotten by the time it arrives"*, they explained. On the other hand, the food that was sold in the informal stands is slightly more expensive than at the Belén market, which diminishes their economic power to acquire the foods they need. What is worse, there is no evidence that the internally displaced people's levels of food and livelihood would improve over time (Mooney 2005). This situation is generating a health risk for the people and a potential problem for the adjacent natural reserve since it could be invaded by people searching to hunt for food.

(6) Increased morbidity

The Nuevo Belén project was meant to include the construction of a hospital for the 18,000 people that in theory would move to the new city. However, up until November, 2019, over 4 years after the beginning of the project, there is only a first-aid post that is not operative because of lack of water. Moreover, the residents of Nuevo Belén reported that the doctor that used to work there, resigned in protest of the lack of sanitation services, refusing to work under such conditions. Thus, the only two places where there is currently a possibility for medical attention are either San Juan Bautista or Iquitos, both located at least 30 minutes away from Nuevo Belén. "*There is no medical center in Nuevo Belén. My sister died, just recently, here. Didn't make it on time, it was the middle of the night. So she just died. That's how it is, miss."*

Despite this, some of the parents I talked to said that they feel safer in Nuevo Belén. The fact that the area does not flood like it does in Bajo Belén means that they no longer have to worry about the possibility of their children drowning. While such risk has disappeared, the lack of medical facilities create a new type of risk by leaving the people unprotected and unable to get immediate assistance if needed.

(7) Loss of access to resources

The area in which Nuevo Belén is located lacks water sources and agricultural lands, which contributes to the impoverishment of the newcomers, who will no longer have access to land for collective agricultural practices. An issue worth mentioning is that, while the resettlement is trading people's old houses for new ones, they are not receiving any compensation for non-tangible assets like the loss of access to common resources, or to markets, or to employment, and these losses have the potential of impoverishing people (Oliver-Smith 2010).

(8) Community disarticulation

Bajo Belén is a neighborhood with strong ties. Neighbors are usually also family members and it is common that people look after each other. The houses are open with large porches that become cozy spaces where people sit around to chat, hang out or just observe the streets. Cooking is often a common activity where women gather outside their houses with their grills to sell their foods. The way that the houses in

Nuevo Belén have been designed and set do not enable these dynamics to be reproduced. "*It doesn't habilitate common spaces, community in general*" says Gabriela Vildosola. The people moving into the new city no longer have their same neighbors or family thus, some of them might even be complete strangers and this situation enhances the feeling of isolation. In addition, since the houses given by the government are often smaller than the houses that the people had in Bajo Belén, in some cases families that do not want to live in an overcrowded space have had to split to be able to fit in the new house. While the possibility of expanding the house exists, the government does not cover the expenses of any modification or repair, and therefore it would represent a considerable amount of extra money to spend, becoming sometimes impossible.

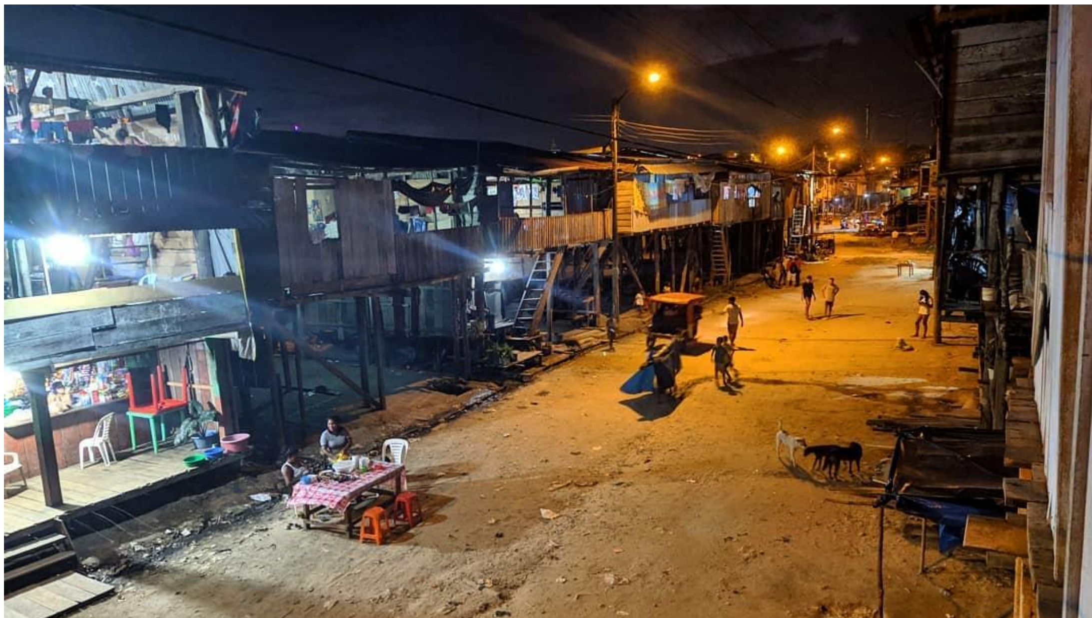
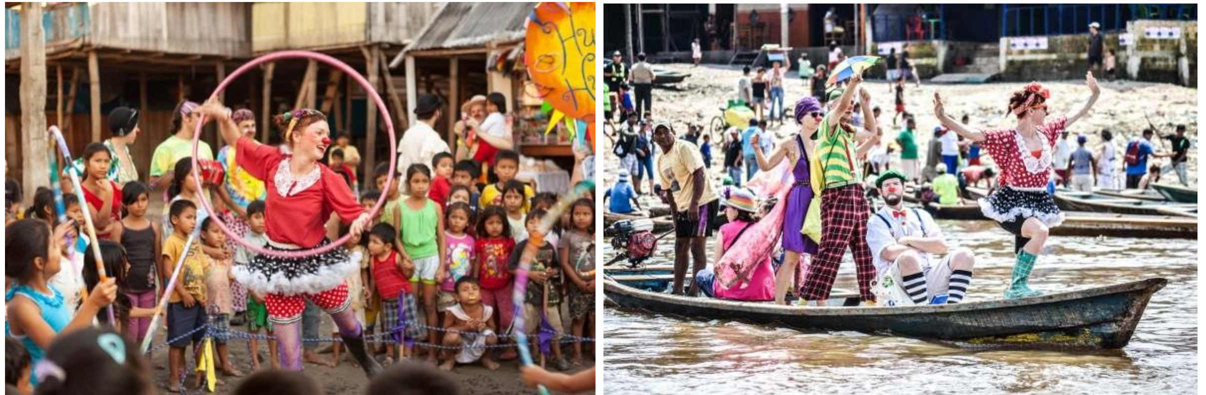


Figure 9. Bajo Belén. Houses are spacious with wide streets and usually have several floors because the first floor floods during the rising river season. Source: Sandra Soto

On the other hand, in the past few years, Bajo Belén has been the center of various festivals that promote the social development of the community of Belén. The most important and emblematic one is called "Festival de Belén", celebrated yearly and awaited with enthusiasm by children and adults. The project began in 2005 thanks to a clown intervention carried out by Bolaroja (Clown Doctors of Peru Association) and the clowns of Gesundheit! Institute (organization directed by Patch Adams) to promote health, education and social cohesion. Every year, this festival brings together clowns, local families, district and regional representatives, health and education authorities,

NGOs and various collectives of the civil society of Iquitos, with the aim of creating tight bonds and build trust to work with the population in cultural and social matters.



Figures 10 and 11. Festival de Belen. Source: @bolarojaclowns

Some of the volunteers told me that the feasibility of making this festival in a site other than Bajo Belén is less likely because of the lack of resources in Nuevo Belén and because the realization of it would imply a different type of logistic, particularly in terms of transportation, security and participation of the whole Belén area. "*You kinda kill the magic, no? We put a lot of effort into this already... it takes a lot too so going all the way there… I don't know, maybe, but it would just be a bit too difficult, even dangerous"* told me one of the volunteer clowns when I asked him about doing it in Nuevo Belén. For now it is still taking place in Bajo Belén and Nuevo Belénians have had to miss it.

Moreover, in Bajo Belén and in general, in the Amazon, the houses usually have big porches where people sit outside their doors to hang around, have casual chats with their neighbors or family and watch the streets, which creates a communal surveillance dynamic among the residents promoting trust and unity (Jacobs 1961). Jacobs, one of the main critics of "high-modernism", argues that the relevance of neighborhood trust and social conviviality that is lost by modernist schemes in resettlements should not be overlooked. However, in Nuevo Belén, this becomes less feasible because the houses' *façades* and roofs do not make enough shadow to cover people from the sun, thus sitting outside them becomes impossible under the temperatures of the area. The design of these houses as enclosed areas ignore the importance of open and semi open spaces for community interaction in this specific context (Lizarralde, Johnson, and Davidson 2009).

Additionally, the houses can be expanded to a backyard but not a front yard because it would obstruct the streets. This new setting not only breaks old traditions but also disrupts the neighbors dynamic and thus, social networks. Being these based on trust, support and reciprocity, they generate "economies of affections", which represent "a powerful mechanisms that enable people to cope under conditions of livelihoods change" as a resettlement can be. However, less enabled in Nuevo Belén. (Boano and Astolfo 2017, 37). The social disarticulation and cultural disintegration that resettlements cause is also an intangible asset that is mistakenly undervalued (Oliver-Smith 2010).

(9) Loss of education

Bajo Belén has one of the highest rates of schooling abandonment in the country, affecting women in particular. In some cases, families that have moved to Nuevo Belén with small children have had the eldest child dropping out of school (most often the eldest girl) in order to take care of their younger siblings while the parents are working, especially when it comes to single parents.

Moreover, people living in Nuevo Belén can only pursue higher education in Iquitos, located over 20kms away. This implies not only a cost for transportation higher than if they had been based in Bajo Belén, but also a problem in terms of availability of transportation considering that the classes often end past 10pm. Therefore, some people have had to drop out since they can no longer afford commuting to school, while others have had to spend extra money by renting rooms in the city where they stay during the school week because it ends up being cheaper and less dangerous than taking a ride to Nuevo Belén every night. Regardless, any alternative apart from dropping out means extra money to be spent, which decreases the economic power of those studying, and in some cases, makes impossible the pursue of it.

(10) New dangers

As we can see from 1 to 9 above, while the theory of moving to Nuevo Belén seems appealing in terms of new beginnings, there is a new set of dangers that were not foreseen by the authorities or the project planners, and that affect directly the newcomers and especially the women and children. This situation makes moving to

the new site an unattractive idea considering that the status quo of the people does not seem to change for good, but only worsen.

On the other hand, the growing difficulties to access food or guarantee the family's nutrition falls on women, putting an extra pressure on the family dynamics and an overload on the women's roles. These new elements to consider also increase the stress and uncertainty on family levels, which in some cases increases family violence. Although there are multiple factors that lead to violence specifically against women, such as low levels of education or income, scholars agree that "low-quality design, isolation from the rest of the city, lack of services, and the social stigma of grouping poor people together", are conditions that propel domestic violence. Forced resettlements thus accentuate pre-existing cultural, economic and social conditions for it, and create new ones that may exacerbate it (Desmaison 2015, 11). Zetter & Boano in fact argue that in this situations, "women's vulnerability to sexual exploitation, domestic violence, abuse of power, abduction and rape dramatically increases." (Zetter & Boano cited in Desmaison 2015, 11)

At the same time, the fact that often it is now only one of the bread providers that is able to work, creates unequal family relationships and dependency dynamics within. This situation in most cases affects the women's autonomy, who are left subjected to the men's incomes, perpetuating the structural power differences between men and women.

(11) Potential for conflict and resistance

Population displacement and removal has been historically a strategy of "conquest, pacification and territorial appropriation". Therefore, it is of no surprise that in this case, regardless of the origins of the resettlement, this is associated with unequal power, oppression and domination (Oliver-Smith 2010, 30, Foucault 1988, Scott 1985). Especially when the execution of it is so incoherent, even when it is meant to keep people out of risk. For that reason, "the struggle against resettlement becomes a complex of struggles against the loss of productive resources, against inadequate compensation, changed relationships with the environment, against non-compliance with commitments made by project authorities, against violence from host populations, and against disrespect for local culture and knowledge" (Acselrad and

Silva cited in Oliver-Smith 2010, 43, 44). "*It always occurs that when facing mistreatment, indifference, abuse, unfulfilled promises and marginalization, communities get organized and revolt; and this is when the voices, the fists and the demands assume their own power to achieve a dignified life and fight the miseries that sicken their bodies and souls*" (Reategui Bartra 2015).

As I have mentioned before, from the beginning of the resettlement process, the population has been divided into two opposite groups, for and against the resettlement. This caused tensions not only within Belenians, as one group argued with one another -generating community disruption- but also tensions between the group against the resettlement and the government. Some of the group leaders traveled to Lima where, as they told me, they felt mocked and disrespected since the heads of the project often seemed too busy to meet them and instead sent their subordinates to hear what they had to say in relation to the project. Thus, the only way that Belenians feel they can get their voices heard is when they protest on the streets. The protests in Bajo Belén have usually been pacific, according to my informants, despite the frustration that this community feels to be systematically ignored by the authorities. "*They treat us like children*", told me one of my interviewees. However, a couple of times these have gotten out of hands, such as the time they kicked out of Bajo Belén one of the government's officials during a visit related to the resettlement. In Nuevo Belén protest have started to happen because the promises keep unfulfilled perpetuating the distrust in the governmental apparatus.

In November 2018, the day after I finished my fieldwork and the neighbor's assembly I have mentioned above was held, the community blocked the highway to demand basic services, *"they will continue mocking us if we don't strike"*. The government got the police force involved, resulting in a violent confrontation While hostility and resistance towards resettlement processes is a normal and expected reaction because of the threat to human rights they represent to communities, and on the other hand, sometimes the resistance is not to relocate but to negotiate the conditions of it (Cernea 1999, Oliver-Smith 2010). Moreover, while the opposition and resistance has been quite silent for the most part, moving back to Bajo Belén, renting the new houses behind the government's back, and some occasional strikes in both Nuevo and Bajo Belén, the Project can be better described as a pressure cooker, silently bubbling. "*They wanna force us out? They'll have to kill us. There's gonna be blood",* Dimas, leader

of Sector 5 of Bajo Belén, repeated. *"Ay Dimas, that's extreme now. You are exaggerating, maybe it's actually for the best, no?"*, I replied. *"No…Not like this. Not like this. You say "ah, just move" because you don't know, miss. Why don't they move instead if it's so great? Ask around and see if I'm exaggerating. There will be blood."*

5.1.2 The glass half full: Positive reviews.

It is important to note that despite the unfortunate situation I have described above, some of my interviewees were content in the new location. Among them is Karina, who is in her early 60s and is the first person who moved out to Nuevo Belén in the first batch of 200 houses granted. She even became a known character for being in a news reportage that covered the resettlement. When asked why she decided to move she replied that she was tired of the river flooding in her house constantly, of the dangers of falling in the water when walking through the precariously and improvised elevated sidewalks, and especially of the contamination in the area. These become extremely dangerous especially during the night since there is a lack public lightning, and also because there have been episodes of violence where people get pushed out in the water by runaway thieves.

Additionally, she explains that she has been living in Nuevo Belén for almost two years and still gets water and sewage at no cost. However, I later learned that in fact, water and sewage are free in Nuevo Belén because these services are not yet officially provided. Therefore, the government fills people's water tanks a couple of days a week and additionally, by people's own initiative, with the help of the researchers from CASA, rain water collectors are being implemented to have some extra water when the one provided is insufficient. In relation to sewage, there are pipes installed in the houses that throw the water drainage in a septic tank that lies next to Allpahuayo-Mishana. While the effects of having a septic tank next to the natural reserve have not been seen yet, when I discussed the matter with the CASA team, they had estimated a potential endangerment risk for the area.

Karina, who owns a little grocery kiosk in her porch, also mentioned that she is looking forward to the construction of the market because in Nuevo Belén she cannot sell much of her products because the competition is quite high. *"There aren't many people to sell yet, you know? But everything will change when they build the market. They're*

going to build it this year [referring to 2019], the roads, the market, the medical center and the school, that's what the minister said when he came. Which minister was that, Karina? [I asked]. Ah, I don't know which one, I don't know his name, but he said this year".

Although she lives with her other 4 family members in her 40mt^2 house and insists she is better off. She does not need a canoe to move anymore as she felt like a "*cornered chicken*" when the river rose. "*You just have to wait, you know? You'll see. Come back in 5 years and you'll see that there will be nothing left in Bajo Belén, they will all be here".*

5.1.3 When failing to plan is planning to fail. The neglected dimensions that explain the outcome.

This chapter aims at analyzing the elements that effect the outcome of the resettlement process of Belén in accordance with the elements developed by Boano and Astolfo, based on the data collected during fieldwork.

a) In relation with the **location** chosen for Nuevo Belén, while this is a 50 hectares site located within the area of expansion of Iquitos, it is an isolated area surrounded by forest, without access to water resources and barely connected to a transportation network. Moreover, the only road leading to Belén is partially still just being a track, making access difficult under harsh weather conditions. However, according to the MVCS, this is a highway that connects Iquitos with another city called Nauta and that *could potentially* become the hook for future urbanization. From the more than 70 people I to talked to in Bajo Belén, the majority thought that the new location was far away and would make them feel isolated and considered that the price for transportation to Bajo Belén was too high or quite challenging to afford on daily basis (approximately 20NOK roundtrip per person without baggage). "*If they had chosen a closer location, maybe we would consider it. But it makes no sense to move so far away…life doesn't work out up there"*, complaint one of the community leaders. For the inconvenience of the site chosen for the resettlement and other reasons, most of them said that they wanted to stay in Bajo Belén, that they would not move from there, and that they would have preferred that the government had carried out the Belén Sostenible project.

"You make them leave their lives and routines, and think that saying "here, you have a concrete house now, you're welcome" is enough. Especially when you promised water, sewage, basic services, you paint them birds in the skies but there's nothing. The city is not even ready. They get water from the rain, their well is dry and, Jesus Christ, they went out to live in the middle of nothing. They are not connected to an entourage, to a network, I don't know how they're going to make it there. If the only option was the resettlement, then at least they should have made a bigger effort to find an appropriate location." – Gabriela Vildosola.

When I asked the former MVCS minister if the MVCS was aware of Belenians' refusal to move and their discontent with the remoteness of the new city he said: "*Well, yes, but if we build it, they'll come anyways"*. It is interesting how this situation is similar to one that Oliver-Smith describes after a catastrophic landslide that happened in the 70s in the central region of Peru (the "Yungay landslide"), which resulted in failed governmental attempts for resettlement. The new location, Tingua, chosen by the government for the reconstruction of the city was situated over 15kms from the original location, which the community successfully challenged. The author recalls how one of the survivors of the disaster explained the bad economics in the new location and the "lack of logic in the government's plans" (Oliver-Smith 1986, 21). "*We have land, we have water (…) Tingua has none of this!*" (Oliver-Smith 1986, 21).

b) The lack of **participation** in the resettlement is questionable. Sources from various institutions including NGOs (that did were not part of the resettlement process), research groups, university professors and Belenians themselves have told me that they had no idea that the resettlement was intended to take place until one day, they heard rumors about a law that the Congress had passed to resettle Bajo Belén, and later the MVCS showed up to inform them about the process and that it would be taking place within the next 2 years.

It is interesting to note that according a large portion of the people I talked to living in Bajo Belén did not know about the relocation until after the law was passed. About half of them were not aware of the official reasons for the relocations, and a few people claims to have no idea why the resettlement project is taking place. These results suggest that the people from Bajo Belén were poorly involved in the planning of the resettlement and that there was not a proper socialization process of the project. It is then uncertain how much of the Belenians' insights -in terms of location and housing

design- has been taken into consideration to plan this project, and how do the authorities understand the needs of the people if they have not been in contact with them. In relation to this, the former MVCS minister explained to me nonchalantly, that *"in these type of projects the communication always fails"*.

The current major of the city, who has shifted positions for, to against the resettlement a couple of times, explained to me that the lack of consultation with the population has caused a tension with the central authorities and there has even been a violent episode where the community expelled by force one of the highest central government's officials from the area because they were protesting the lack of involvement. Dimas explained: "Maybe we [would move] if they had ever asked us, if we had the chance to speak out our needs. But they didn't ask anyone. I guess they think we're just ignorant people, so they don't need to ask us anything. They come to impose, not to ask."

In accordance with the report on the matter made by The Barlett Development Planning Unit in cooperation with CASA (Boano and Astolfo 2017), most of the people I interviewed wanted to stay in Bajo Belén. Luis Adolfo Chumbe is a local film-maker and resident of Iquitos who has grown up benefitting from the social interventions in Belén and who now himself runs an art-oriented social project in Belén. He told me: "The government is never here. You never see them around, they never talk to anyone. And then, they suddenly come. Out of nowhere, they scare people off, boo! with their great ideas, and you never see them again until the next scare. You see the problem?"

I find interesting what Dimas explained to me. Belenians are fully aware that the area is contaminated and that perhaps it would indeed be better to move out somewhere else. But the main problem for him, who as a leader represents the opinion of hundreds of people, is that they feel that their self-determination and idiosyncrasy disrespected by the government by implementing the project without consultation, and therefore, the opposition and resistance. This type of resistance presents itself as a protest to what communities consider arbitrary measures. The project thus, perhaps would have been welcomed had the Peruvian government executed a thorough consultation and participation process.

The participation of the population in both, the decision making process and the implementation of the project, are fundamental to access the people's opinions and to learn -and thus meet- the needs of the people. Without people's consent, the implementation process becomes a challenge for the authorities and a struggle for the community. However, it is understandable that when a situation requires immediate action, in situations of emergency or when people's lives are at stake, express consent or coordinated consultation would be difficult and may even put in more danger the population, though the state is still obliged to perform diligent actions that will not harm further the target community in need (Ferris 2012). Nonetheless, in the case of Belén the data suggests that a hurried action may have not been needed considering that the river conditions are expected to change decades from now, for which it would have been feasible to get the community involved with anticipation.

c) **Governance**: The project is managed from the central government through Nuestras Ciudades, with the intervention of the Municipality of Belén, the Municipality of San Juan Bautista, the regional government in Loreto and the provincial government of Maynas. However, the co-ordination across the governmental apparatus is not flowing in an articulated manner. My informants in the local and regional governments expressed that the orders they get come exclusively from the capital city without space for discussion, and more than proposals to be analyzed jointly, these feel like mere commands that do not allow any re-thinking. This situation generates a lack of conversation between actors and therefore an uncoordinated work with flaky results. Carvalho and Warschauer emphasize that the coordination within the authorities, and between these and the subjects not only is key, but it must take place in-situ, as it is "the perfect location for political coordination or urban and social development, as it is where the target subjects of these policies are found" (Warschauer and de Carvalho 2013, 147)

Additionally, the Municipalities involved in the resettlement serve their own interests rather than working together and looking at the bigger picture. On one hand one of them does not want to lose 18,000 people because that would mean losing voters and a significant cut on the budget allocated by the state according the number of inhabitants, and on the other side, the receiving municipality is eager to add 18,000 to their budget application to the central government, plus new voters.

Moreover, the fact that CENEPRED, the main governmental entity in charge of preventive resettlements in the country, seems to have barely any knowledge of the course of the Nuevo Belén project, results alarming and a clear evidence of the poor engagement and institutionalization within state bodies and institutions. So much so, that when I asked a few of the bureaucrats involved in the resettlement process about the National Plan for Prevention and Assistance of Disasters, and the National Plan for Disaster Risk Management, some knew about only one, some did not know of any of those, and one even said that there was not such a thing. Luckily, I was able to have access to both from the Peruvian Government's website and the National Institute for Civil Defense.

Both former MVCS ministers agreed that Peru has a severe lack of institutionalization, in the sense that there is a disarticulation within and between governmental bodies. Milton Von Hesse explained to me that it happens that projects that are in course are often cancelled by new administrations in power. *"For example, the new major comes, kicks everyone out, puts in his own people and we're back to zero. There is not a solid culture of what the institutions have to achieve or how they should act. There are not even adequate processes to select people by meritocracy or a capability criterion. Sometimes it takes a long time for the bureaucrats to understand a topic because it is not their field, and like I said, a new major comes, everyone's gone and the cycle repeats."* Lack of institutionalization takes a toll on the citizens in the long run, because by not working on the basis of solid structures, there is no long term vision and thus, politicians work only for immediate popularity, and under the incorrect incentives. As a consequence, this systematic disarticulation generates distrust in the people in relation to the authorities' intentions and capacities (Mortrerux et al. 2018).

d) "The first—the most elementary—lesson […] is simply the importance of planning" (Rich 2016). In relation to **Disaster Risk Management and planning (DRM)** it is concerning that these policies do not have an ad-hoc approach per region, considering the heterogeneity of the country and how particular every region is. The Amazon, due to its particular social heterogeneity and geographical complexity, requires "specific context-based policy and plans" for its development (Boano and Astolfo 2017, 36). On the other hand, while the policies for DRM exist, the authorities do not seem to take into consideration that planning with sufficient anticipation is a crucial feature for success in preventive resettlements, and that planning ahead is

precisely the advantage preventive resettlements. Integral and multisectorial planning strategies in fact may Help prevent resorting having to resort to resettlements, for example, through secure land occupation policies (Lavell 2016). In the case of Belén, the government (local, regional and national) is partially to blame for the situation that Belenians face now, since the lack of secure occupation policies allowed Belenians to settle in what is now considered a potentially dangerous.

Moreover, studies in previous resettlements show that DRM must be implemented hand to hand within sustainable development policies because to prevent from becoming paternalist band aids to structural problems, prone to failure. Planning ahead results crucial to mitigate the impacts that resettlements may generate. However, in this case, the national government considered the need for a resettlement as a matter of utmost urgency and therefore bypassed the regular procedure excluding the other institutions that must had been involved in generating the risk assessment and monitoring all stages of its implementation.

There was widespread agreement among my expert informants to say that a one year timeframe was little time for a project that would mobilize a significant amount of people within such complex geography, especially considering that the imminence of the danger was still remote in time. In fact, Ferris suggests that if the disasters "can be predicted with enough anticipation, planning of such mobilizations should be done several years in advance". (Ferris 2012, 20).

e) **Land tenure:** Most of the people in Bajo Belén do not hold property titles on their parcels because they are informal tenants, but they hold possession certificates. As long as they register duly and they leave behind their old houses to move to Nuevo Belén, they can get a property title on their new house with a 5 year restriction to make profit of the property. This means that they should not sell or rent the house for a 5 year period, which ties them to the remote location, Nuevo Belén, without possibility of coming back or making profit of their old house, since as mentioned before, these are – in theory- to be demolished, and the materials to be kept by the old tenants if they wanted to. The problem is that, in the beginning, some of the houses were not yet finished and people moved to temporary houses, which has increased the mistrust in the government capacities. At the same time, since they cannot see the houses being built, some people do not trust the certainty of the new city and therefore refuse to move. Additionally, since Belenians are often multi-sited, the possibility of being tied

for 5 years to Nuevo Belén, without yet knowing if they will like it or not, results inconvenient for them and does not allow them to move freely.

f) **Housing design:** As we know, the resettlement plan was developed in the central government, and thus the housing follows a standard, homogenous design, in accordance with the central government's conception of housing, despite Belén belonging to a completely different region than Lima. My informants explained to me that they are used to living in big open houses built on stilts that have an area of at least 20 to 30mts, and with 2 or 3 stories. The fact that these wooden houses have tall ceilings and different levels, makes the space look bigger and therefore easier to live in, helping them cope with weather and number of people per household. *"The Amazon man is used to living with his whole family. We all sleep under the same roof"*, the owner of a food stand that has lived in Bajo Belén for over 56 years explained that that is their way of living, regardless of it being ideal or not from a health and family perspective. This, however, often generates an overcrowding situation, and a risk especially for children and women, for they are often exposed to violence and abuse.

In relation to this, La Restinga is an ONG that has been doing social interventions through workshops in Belén since 1996. Wendy, my informant, is a social anthropologist who has been working there for over two years. She says that it has been a difficult task to teach families that it is important to have separate rooms in their houses, where the adults and children can have their own spaces and privacy, especially during the coming of age of the girls. Some scholars depict home as a private, enclosed domain where people retreat and find refuge from the public spaces, however, in the Amazon the connotation of home not necessarily follows notion of privacy (Altman and Werner 1985). Moreover, though the houses in Nuevo Belén have two bedrooms apart from the other areas of the house, the overcrowding issue has not yet been solved. While the MVCS claims that the houses can be expanded, these are only one story houses and the possibility of expansion runs by each person's cost, therefore, the overcrowding issue that was recurrently pointed out as one of the biggest social problems in Bajo Belén remains.

As I walk around Bajo Belén, I realize that most people have chairs out, in improvised porches, where they sit to observe the streets, talk to the neighbors, cook, and watch the children play. The cooking in the area takes place mostly outside the houses for it is common to use coal grills and fires.

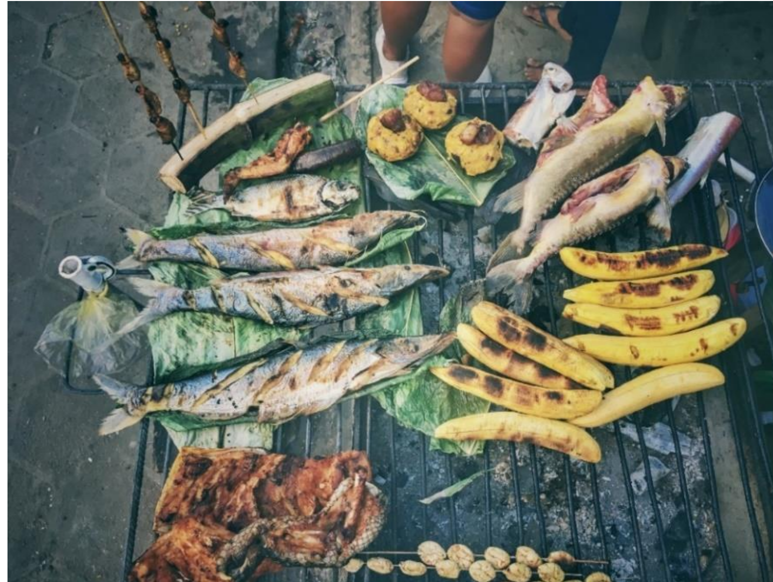
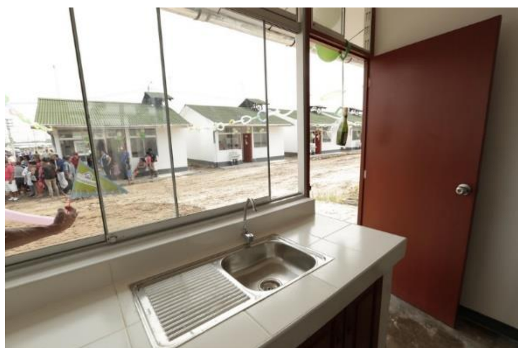


Figure 12. Traditional grilled food from the region.

During my visits to Nuevo Belén I noticed that the new houses had the kitchen area placed inside the house, following a model alien to the region, adapted instead to the habits of the coast. When I asked them how was the kitchen setting working for them, most replied that they were using it as a storage room because they were not used to cooking inside. Moreover, the Nuevo Belén kitchens are designed to be used with gas, which not only costs more than coal, but also is not supplied in Nuevo Belén, and private transport for it can be dangerous. Thus, the housing design in Nuevo Belén does not meet the habits of Belenians and nor does it incorporate the local traditions. The houses follow a homogeneous design, standardized and monotonous that has not been put under the consideration of its final users (Desmaison 2015). Thus, in the new houses, the kitchen spaces have been turned into mere storage areas because regardless of the -perhaps unconscious- imposition of this design, people stay loyal to their old traditions.



Figures 13 and 14. Close up of Nuevo Belén kitchen and houses. Source: (Noticias December 22, 2016)

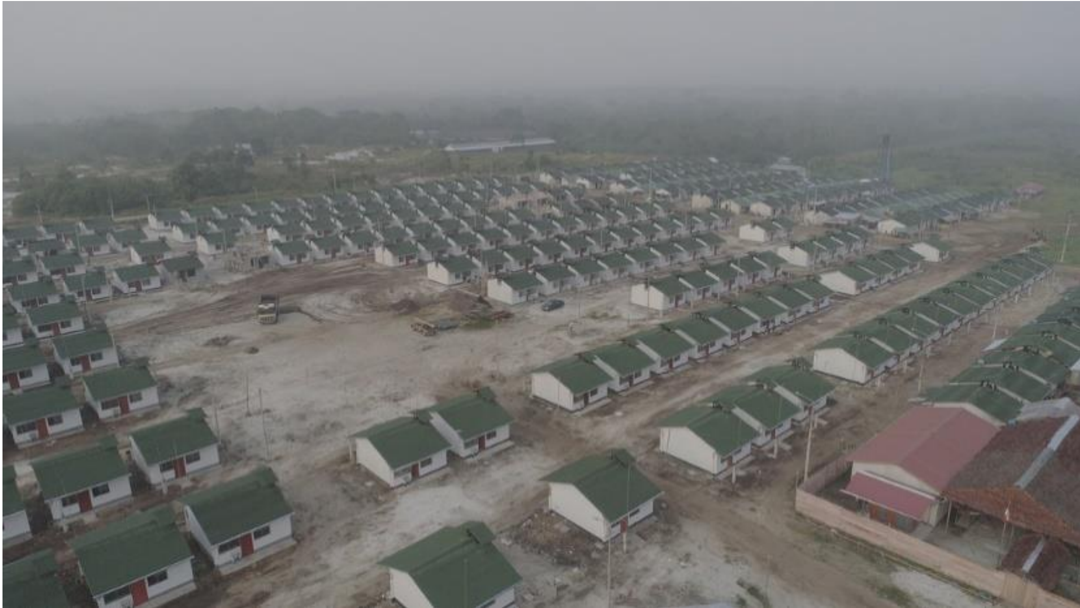


Figure 15. Nuevo Belén from the air. Source: (Noticias December 22, 2016)

The houses in Nuevo Belén are built out of concrete, following a coastal design that is not suitable to the tropical climate of the area. This becomes a problem because concrete holds more heat than wood does, and these houses do not count with an appropriate ventilation system, forcing people to keep their windows open or buy fans. Moreover, since the Nuevo Belén area does not flood, the houses are no longer built on stilts but instead at ground-level, meaning that keeping the windows open while they sleep, while away or even while in the privacy of the bedrooms, becomes a problem because burglars often break into their houses. This situation keeps the residents under constant preoccupation and discomfort, since their houses become inhabitable during the hottest season and prone to suffer robberies. On the other hand, an issue pointed out by the MCVS as one of the main reasons to execute the resettlement project was that Bajo Belén is not connected to the water and sewage network and Nuevo Belén would. The big surprise is that the houses in Nuevo Belén are also not connected to any of these networks. Furthermore, I learnt from an informant involved in the implementation of the resettlement project, that the company that was going to be appointed to implement the permanent connection to the water network had been in touch with the central and local government to communicate the unfeasibility of the service provision due to the instability of the terrain in which the new city was established.

When asked for comments, Gabriela Vildosola told me that she found sad that the government had overlooked all local practices and traditions. She also stated that the

MCVS had come to the CAL to ask for comments on the project and that there had been a disagreement between the CAL architects and the project leaders, which ended up with the MCVS carrying on with the project despite the disapproval of the project and housing design by the CAL. *“We looked at the it and it was just inadequate. We said no, we’re not validating that. The government has a distorted notion of what development means. For them it means turning everything into Lima”.* This is rooted in what Arturo Escobar notes as the dominance of the Western ideas, and how these set the stage in Latin America for “a purely functional conception of development, conceived of as the transformation of “traditional” into a “modern” society and devoid of any cultural considerations” (Escobar 1995, 14).

In relation to that, Gabriela also told me about a social program carried out by the regional government from 2012 to 2014, called “Techo digno” (“*Dignified Roof”*). The program encouraged the –free- replacement of traditional palm leaf roofs for calamine ceilings, for the latter “are better”, despite them not being ideal for the Amazonian weather. The idea that the project unintentionally promoted was that the leaf roofs are something to be ashamed of, and therefore, the replacement as a sign of improvement. Populist programs like this one, illegitimate and disqualify the local ancestral knowledge, and centralist states intend to modernize other traditional cultures by imposing the “right values”, namely, those in the capital (Escobar 1995). Moreover, they promote a distorted idea of development that encourages habits and the use of materials foreign to the region, while seeking to “correct” traditional ways of living. What the government did not anticipate was that it disrupted the solidarity schemes that were built around the roofing jobs and the community created around such a task, not to mention the crack it created in the leaf businesses and its impact in the locals’ economies. Furthermore, it ended up being more expensive because house modifications had to be done to adapt the new ceiling, and some had to go back to leaves because the heat was unbearable (Brañas et al. 2015). As Gustavo Esteva argues, the word “development” has become a buzzword that has been socially constructed for the *developing world* as “a reminder of that they are not. It is a reminder of an undesirable, undignified condition” (Sachs 2010, "Development"). Nonetheless, the new calamine ceilings provided by Techo Digno some felt proud of their “development” although the temperatures that their houses reached were became unbearable. This situation is similar to what has happened with the housing in Nuevo Belén. Some people, although being having a lesser life, feel proud about moving on

from their wooden houses to calamine roofs and concrete houses. The government has encouraged it as a synonym of progress and modernity, and life enhancement, although it is based on urban areas from the coast of Peru, alien to the Amazon evidencing the influence and power of the capital city (Brañas et al. 2015). “The West is now everywhere, within the West and outside, in structures and in minds” (Nandy 1983, xi).

Johnny Dávila, a local anthropologist explains that these ideas when imported from the urban areas into the rural and semi-rural communities, not only are a form of discrimination to the traditional Amazonian housing and a way to disregard the vernacular architecture of the region, but at the same time, these constitute an easy resort and an oversimplification that discourages reaching sustainable solutions that allow the prevalence of the local traditions (Dávila 2013). Maybe we should pay more attention to Jane Jacobs when she says that there is no study or expertise that can substitute the local knowledge in planning (Jacobs 1961).

g) **Livelihoods:** The resettlement has put people in a safer physical position than they were in Bajo Belén, reducing the risks that originate from the increasing river flooding and its collateral effects. However, it has the potential of creating further risks and impoverishment and to have worsened the living conditions by “separating the relocated people from already-existing livelihood sources” failing to reconstruct sustainable alternatives, resulting in exacerbated socio-economic vulnerabilities and enhanced patterns of violence instead (Desmaison 2015, 26). Despite the existence of a study carried out by the MVCS in order to analyze the socio-economic aspects of the relocation, that includes some ideas to achieve a sustainable development in the area, such as workshops to train the newcomers into new occupations, or rehabilitation programs, none of that has yet occurred. The World Bank Guidelines state, “displaced persons should be assisted in their efforts to improve their livelihoods and standards of living or at least to restore them, in real terms, to pre-displacement levels or to levels prevailing prior to the beginning of project implementation, whichever is higher.” (World Bank 2001). Nonetheless, the relocation of Belén has not met the standards of these guidelines. Moreover, the efforts to develop infrastructure facilities or finish the project are lagging which encourages people to move out of Nuevo Belén and to not leave Bajo Belén.

h) **Social capital:** Most of the people currently living in Nuevo Belén, according to what Belenians state, are not people from Lower Belén but people from other sectors that have managed to sneak in the resettlement, and some others that were relocated by the government due to the fires that devastated an area in 2012. As I explained in section 4.1 above, everyone in Belén is familiar with each other. Therefore, they are not exactly excited by the idea of living with new people or changing neighbors. A lot of the times, people rely on each other, not only in terms of solidarity when it comes to needs, but also when it comes to watching the children or keeping their houses open as they do. As Jane Jacobs and Susan Fainstein argue, consolidated neighborhoods give a sense of security to the residents. The concept "eyes on the streets" was introduced by Jane Jacobs over fifty years ago, referring to the sense of safety and security that a thriving area can have when there is a sense of community and people connect with their space and build a collective identity, as there is now in Bajo Belén. Of course, this can also be generated eventually in Nuevo Belén, but it is just another element that adds to people not wanting to move, or wanting to come back, since the government has not planned any measure to keep the community integrated as it is in Bajo Belén.

i) **Planning ahead:** The importance of planning ahead is evidences by the outcomes of the variables described above, which allow inclusive participation, better evaluations and in general a more integral approach to resettlements. Adequeate processes that monitor the resettlement not only while it is being implemented but also ex-post, to assure social, economic, political reintegration (Mooney 2005).

j) **Spiritual elements:** The spiritual deep connection that Belenians have with the area and with the river has played a big role in their dissatisfaction and discontent. The area they have been moved to has no water resources for which, according to what they expressed, they feel alienated there.

As we can see, the failure to attend the elements described above has led most Belenians to reject the project, both the already relocated and the ones that stayed. The fragility of these dimensions and is proof that resettlements should be the last option within risk reduction management, adaptation and sustainable development (Ferris 2012). One of the main lessons that Nuevo Belén leaves us with is that the social, economic and physical exclusion that resettlements often bring, are part of the fundamental understandings of impoverishment, and are contrary to what any notion

of development or enhanced life conditions that planned resettlements are intended to bring apart risk reduction. The exclusion that the community faces, enhances the dependency from the state and therefore, perpetuates oppressive power relations between the state and the community. As Gabriela Vildosola, dean of the Loreto Architects College (CAL) explains, "*sometimes the government only cares about numbers and that's not how resettlements should be carried out, soft elements are wrongly overlooked and underrated*".

5.2 Interpretations of the outcome in the context of the ideas, practices and capacities of the Peruvian state

The results of the analysis above suggest that the resettlement project was hurried and poorly planned, blatantly ignoring the people's culture, desires and traditions. The original intention of the project was to protect people from the increasing flooding and to enhance their quality of life (CR 2014) which seems to not have been achieved. My research suggests that a resettlement could have worked as intended, had it been planned and implemented taking advantage of the time to plan that preventive resettlements offer, and with different approaches and stronger state capacities. Thus, this chapter discusses three interrelated interpretations of the state's course of action and its exceptional celerity to start the project, and the ideas under which the resettlement was planned.

5.2.1 Social-engineering and modernity delusions

In section 3 above, I discussed high-modernism in relation with state's social-engineering policies, and how the search for legibility and top-down knowledge from state officials has led to calamitous state interventions (Koyama 2017). In this chapter I will explain how it relates to Belén.

Resettlement processes have governability schemes with nuances from the notions of high-modern social-engineering that Scott criticizes. Scott suggests that one of the characteristics of it is the pursue of legibility, social organization and design simplification, philosophy followed by LeCorbusier to design Chandigarh (India), or Brasilia (Brasil), which was planned by his students (Scott 1998). So, if we take a look

at the grid of Nuevo Belén design in Figure 13 above, it is evident from the standardized and monotonous design, and the rigid divisions, that it was made with such approach. Nuevo Belén is also similar to centrally-planned high-modernist inspired settlements in Ecuador known as "Cities of the Millennium". These are small cities built by the Ecuatorian government in the beginning of the 2010s, implemented for a better distribution of the wealth brought by the oil industry to the people from the Amazon region. They represent an attempt of civilizing cities for the indigenous communities, with perfectly identical, evenly distributed white houses in the middle of the forest, provided with schools, football fields, paved streets, picnic tables, and all kinds of features that belong to an urban design. National symbols of civilization and modernization, designed with their straight lines and "perfect order", resembling villages imported from the Swiss Alps that are slowly being devoured by nature and becoming failed simulations of modernity (Goldaraz 2014). Both are similar to the modern city project that Henry Ford intended to build for his workers in the Brazilian Amazon during the 1920s. A "small town America" called "Fordlandia" that resulted in a necropolis of arrogant and utopic infrastructures (Constante 2019, Reed 2016, Grandin 2009). These civilization attempts to transform the way they live into "a productive, normalized, social environment: in short, to create modernity" (Escobar 1995, 156)

The Ecuatorian government claimed these to be projects for the transformation and development of a marginalized region, however, they failed to meet such purpose, and became schools without teachers, medical centers without doctors, streets without cars, and cities without jobs that are being a oned by their inhabitants, slowly becoming part of the forest (Wilson and Bayón Jiménez 2017, Constante 2019). Unfortunately, any resemblance with Nuevo Belén is not pure coincidence. In fact, the new city is based on urbanization, which is an alien phenomenon in the area because as I have explained, the traditional use of territory has historically been based on as multi-sited appropriation scheme (Padoch et al. 2008). Thus, the design and implementation of these modernity and urbanizing failures product of inadequate contexts and poor planning, has been influenced by old Amazon conquest models and colonial schemes -which its critics call neocolonial strategies to civilize, organize and homogenize communities. These projects, often in the pursue of transforming environments for best (in the name of development or climate change adaptation strategies) have become

simple modernity and urbanizing fiascos that risk uprooting entire communities and cultures, often leaving people “displaced, disempowered, and destitute” (Oliver-Smith 2010, 2).

Nuevo Belén is also a result of the influence of unidimensional, hegemonic models of development, evidenced in the state’s implementation of “one universal solution”, which favors rapidity, since it is thought to be replicable anywhere -for example, coastal designs implemented in the Amazon. However, high-modernist homogeneous solutions tend to ignore local insights from the communities involved because this ideology understands that human needs can be met by abstraction and calculation, without taking into consideration non-quantifiable elements such as culture, or belongingness. They set goals based on numbers that have no correlation to actual social conditions and that do not recognize historical backgrounds (Escobar 1995). Thus, they become inadequate, improvised and sloppy intents of an aggressive development destined to fail. In accordance with Oliver Smith, these projects end up being “a form of structural violence” exerted by those with the power to implement their ideas of what constitutes progress and what does not (Oliver-Smith 2010, 3). Even more so, in a multiregional country like Peru, highly heterogeneous -geographically and culturally-, overlooking diversity enables oppression, which historically has rooted social conflict.

Thus, under a Scottian perspective, the design of the new city can be understood as a power expression, in which citizens opinions or heterogeneity is not acknowledged. However, the framing of the threat enabled the “normative obligation for human intervention” that allows the sacrifices that high-modernism deems necessary to achieve long-term goals (Bichsel 2012, 101).

Under top down approaches to resettlement and high-modernist rationales, governments believe to know better than the local communities, disregarding what they have to say about what is best for them, or what their needs really are, and what is it that covers them. Modern-minded states prefer to organize society in and high-tech ways rather than relying on local knowledge, or old traditions and lifestyles, which ultimately leads to failure. These approaches thus, not only limit the participation of institutions and individuals, but also disable the communities’ self-determination and agency, depriving them from a feeling of ownership of the

intervention that is taking place. Indeed, some of the resettlement guidelines and regulations for resettlements that exist, such as the World Bank Guidelines, seem to shift the role of individuals from active agents of rights to passive objects of policy. And even when the people participate and the information is collected, in the end, the fate of the people remains a domain of the experts. The fairness of the project, environment, social and economic structure, the impacts, and the needs of the local people are all determined by the resettling agent, which as shown in this research, may bring about counterproductive effects (Scott 1998, Li 2005, Oliver-Smith 2010). Disacknowledgement and paternalistic behavior from the know-it-all government, especially towards indigenous or vulnerable populations, has been present in historically present in Peruvian culture. For example, in the context of the Yungay landslide, Oliver-Smith recalls: *"the view that Indians were in fact like children, needing the authority and direction was commonly expressed (...)"*(Oliver-Smith 1986, 68). Interestingly, this is precisely how the United States States of America depicted Latin America in the 1940s, "a child in need of adult guidance" (Escobar 1995, 30). However, without the communities' input, the public policies that the government implements, tend to be reductionist and paternalistic, with a limited knowledge of local realities that result into mere placebos that numb deeper structural problems, and in social disorganization rather than organization. (Li 2005, 387). For that reason, while the river is no longer a hazard, most of the same issues as the ones we find in Bajo Belén are replicated in Nuevo Belén -overcrowding, garbage, poor sanitary conditions, etc.- and worse, new ones have arisen.

According to Ferris, participation is one of the key pillars for resettlement processes to be less harmful for the affected communities. The toolbox she wrote for the United National High Commissioner for Refugees clearly states that the people that must be relocated and resettled because their habitats are at risk of becoming uninhabitable or already has become so, have the rights to fully participate in the decision making of the resettlement process. This includes information about the timing, new location, ways in which they will be effected, housing options, livelihood options, etc. (Ferris 2012). However in Peru, apart from the case study, at least two past resettlement attempts register deficient information provision and recollection that has led to conflict and resistance, displaying oppressive power relations and inept state penetration of the country (Oliver-Smith 2010). Thus, social-engineering in "wannabe

modern states" is just a social simplification that fails to meet local needs and does not adjust to local realities, bringing about detrimental effects. Therefore, the resettled families and beneficiaries of the housing units acknowledge that none of this is the result of a collective process. They see the resettlement more as a political imposition that became possible because they are a vulnerable population, and this perception increases the general discomfort among the population, translated sometimes into conflict and resistance.

The dismissal of the participation of the affected communities in Peru, is a natural consequence of a centralist country with top-down approaches to policy design and implementation, by which decisions being taken in higher levels where the power is concentrated and the disdain for local knowledge. Centralization has been a phenomenon in Peru since the colonial times, when the Spanish conquerors imposed their governing ways and delimitated Peruvian territories to consolidate their viceroyalties in the region. From that moment on, and the declaration of Lima as its capital, all the political and economic power of Peru and South America was concentrated in the capital city. Afterwards, during the decade of 1930s, especially after World War II, North America suffered from an industrial decline, which allowed a fast-paced industrialization in the country and Lima placed itself as its economic power. Thus, the economic growth of Lima inhibited the growth of the rest of the departments, evidencing inequality among the rest of the country and the capital. The spreading of a dependent and predating capitalism imposed in Peru as a former colony, reached the Amazon turning it a region for natural resource exploitation that unfortunately did not benefit from any of the wealth it generated. Historians agree that the Amazon is some sort of colony of the Peruvian government, where centralist policies that hegemonic notions of progress and development are constantly failing to be implemented, perpetuating it as a second-class region for social-economic matters. Its excessive centralisation in decision-making processes, leaves little space for input from local governments and citizens, where the central government has imposed top-down, sectoral policies (Fernandez Maldonado and Bredenoord 2010). As Bromley concludes, "Peru´s principal problem was, and still is, political centralism seeking to co-opt and control local initiatives" (2002, p. 290).

"The Amazon is like the cemetery of projects", says Jorge Gasche, Peruvian anthropologist and researcher in the Institute for the Amazon Research (IIAP) (Gasche

and Vela 2011). In addition, Martin Reategui, professor and historian on Amazon matters, told me that there is no Amazon community that has not been part of -apparently well intentioned, however, failed- prospects of all kinds of projects, in matters of development, risk management, education, infrastructure, security, health, culture, biodiversity management, or any field we can imagine. *"I can't honestly remember any project that I can say was a success. I think most of them have simply been failures, and if you think about it, those failures could have been avoided if the government had bothered asking the local people simple things like: do you think this is going to work here? Is the flooding bothering you? How high was the river last time? Do you make money this way or that way? Do you really need this project, or what do you need?"* The Amazon has historically been territory for these type of approaches by bureaucrats, political and business elites[7] with specific interests that come with seductive offers to the low-income sectors, distorting the nature of the relationship not only between the governmental body and the population, but also within the population, who gets distracted from looking out for their own interests and slowly becomes a passive agent. Projects from the central government tend to entail elements that are alien to the Amazon context and culture; however, these are too often pushed forward despite lacking positive, long term, sustained or sustainable results. This causes an even wider gap between "the rural" and "the urban", "the obsolete" and "the modern", hindering -in the long run- the inclusion and enhancement of the quality of life of the Amazon inhabitants (Reategui Bartra 2015). In relation to the Amazon, Peluso argues that Amazon cities are "at the margins of neoliberal modernity", and these possess characteristics that are strictly Amazonian, for their have different practices and processes that are fundamentally based in indigenous practices and mobilities (Boano and Astolfo 2017, 37, Peluso and Alexiades 2016). Moreover, since they have a strong historical attachment with the land and the river, they also understand and interpret the river stages as its normal dynamics rather than a menacing phenomenon that requires immediate state's action. However, the Peruvian

[7] For the purposes of this thesis, elites are defined as: "Groups of individuals that, due to their control over natural, economic, political, social, organizational or symbolic (expertise/knowledge) resources stand in a privileged position to influence in a formal or informal way decisions and practices (…)" (Bull and Aguilar-Støen 2015, 18)

government seems to be incapable of reaching dialogues in which new orders that consider different lifestyles and forms of adaptation are achieved.

"I also come from the coast, I also thought that our way was the only way to improvement and development. I used to get frustrated with them because I thought they didn't understand but after spending more than working 20 years with the Amazon, it was us that didn't understand. They have different cosmovisions and we tend to bring only ours, and that's why projects always fail in the jungle. The world is globalizing but the changes have to be respectful and at their own pace. The reason for the few successful projects we've seen is because we've respected the Amazonian ways to see life" – Jose Alvarez Alonso, Director of Biodiversity (CDR 2016)

Drawing from Scott's critique to high-modernism, interventionist projects from centralist countries are often based on dichotomies of the traditional vs. the modern, which relate to old notions that have reigned among the savage-civilized binary notions of the Amazon (Vallejo et al. 2016). Let us not forget that the ideas of progress and life enhancement in the Peruvian state-even in the case of Belén which was thought as a climate change mitigation strategy- are embedded in the cultural fabric of the West (Oliver-Smith 2010). What makes this particularly dangerous is that vulnerable communities are mostly rural, for which their ways of living differ significantly from that of the people in the central government, whose perceptions of this type of populations are based on modernities that disparage other ways. The design of Nuevo Belén is an imitation of any district from the coast, which under the Peruvian context and ideology is the representation of progress and thus, the "model region". Hélène Sanier, is a French expert in human space design that was living in Iquitos at the time I did my fieldwork. She had been working with the local government in relation to urban development around the area, and described Nuevo Belén as: "*honestly, like a military camp*, *without community and clearly without concertation (...) like an imitation of Ville Radieuse of Le Corbusier or The Familistère de Guise of Godin*", she laughed. Then added, *"disruptive."*

On the other hand, Scott argues that high-modernist life improvement and societal organization schemes and projects categorize people as a means of control and containment. This model has historically justified projects that encourage the legitimization of state rule (Regassa and Korf 2018). These aim at expand the state's

power, organizing society to make it legible, because such a society is easier to control, rule and tax, for which a strong state is required. This objective ultimately represents a "condition of manipulation" where states do and undo as convenient, and will even exclude any agent that becomes an obstacle to control (Scott 1998, 183). The common denominators that historically enabled the enforcement of high-modernist tragic utopias around the world in the past (such as Nazism, the apartheid in South Africa, villagization in Vietnam) are the state's desire to control and (re)organize nature and society; the use of unrestrained state's force; and the existence of a weak society that cannot resist the state's power (Scott 1998). Therefore, resettlement processes can potentially become the epitome of the state's monopoly on the management of violence in combination with ambitious social-engineering, when driven "by ruling elites with no commitment to democracy or civil rights and who are therefore likely to use unbridled state power for its achievement" (Scott 1998, 89).

Notwithstanding, Scott's notion of the state as an apparatus that tries to over-control its citizens even using authoritarian ways, is criticized by those who argue that states are not only looking for legibility but also pursue the enhancement of their citizens' capacities and the improvements of their lives (Li 2005). In relation to this, West explains, that "the rationalization of society has generally been dangerously justified by its advocates as a means to better ensure the provision of fundamental social services, including health care, education, sanitation and others" (West 1998, 128). Since it seems like these justifications "for a greater good" are oblivious to unforeseen consequences, it results fundamental to be aware of benevolent cover-ups, especially in the context of disadvantaged communities, like Belén. After all, strategies for the consolidation and penetration of the state through the occupation of Amazon territories have existed, directly or indirectly, by private projects and by populist policies (Peluso and Alexiades 2016). Indeed, many projects like Belen have proven to fail to improve the lives of their subjects. So, under a Scottian perspective, as Regassa and Korf argue, we might be taking the wrong approach when we question if these projects fail or succeed in developmental, risk reduction or life enhancement terms. Perhaps we need to see Nuevo Belén as political statecraft for power expansion under a life-enhancement alibi. In James Fergusson words "even if those projects failed in developmental terms, they might still be successful as a mechanism of state expansion into the lowlands – they might still be a "successful failure" on those terms"

(Fergusson cited in Regassa and Korf 2018, 624). As De wet points out, these projects have the capacity to simultaneously promote and undermine human wellbeing (Oliver-Smith 2010).

On the other hand, top-down interventions based on high modernity, often promote ideas that follow a unidimensional vision of development and set the ground of what is culturally valuable and respectable and what is not (Valer 2015). This linear way of understanding the world, relying on technical knowledge for progress, corresponds to monocultural, self-righteous notions of modernity and development that have been embedded in the neoliberal paradigm for decades in Western societies, who have had hegemonic influence and power over the South (Coyne and Pellillo 2012). Thus, as Li argues, even genuine efforts to enhance life conditions and development are likely to be unsuccessful when they do not meet local preferences and the local knowledge. The ignorance of a country's multicultural nature by the government and the law, generates regulations that do not meet a country's realities and its varied cosmovisions, constantly ruling for some sort of chimerical project of distorted cultural perfection, which results in a government incapable of performing its basic functions, like protecting its citizens.

Thus, analyzing the case of Nuevo Belén, high-modernist nuances like the ones Scott describes can be seen, like the fact that an allotted city, where the state keeps a registry of property ownership within the community is a lot easier to tax than one where there is no official records, like Bajo Belén; or when I look at the way that the project was imposed, rather than implemented. Moreover, as I have explained, the reorganizational structure followed by the project is clearly thought under notions of development and modernity that do not adjust to an Amazonian reality, leading to unsustainable livelihoods that will represent soon a new challenge for the government. On the other hand, a bottom up approach that included the participation of the population could have helped shape this project into not only a more digestible and appealing bid, but mostly into a proposal that meets the needs of Belenians.

5.2.2 State weakness weakens

The previous section explained how resettlement processes have patterns that belong to high-modernist societal reorganization schemes and how Western notions of modernity and development have historically influenced a type of project implementation in in authoritarian and centralist governments.

However, in the context of high-modernism, Scottian notions of the state seem to be missing some shades of gray. His state is characterized as a well-functioning organisms that interact in a binary category where citizens are in the opposite end. The state to which he refers to, actively seeks to expand its state space and power in order to manipulate society into a readable web. However, Scott does not touch upon the scenario where high-modernist aspirations are attempted by weak states, and that lack "consistent coercive power, fine-grained administrative grid, or the detailed knowledge (…)" that would allow such intrusive ambitious, social-engineering projects (Scott 1998, 88). In addition, he seems to be oblivious of the complexities within weak statehood, where scenarios of little accountability facilitate individual agendas and dynamics that favor private interests from politicians, bureaucrats, elite groups or non-state actors. In states with a weak governance, these can play a key role when comes to state's action or inaction.

Scott explains that it is only the state who has the power and resources to move people around its boundaries to new cities or settlements (Scott 1998). The ability to control the location of people and things within a specific territory is a display of the state's political power; in opposition to what it represents to people: the ultimate expression of powerlessness (Oliver-Smith 2010). So, while Scott's analysis helped us understand how high-modernist inspired policies like resettlements, can be harmful when executed forcefully by authoritarian states or when the 3 elements I mentioned in 3.3 converge, he does not explore what the result is when attempted by weak states that do not have such great power. Thus, this research attempts to explore such scenario through Nuevo Belén as a high-modernist ambition executed by the Peruvian state, despite its institutional and governmental frailties.

In "Scottian states", a high-modernist reorganization of society can lead to, and be led by stronger state action. However, in the Peruvian state, projects like Nuevo Belén evidence the open contradiction that exists in contexts of poor infrastructural power,

between aiming at improving people's lives and protecting them, and the misery created. As I have explained before, I do not consider Peru to be a strong state because of the deficient way in which it has historically provided political goods, collected taxes and ruled. An additional weakness is that it is highly vulnerable in the face of crisis, of endogenous or exogenous conflicts, natural calamities such as floods or earthquakes, and that it holds poor capacity for recovery (Jimenez Piernas 2013). Another dimension of its weakness is that there is high political instability at central, regional and local levels. New leaders that come to power often disregard whatever the previous leader did, and attempts to introduce new projects, systems and programs, undoing and deconstructing what was done by the previous regime (Martinez-Vazquez and Vaillancourt 2011). On the other hand, disarticulation of institutions and poor planning results evident after having had the opportunity to discuss with the governmental actors involved in the resettlement process and the ones that were not involved. My contact in Nuestras Ciudades told me how they found frustrating that the channels provided for coordination do not work because each institution has their own agenda, and the resources available are not sufficient to encourage conversations that make everyone push in the same direction and make holistic analysis of the issues to be solved. Thus, incomplete understandings of the issues lead to solutions that do not work. The Brookings Institute's Index of State Weakness in the Developing World[8] (the "Index"), based on 20 indicators divided into political, security, economic and welfare topics, ranks Peru No. 92 out of 141 of the weakest states in the world, which places it in the fourth out five quintiles, being the 1st quintile the weakest (Rice and Patrick 2008). Furthermore, and relevant for our notion of weak statehood in Peru, the Index gives it a score of 5 out 10 in the Government Effectiveness indicator, 4.8 in Rule of Law, 6.8 in Accountability, and 4.6 in Control of Corruption, featuring between the 50 more corrupt countries in the world (Rice and Patrick 2008). One of my informants at one of the governmental institutions told me, in relation to Belén and the institutional disarticulation I perceived: *"I don't know. They [the heads of projects, the MVCS] think it's like playing legos or a videogame, you just move this here, move this there, pull out exceptional measure and bon appetite. And they don't even talk with other institutions, the ministries, the Ministry of Women and vulnerable populations? Like a wallflower. They don't know the major impacts this can have in a*

[8] See Index in https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/02_weak_states_index.pdf

community. And us? Another wallflower. We barely know anything about this, they never asked us. It's a "bypassing culture" to achieve things fast. I don't know why we are used to working this way…and the PCM could have formally objected or challenged it's execution, but they don't care, because in reality, unless there's a gain, no one does."

Peru, despite its efforts for decentralization in the past 20 years, is still a centralist country in an economic, institutional and political level (Gonzales de Olarte 2017, Garcia-Escribano and Ahmad 2006). The fact that the policy-making has little consideration of the local cultures and uses the same formulas across the territory can be explained by the country's centralist nature, which as Ponzetto et al. explain often hinders the ability to match public goods to idiosyncratic local preferences (Boffa, Piolatto, and A. M. Ponzetto 2016). Due to the concentration of political and economic power in the capital city, it works under a scheme of centers and peripheries. Lima, the capital is the center and everything else is considered the periphery.

The central government must ensure, encourage and monitor quality decision making and cross-government coordination when it comes to the implementation of public policies. However, according to a report issued in 2015 by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), in relation with good governance and state capacity in Peru, this is precisely where it lags behind, scoring al alarming 1 out of 4.5 in the field of coordination among public institutions. Furthermore, the report concludes that in Peru there is lack of dialogue, collaboration and co-ordination between institutions, mainly because of fragmentation at a political and public sector level, which often have their origins in corruption (OECD 2015). However, in Peru, as one of the former MVCS told me, there is no long-term vision when it comes to policies or projects, *"it's like a carpe diem ideology"*. A researcher I joined in Belén even pointed out the improvisation and institutional disarticulation in a playful way: *"Even we as outsiders feel helpless sometimes. It's scary to see that this is how the state is managed [by the central government]. No wonder it turned out like this. Even the name is in disharmony! Ministry of Housing, Construction and Sanitation? No! You first remediate, then build, and last grant housing. Not the other way around! That says it all, no? It's a mess, really. We need an integral reform, qualified people, competitive salaries, and definitely auditing internal processes…but that's just wishful thinking."*

Scholars agree that governmental institutional coordination and citizen participation is key when it comes to planning projects, especially those that will affect every single aspect in the lives of a community and the environment. As we have seen in section 5 above, the impacts of the Nuevo Belén are manifested essentially in every single aspect of their lives. Therefore, it is of utmost necessity to have all relevant governmental bodies and the community on board, in order to take coherent decisions, tackle the challenges that may arise and find sustainable solutions rather than using temporary or simplified measures that will deal with the symptoms but not the disease. Even international treaties encourage states to cooperate internally and delegate responsibilities to local governments. However, as Milton Von Hesse, former MVCS minister states, in a country like Peru, where institutionalization is lacking and there is much political interest at stake, cooperation is not encouraged. Consequently, when inter-institutional collaboration is not efficient, the flow of information generated in an upper level and that would have to reach the bottom also gets affected. Thus, the information delivered to the citizens is sometimes contradictory, reaching the population unevenly and imprecisely, which leads to confusion and misinterpretations. For example, the embroiling information given has given them the perception of absence of a valid motivation for the replacement of Belen Sostenible for Nuevo Belén, especially considering that there already exists another Peruvian city nearby called Islandia under the same biannual river dynamics, but with perfectly adapted infrastructure to thrive in such conditions, which Belenians always use as a referent to criticize Nuevo Belén.

Information and the access to it is a recognized human right, and part of the political goods that the state should dutifully provide to its citizens. Ferris states that the governments are obliged to provide the resettled community information related to: "(a) the nature and extent of the changes to their habitat resulting from climate change, including the evidence on which such assessments are made; (b) evidence that the authorities have consulted on and considered all other alternatives to relocation, including both mitigation and adaptation measures that could be taken to enable people to remain in their communities; (c) planned efforts to assist affected communities in their relocation, both in the short-term relocation process and in the longer-term resettlement process; (d) compensation and alternative settlement options available to them if they choose not to be relocated under the government's plan;" (Ferris 2012,

28). When this information lacks, it generates a sense of being at risk. Without it, people cannot estimate what their future will look like and cannot assess their losses or gains. Thus, the feeling of not having control or a proper understanding of the situations of our lives hinders our possibilities of coping with change, often leading to conflict, tension and even active resistance (Oliver-Smith 2010).

From the interviews and conversations with Belenians, I conclude that the information in Bajo Belén was poorly provided and it is poorly managed by the authorities as well. I asked several governmental officials what was the area and the sectors that were comprehended in the relocation plans, receiving different answers 100% of the times. Moreover, in Belén some people about the resettlement's origin or implications; others still believe that it is and will remain voluntary, even despite the fact that the area has been declared by law intangible and inhabitable, and that the authorities have stated that people will be forced to leave the area once the construction of the new city is completed. It is alarming to think that even when the process is believed to be optional by most, there have already been pronunciations and protests against it. This should make the government wonder what will happen when the total of the remaining 16,000 people acknowledge that this is a mandatory, irresistible process? There is a disconcerting secretism around the project, and reportedly, when the citizens question certain decisions or inquire over the project, they are usually ignored by the government institutions. The negligent way in which the project was socialized depicts the lack of penetration of the government and its deficient administration and thus, its weakness and administrative incapacity.

O'Donnell explains that when the effectiveness of the states is extended irregularly, these become apparatuses incapable of implementing minimally complex policies (O'Donnell 1993). This helps explain why Nuevo Belén is still in such a precarious stage even over four years after it started. The fact that the process is so delayed, that the satellite city is still disconnected from the commerce networks, that something as essential as the roads, and transportation accesses are still not finished, or that the workshops that would ensure the communities livelihoods never took place may also be a result of the analysis above. Thus, it is clear that an incompetent state that lacks infrastructural power and that is a deficient provider of goods is most likely to fail to organize society or plan, in a functional and efficient fashion. The Peruvian government, particularly, in remote locations like Belén, has little to no incidence.

Because of the neglect with which people are treated and the lack of coherence in the implementation of the projects, the communities feel disenfranchised. The government and the government's officials lose credibility and people's distrust in the state becomes inevitable. In relation to this, I often asked my interviewees if they trusted that the government would keep their promises and help them improve their life conditions. More than half were skeptical because based on past experiences, the government has always been an untrustworthy entity for Belenians. In fact, a great number believed that there were underlying interests related to oil or tourism development behind the resettlement. After all, it has been a common practice in Peru to displace people for industrial purposes in the past. In relation to it, Rotberg explains, that citizens stop trusting the state when they perceive the rulers as working for their own benefits and not for the people. Thus, the state's legitimacy, falls and citizens see the state as "owned" by politicians and elites, working for their private interests (Rotberg 2003).

The lack of goods provision, the obstacles that people face and the disabled opportunities, also enable paternalistic approaches and clientilistic measures for private agendas, as it is also likely that territorially based spheres of power arise, such as local mafias, political parties, etc., and take advantage of precarious circumstances (O'Donnell 1993). This situation generates an anomic society with new social and cultural norms, juxtaposed to institutionalization, where the official state rules are not the ones that prevail, and instead the ones by the alternative powerful actors. Moreover, it gives place for local leaders to strengthen their power, which enables the formation of sub-groups that may peacefully co-exist or be pitted against each other. These potential conflicts may break the order and dynamics within the community, disrupting and dividing it.

An example of the populist practices that take place in the absence of institutionalization is the fact that the project has been rejected and supported by the same actors, mainly politicians or aspirants, depending on their momentum and their audience. In fact, if we reflect upon the development and consequences of the resettlement, the project itself often comes off as an improvised idea, not well thought through, that has led to non-anticipated impacts. Whereas there would be an unpredictability element in relation to the resettlement projects, since it is unlikely that governments would be able to measure and calculate all impacts, the evident lack of

congruence is remarkable. Thus, the resettlement often seems like a Trojan horse for popularity and sympathy among communities, in political terms, voters. In both Nuevo and Bajo Belén, even the community leaders are being accused of being "sold" to different parties or being colluded with the government. People claim that they often condone governmental negligence and frustrate the intents of demands. "*Who do we trust? Everyone promises, but they all betrays us for their own gain as soon as they have the chance*", said of the men in the neighbor's assembly. The lack of follow up on the project, delays with the provision of basic services and other inconsistencies that arise from the withdrawal of governmental attention is a display of the state's inability to maintain a sustained and coherent presence. Moreover, this is alarming also because laws become vulnerable to be broken and compliance to be waved. Law 30291 expressly dictated that the resettlement should begin only once the basic services were implemented in the area, nonetheless, people were moved without these, and over four years later, the status is the same. On the government's disdain, one of my interviewees joked with a smirk in his face: *"so, disappointed but not surprised!",* although he later talked about the resentment that the community feels towards the government.

My informants in Nuevo Belén told me, MVCS officials –seldom- show up in the site to verify that the work is progressing, and those in charge of the project, sent from the central government make quick band-aid fixes to simulate that things work fine. *"Always when the Minister or someone from Lima comes. That day the tanks are full of water, the trash trucks and the busses come around frequently, everything works. They visit the nicest house, no cracks, white walls, three happy inhabitants, looks perfect. Pictures, videos –oh, the new life of Belenians, where kids get to be kids- and once they're gone, everything's the same, no water, sand showers, we're abandoned here"*. It results ironic that even the state officials can be fooled by façades of project success, perpetuating the unawareness of the reality and the extent of the local vulnerabilities. The same situation is reportedly happening in the Cities of the Millenium, where the villages are fixed for the President's visit and they remain dysfunctional cities after he [Correa] leaves (Wilson and Bayón Jiménez 2017). Both settlements have become a sort of Potemkin villages that in the end, do not represent modernity, or sustainable development, nor life enhancement, but collective fantasies of progress over the minds of all, the audience and the actors. And consequently also Potemkin modernities where toilets without drains and kitchens without gas work great

only on paper (Wilson and Bayón Jiménez 2017). These also, reflect how resettlement processes keep the structural symptoms of interventionist projects for societal reorganizations attempts, like the ones Scott describes.

It's fair to conclude that this case, it is not even a matter of lack of economic resources because the money was allocated successfully, but it was spontaneously deviated to the climate disasters in the north of Peru. The issue with Nuevo Belén is about a centralist country, that contrary to Scottian states, has no political organizational or infrastructural power, and therefore without administrative capacity, unable to provide the basics to its citizens, however pursuing an ambitious attempt for social-engineering. There are plenty of examples within Peru that evidence that governmental attention and presence for the less favored, especially in remote locations is rather deficient, for which it is highly unlikely that the government would efficiently follow up on the development or completion of an ambitious project such as Belén. The weakness of the Peruvian administration, on the other hand, allows informal rules to rule, which enables projects and policies to end up subjected to the power spheres and factual powers. As Jane Jacobs argues, even when the money to create better cities is available, the planning may be so poorly done that "low-income projects become worse centers of delinquency, vandalism and general social hopelessness than the slums they were supposed to replace" and Belén seems to be no exception (Jacobs 1961, 4). So maybe, the resettlement is not a problem in itself, but weak states trying to implement it.

5.2.3 DIY: resettlement as a product of securitization

"When a securitizing actor uses a rhetoric of existential threat and thereby takes an issue out of what under those conditions is "normal politics", we have a case of securitization" (Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2015, 495)

The third and last explanation I want to posit in this research project is related to the power of the climate change narrative, which reminds me of the "The Shepherd's Boy and the Wolf" story, as you will see throughout this section.

Warner and Boas argue that "crises can open policy windows" (Warner and Boas 2019, 2). The first can be represented, among others, by climate change, natural or man-made related disasters. For their potential of becoming a threat for the world population,

these are often framed as security threats, and therefore, the governments have the obligation to protect their citizens against these hazards. However, there is potential for governments, inter alia of this obligation, to take advantage of the existence (or potential existence) of these threats to push forward certain policies to pursue other interests. In relation to this, Bigo warns that actors with power, and political or economic elites, have the potential of using their position to exacerbate fears for their own benefits or hidden agendas. Thus, the state's capacity may be used to manipulate politics by using the "governmentality of unease", that lead to securitization processes (Bigo cited in Charrett 2009, 27). Securitization, as explained in 3.4 above, happens through a speech act by which a potential problem becomes a security threat, and the issue is put on the top of a government's agenda, giving place to extraordinary measures that would otherwise not be allowed. Now, how is this related to Nuevo Belén?

The actions of the Peruvian government in this case study, aimed to eliminate the threat that the population of Bajo Belén would theoretically face. The threat came from a rising river allegedly soon to be untamable as a product of climate change, and from the high contamination and health risks in the area. Such a dire scenario, gave place to the declaration of a -rather questionable- emergency that consequently required immediate and urgent action, starting the engines for a preventive resettlement project under the framework of disaster risk reduction strategies. Under common sense, it seems like the sensible and diligent way to proceed in the face of risk. However, if we take a closer look and consider everything we now know about the context and the status of the project, as well as the political momentum of the former President when he promised to provide solutions to the water issue, it is not far-fetched to question if perhaps the situation of Belén was overdone, and instead framed as an emergency as a result of political opportunism. But let us not jump into conclusions before we analyze it under securitization theory.

First, to analyze and trace if securitization occurred, three steps are necessary. The first is to identify the threat, which is the –uncertain- possibility of rivers Amazon and Itaya merging in an imprecise future ranging from three to seven decades far from 2014, and that could potentially wipe off the district of Bajo Belén, propped by the high contamination, health risks and crime rates in the area, which is undeniable. The second step is to identify the emergency action, expressed with the issuance of the Law

that declares the security of the community at risk, the inhabitability of the area and that mandates the relocation of anyone living there. This framing enabled the Peruvian government to put this issue on top of the agenda, and to take extraordinary measures for it, resulting in the rapidly approved emergency law and a hurried planning process of the resettlement project that skipped formal consultation processes. Warner and Boas state that, "a securitizing move seeks to lift an issue into an untouchable space of urgency (…)" (Warner and Boas 2019, 2). And sure enough, invoking an emergency in Bajo Belén broke the regular course of politics, "legitimising the breaking of 'rules that would otherwise bind'" (Buzan et al. cited in Warner and Boas 2017, 205). The execution of the resettlement thus, is the effect of the first two steps, for which it is safe to conclude that a successful securitization took place. The *extraordinary measure* taken is the -rather quick- emergency declaration, and consequential -even quicker- resettlement of the population in response to the existential threat. However, this process seems to have been a rather volatile securitization where the weakness of the state becomes an additional element for the failure of the Nuevo Belén project. But we will come back to this later.

As a result of the urgency that the project required, neither the abnormally hurried planning nor its execution were subjected to inter-institutional, national and local, evaluation or monitoring processes that the regulation on resettlements dictates, had it followed a regular path. One of my informants from CENEPRED mentioned "*it would have been best that Nuestras Ciudades came to us first for a suitability study or technical assistance, but since this was considered an emergency, they skipped the process*". In relation to the planning, scholars agree that a resettlement processes take at least a couple of years to plan, especially considering that it is a concept beyond infrastructure only, but it must include mechanisms for the regeneration of socioeconomic elements and ensure the sustainability of the people's livelihoods. However, as the former MVCS Minister said it, since the then President wanted to launch this project during his time in office, time was a scarce element. So, the instrumental nature of climate security framing allowed jumping over the regular legislative and administrative processes without it being questioned, enabling an extraordinary celerity in the execution of the project. In relation to this, it is relevant to highlight that the formulas that centralists governments apply, often favor promptness in decision-making but lack a thorough ad-hoc analysis of what is

appropriate for each case. In this sense, the rapidity of the resettlement process initiation took a toll on the quality of the project and the involvement of the institutions with competence and communities affected. Moreover, the focus on getting the process started as soon as it was possible, ended up putting the relocates at risk –again, with unfinished promised housing and insufficient services. The Law expressly dictated that the people should only be relocated once the basic services provision was guaranteed. However, the first group of people moved into temporary houses and without a water or sewage network installed, relying only on intermittent supply. Despite this, the government is still moving people into Nuevo Belén and yet a solution for the water and sewage provision has not been implemented and that the transfer felt chaotic and improvised. It is important to notice that not only the administration broke the law by moving people without implementing basic services, but the provision of inadequate living standards can also be considered a violation of human rights.

On the other hand, the principles of most of the literature and guidelines around resettlements agree that there must be a consensus among the population to decide their fate, or at least participation to some extent. Nonetheless, the speed of the process and the way it was mandated, from the central government and without much institutional debate, did not allow space for popular participation, which as we have learnt before, is fundamental in this type of processes. Moreover, most Belenians insist that they were never consulted if they wanted to be resettled, and that they were expecting governmental initiatives for climate change risk prevention in the area, through the Belén Sostenible project, rather than a pop-up resettlement project. While it is true that some of the people from Bajo Belén have moved voluntarily in the initial stages, the project is enforceable by Law, meaning that when the government starts its forceful execution, people will have to move regardless of their will. In relation to this, the CSS warns, the securitization of a potential issue results problematic when it "[legitimizes] a state of exception, in which drastic mitigation measures are adopted using undemocratic procedures" (Oels 2012, 185). In relation to this, Mortrerux explains that sometimes the political logic that encourages a government to make interventions or not, depends on the risks or the gains that these would mean for them (Mortrerux et al. 2018). Therefore, Arnall suggests that the fact that resettlements should be considered a last resort may help protect people from "those in power who

might use the excuse of reducing community exposure to climate change in order to conduct forced migrations for political or economic gain" (Arnall 2019, 254).

From a political economy approach, politics influence policies, and thus government action or inaction may often just be the product of conscious, strategic or tactical decisions pushed by personal agendas, or a particular momentum -and not necessarily for reorganizational or legibility purposes as Scott suggests (McConnell and Hart 2014). After all, "a crisis is not only a threat, but also an opportunity" (Warner and Boas 2019, 2). Therefore, drawing from this argument, this project resonates, and I posit the idea that it was pushed and launched in informality and improvisation, driven by political popularity. As Oliver-Smith explains, "when people are displaced (…) the disruption and trauma that are inflicted may be profound, an unintentional result perhaps, but one that has been considered by decision-makers to be an acceptable risk or cost, whether or not efforts are made to mitigate it" (Oliver-Smith 2010, 11).

So, once the political benefit was achieved, the reasons to continue devoting resources to it disappear, resulting in the reckless product I have described. To explore this idea further, I would like to go back to the Anecdote that I described in 4.2.3 above and highlight that political actors often scout for "'problems' in order to promote their own preferred 'solutions'" (Boin, t Hart, and McConnell 2009, 83). So, regardless of the Bajo Belén area being indeed in miserable conditions, and urging state's presence and assistance, it might be political incentives what triggered the idea of Nuevo Belén, since Bajo Belén was in a way randomly chosen, as my informant expressed.

In relation to this, there is evidence that show that governments weight up the reputation and transaction costs of interventions, how these affect electoral results and how they affect future or other government's interests, especially during campaign times. Governments thus, often decide whether to act or not on an issue, motivated by their capacity to maintain their own legitimacy and extend their power (Mortrerux et al. 2018). So, in connection with resettlement policies, there is a danger that powerful actors may use the implementation of prevention, risk reduction strategies and life enhancement to cover up underlying interests that would generate ulterior benefits (Ferris 2012). In this sense, perhaps the President was looking to have an iconic project, a sort of Trojan horse for future campaigns, expecting the popularity of the project to trickle down eventually to his government, or to have unquestionable

allocation of resources for a remote area with little governmental presence and therefore, little fiscalization. On the other hand, the urgency with which the project started could have perhaps been due to the little remaining time in office and as I said before, the way to speed up the project was by framing it as an emergency, thus, leading to its securitization. The former President Ollanta Humala had already been in office for 2 years out of 5 when Belén Sostenible started, and coursing the third year when it was replaced for Nuevo Belén. This meant that if he wanted to comply with his promise of providing water and sewage to the community, the relocation of the people to the new satellite city had to be launched within the following 2 years, before the change of command on July 28, 2016.

Infinite assumptions can be made around private agendas and different incentives that could explain why the process went out of the regular course that a resettlement project should have gone through, why it had little institutional and popular participation, technical assistance and studies, or why the government did not take a longer time for its planning and implementation. However, the purpose of this section under the securitization lens, is to reflect upon the potential abuse of the climate change narratives to construct an emergency which may enable policies and processes that result detrimental for the population but that have an underlying purpose. As Warner and Boas say, there is indeed a space for a "discursive threat construction [that serves] as a lever to legitimize exceptionality" often giving place to corruption too (Warner and Boas 2019, 3). Unfortunately, the discussion around the irregularities that may exist in this resettlement escapes the scope of this research project.

As we can see, visible and tangible projects that catch media attention like Nuevo Belén, may lead to short-term rewards and electoral opportunism. These, however, in the longer term, fail to address root problems because they end up being paternalistic and clientlistic placebos (Mortrerux et al. 2018). Providing a community with populist incentives, such as houses or football fields, often means for governments a more measurable action for their results and numbers, something palpable for the people to immediately enjoy and see, representing more political mileage than an integral rehabilitation, the latter being a slower process, and therefore a less attractive political measure (Jain et al. 2017). This leaves space to question if indeed other options before resettlement where explored, if Belen Sostenible was indeed unfeasible or if it was just easier to start from scratch. Moreover, the fact that the area chosen for the new city

was a product of a convenient donation from a third party rather than the product of a thorough study that verifies the aptness of the area in relation to its location and soil characteristics evidences a disconcerting spontaneity in the government's actions.

Furthermore, as I mentioned before, there are areas in Peru that are vulnerable to disasters, entire communities living below mountains that face yearly landslides, for example, however no initiatives to resettle them for prevention or to implement other preventive measures to the natural hazards that threaten them have been made. The norm is to react rather than prevent. Although we can acknowledge that Bajo Belén is indeed vulnerable, all of the above makes it seem like the crisis invoked -to an extent- politically constructed, given that events of equal gravity in the country have not been declared emergencies nor crises, and that this resettlement was launched in a remarkable time. An example of an event that indeed requires attention, for it has already occurred, but has barely been given any is the Cantagallo urban settlement destroyed by a fire. This was Amazonian migrant indigenous community in Lima that was entirely devastated in November 2015. Despite the precarious situation that people go through, living in tents, without a land or basic services, governmental efforts to alleviate this situation have been minimal and there are no concrete plans for the future.

On the other hand, the advancement of the Law repealing motions is not only a display of a state weakness, but also an evidence of the powerful role that the political momentum plays when it comes to policy making. I interpret these repeals as desecuritizing moves, which contrary to securitization, seek to declare that an existential threat no longer exists, and thus that the problem can be comprehended or managed within the rubric of normal politics (Salter 2008). Therefore, the neglect, put on hold and delay of Nuevo Belén after all the initial circus around it makes me think of a rather whimsical securitization process that activates and deactivates an state of emergency as the incentives or disincentives appear. A thorough analysis of the possible consequences of desecuritizing will not be explored in this thesis; however, the little effort and lack of technical support that took to overthrow a project of such dimensions in the first instance, without even having a roadmap for a plan B, makes evident that politicians and authorities are not aware or are incapable of diligently assessing the consequences of this potential political ping-pong game (Donnelly 2017). The government's cavalier attitude towards the project and the community results disconcerting if we consider that we are talking about "an emergency that risks

peoples' lives and safety". We should wonder then, was the resettlement actually of utmost and urgent necessity? Or was it "a solution in search of a problem"? (Warner and Boas 2019). These questions will have to remain for further investigation. However, if the law repealing claims were successful, then perhaps Nuevo Belén, in the end, was not that urgent and that this process could have been delayed in the sake of a better planning, finding less disruptive solutions to resettlement, and especially to get the people involved actively in it. Thus, going from pushing the project to the top of priorities to then exploring the possibility of deprioritize it and simply call it off, seems like an aborted, erratic securitization process. This desultory situation shows that a government with weak institutions and little accountability may become a dangerous medium, where anybody can run their own show without institutional logic.

Finally, another reason why the securitization of climate change disasters is treacherous is because it can backfire and create skepticism. The authorities in Peru may have exaggerated the gravity but especially the urgency of the resettlement, considering that the triggering event is possible yet still uncertain, and not happening in the immediate future. Therefore, much of the refusal to move comes from the skepticism of Belenians, who have lived by the river for decades and know their element and its dynamics. Rushing the relocation of people to conditions less desirable than the ones they face now, has already created the mindset among a percentage of Belenians that moving is disadvantageous. This is mainly due to the fact that they have lost trust not only in the capacity of the government of enhancing their lives, but also in the occurrence of the natural disaster. So, if the project was aborted and Belen Sostenible reactivated, but later science and technology determined that the rivers would surely merge and flood permanently the area, how would the government convince the citizens this time? What would happen if the wolf was indeed on its way and no one believed it? As Warner and Boas explain, the risk of exaggeration may backfire. Apocalyptic discourses may lead to the audience questioning the securitizing actor's authority and credibility, also generating disengagement and skepticism with the threat, and a potential problem to think about is the possibility of social conflict arising by a challenging audience that rejects the measures to be taken to prevent, the real catastrophes (Warner and Boas 2019, 2017).

6 Conclusions

Building on the relatively new tendency to adopt preventive resettlement processes as risk reduction and adaptation strategies, this thesis sought to understand the extent of the impacts and risks of planned resettlements implemented with high-modernist ideas, and to contribute to the understandings of the role that poor infrastructural power, centralism and informal politics play in shaping these processes. By doing so, it shed light on the power and potential danger of elites (mis)using the climate change narrative to push through individual agendas. To achieve these purposes I used the preventive resettlement of Bajo Belén in Peru in the context of an emergency declaration originated by an uncertain climate change threat as a case study, which I approached from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

What I encountered in my short stay in Bajo Belén, far from being a community expecting to be given everything by the government, is one that strives daily to earn a living, even when systematically untended and forgotten by the authorities in power and the savvy elites that take advantage of their necessities. Belenians are a resilient community whose cosmovision, roots and traditions allow them to have the capacity to adapt to the extreme Amazon weather with the few resources they have available, despite precarious conditions and governmental absence in the area. What I learned from their struggle and their strength can be summarized in a quote from Indian social activist Chetna Sinha: never provide poor solutions to poor people.

While the intention of this research was not to be an evaluation of the project, understanding the resettlement through the analysis of the transformation in people's livelihoods, the impacts it has caused and risks it represents, has been crucial in order to respond to my research questions.

6.1 Same but worse.

"Pretty houses don't replace our fish, Nuevo Belén is a bad result, and for my people an insult" sings a rap song composed by a group of Belenian teenagers who wanted to send their opinion on the resettlement project to the MVCS.

My first research question sought to identify and understand the impacts of this process on the lives of Belenians. The analysis presented in section 5.1 shows both the faults of the Peruvian government in its rather unbidden attempt to implement a high-modernist social-engineering project. The specific impacts on the population and the significant risks that the project still entails for Belenians is a consequence of neglecting the key dimensions of resettlements, which are leading to their impoverishment and the disruption of their livelihoods. Thus, the high levels of dissatisfaction in the relocated population, the demands they strike for, and the strong opposition from the remaining people in Bajo Belén respond to the poor implementation of the project, as free housing does not solve the socio-economic losses that the community is facing. Moreover, the lack of follow up measures to restore their livelihoods is a display of governmental contempt and ineptness. In fact, as McGoldrick argues, not meeting minimum standards is more an eviction than a resettlement (McGoldrick 2003). Therefore, the ones that have moved, want to or are returning to Bajo Belén, and demand having basic services implemented; while most of the remaining people in Bajo Belén opposes the project.

My second research question seeks to understand why a preventive resettlement process would be implemented the way it did, considering that time and economic resources were not scarce. For that, I have interpreted the process and its outcomes in the context of the Peruvian state's structures, ideas and practices.

As I have discussed, Peru has a centralist state structure and operates with little involvement of the community in decisions that affect their futures. Authorities often regard vulnerable communities as children incapable of self-determination. Moreover, the notions of development and progress that inform and shape the governmental interventions are based on notions of modernity and progress that the government has historically tried to impose in "the periphery". These perpetuate oppression by disrespecting local traditions and cultures, and their ways of adapting to the environment. On the other hand, Peru also has a poor infrastructural power, which means that it reaches unevenly across the country. Its officials and institutions lack coordination among each other which incapacitates the government of implementing coherent projects with long-term vision. Thus, little knowledge of local realities and

top-down approaches to policy making and implementation in a context of weak statehood often translate into mediocre projects with negative results, or mediocre projects without significant results in the best scenarios.

In fact, despite that national laws, regulations and guidelines mandate community participation, ad-hoc approaches, and human rights protection, and although Peru is part of the international bodies that encourage such approaches, the design and implementation of other resettlements that have taken place in the country, have had a completely different approach, founded on models shaped by unidimensional notions of development and progress. These other high-modernist resettlements and attempts (i.e. Nuevo Fuerabamba, Nuevo Morococha, and the attempt in Nuevo Yungay), have been implemented by the same homogeneous formula, and therefore failed and keep failing for essentially the same reasons. As a result, after the populations intended to live there were dramatically impoverished and had their lives and cultures disrupted, they have become perfectly geometrical ghost towns.

Considering that the advantage of preventive resettlements is the possibility to plan ahead, it seems inexcusable that the project was approved and implemented when more time could have been to design a complete and sustainable city for Belenians, rather than the inconsistent brand new ghetto that was delivered. Therefore, in the context of Peru's weak statehood, the absence of clear motivations for the abandonment of Belén Sostenible to Nuevo Belén, the unusual rapidness with which the project was implemented, the unconventional process that it followed, and the inconsistencies that followed, make the project seem as a self-interested and underhanded measure. The resettlement appears to have been born under populist rhetoric, based on a climate change narrative that gave place to an intervention with underlying purposes, enabled by the claiming of a threat, as I explained in 5.2.3.

Hence, in sum, a high-modernist approach to the resettlement, in a centralist government influenced by Western notions of progress, with poor statecraft, governed by informal politics created the perfect formula for a real disaster: Nuevo Belén.

In consideration of the above, Belenians stance on the project, not only means objection to moving, but also hostility towards the ideas that shape the resettlement. It is also a reflection of the weariness of a neglected and marginalized community that repeatedly gets promises that remain unfulfilled. This happens because the attention

that the Amazon gets, often occurs with underlying purposes and ceases when the latter are achieved.

6.2 Preventing failing like a state.

This thesis has allowed us to understand the traditional politics and practices that are found within weak statehood. As these are characterized for being informal and often populist, they include the possibility of actors in power pushing forward improvised and opportunistic projects as instruments for political or economic gain. A way to do so, is by constructing problems and then implementing the so much unneeded solutions. In the context of the climate change fever, claiming a crisis or a disaster risk becomes an almost unchallengeable card that, due to the life risks at stake, puts the issue in the panic agenda, skipping the regular controls, processes and politics and allowing the implementation of extraordinary and hurried measures to eliminate such risk, which often have detrimental consequences for the population. One example of this measures the resettlement project of Nuevo Belén. With this example, I have also shown the disastrous potential of such a processes when implemented by centralist states that lack state capacity, that use top-down approaches to policy implementation and that are influenced by ideas of modernity that do not adjust to local realities.

The impacts and risks shown through the analysis of this case study and the outcomes, evidence that resettlements are complex processes in which multiple socio-economic and cultural dimensions interplay. Moreover, these become more vulnerable of failure when the risks that they intersect with strong centralization, weak state structures, and traditional practices such as paternalism and clientilism.

Now that preventive resettlements and migration in general has been highlighted in international arenas as disaster risk reduction and adaptation strategies, policy makers and governments should be aware of the potential impacts of these measures, and prepare appropriate institutional and governance approaches and legal frameworks, in order to successfully protect and enhance, or at least restore, their population's socio-economic conditions (Gogarty 2011).

Nonetheless, even when these processes may be well funded, well planned, and well executed, these are still highly disrupting, for which nothing can assure its success.

Therefore, it is important to remark that they should always be considered a very last resort. If inevitable, they should be implemented aligned with human rights standards and along with other measures to reduce risks such as bottom-up approaches and initiatives, including people's participation and their cultures (Mooney 2005, Boano and Astolfo 2017). As Paulo Freire, argues it results fundamental to "empower individuals and enhance their local capacities to manage and name the world in their own words" (Paulo Freire cited in Omar 2012, 46, Scott 1998). Finally, the solutions provided must be sustainable and must aim at building resilience and social, economic and political reintegration, for which validating the plurality of cultures and knowledge results key (Adger 2006, Mooney 2005).

Having in consideration that climate change is an unavoidable phenomenon, it is necessary to be aware of its potential to become a recurring fear propaganda used by those in power to alibi other motives through spontaneous, improvised programs or projects as solutions. The implementation of these alone could be abusive and bring detrimental consequences; and in a context of poor state capacities, it results even more alarming.

Without having functional and reliable mechanisms to hold the bureaucrats and governmental agents in charge accountable, or to sanction them for their decisions, those in power can do and undo as they please (Lindberg 2013). Latin America, for example, is one of the regions that climate change will hit the hardest, and where weak statehood is also common. Therefore, any climate change adaptation or risk reduction measures with an overemphasis in security should be carefully evaluated. An unpredictable and untrustworthy government is susceptible to losing its legitimacy and may start navigating towards government collapse.

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