„Etnografia Polska", t. LXIV, 2020, z. 1–2
PL ISSN 0071-1861
DOI: 10.23858/EP64.2020.008

ALEKSANDRA WIERUCKA
Institute of Cultural Research, University of Gdańsk, Gdańsk
TOMASZ LIDZBARSKI
Institute of Cultural Research, University of Gdańsk, Gdańsk

BETWEEN OIL AND TOURISM – HUAORANI YOUTH'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

Ecuadorian reality places many limitations on young people living in rural areas: poverty, lack of access to higher education, development of the oil industry on local lands, corruption, and social inequity create harsh living conditions. Indigenous people experience these limitations to an even greater extent. Being young in the 21st century means not only pursuing education and planning for the future, but also following global trends, using the latest technological inventions, and being in contact with people from around the world. Due to hindered access to a majority of these activities, young people in rural areas have to plan their futures in accordance with the possibilities they are offered in life. Indigenous people find themselves in an even more complex situation as their life is always torn between tradition and modernity; between their parents' wisdom and the knowledge they gather from school and the media. Lately, a term appeared in relation to youth migration – namely, 'mobility imperative', which describes a process that encourages or mandates mobility (Farrugia 2015, p. 1). Young people experience this imperative in the urbanized world where the inequities between rural and urban contexts are growing. Mobility is mostly associated with a dependency on urban capital in order to survive (Farrugia 2015, p. 4), which relates to easier access to paid jobs and to greater everyday opportunities. Alternatively, Davis suggests that Indigenous groups may retain their traditional lifestyles and at the same time engage with the outside world (Davis et al. 2016, p. 13).

In this paper we would like to explore the occupational prospects and plans for the future of young Huaorani living in one of the most remote settlements in Ecuador. The main aim of the project was to assess whether young people there were planning to move to nearby cities, what their education and work possibilities were, as well as what occupational plans and dreams they had. The outcome of our research can be placed adjacent to Davis' findings rather than to Farrugia's (2015) as it indicates the youth's inclination to lead traditional lives and stay in their settlement despite (or maybe because of) its remoteness.

To explain the intricacies of Huaorani everyday life, we begin by describing the cultural background. We then move on to present the methodology of the research

conducted. The next parts of the paper deal with occupational prospects that are available to the young in the community and present data gathered during fieldwork done in 2017 and 2018. The paper concludes with a discussion providing insights into occupational practices and plans for the future of Amazonian youth.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Full contact between the Huaorani and the Ecuadorian state occurred relatively late (1958) and introduced numerous changes in Huaorani everyday life. Initial ontact was made by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). In contrast to the Salesians, who worked with other Indigenous groups in Ecuador and who emphasized the value of Indigenous traditions and wanted to incorporate them in the new national education system, the SIL's Protestant missionaries openly rejected and banned these traditions (including shamanism, polygyny, ceremonies, and war traditions – Taylor 1981, p. 663).

Due to the missionaries' work, different Huaorani groups were transferred to a single, shared area – and this resulted in conflicts, the spread of diseases, and food shortages (Yost 1981a, p. 682) that influenced demographics. Social structure was also affected as the missionaries recommended a nuclear family model that was extraneous to the Huaorani – thus, instead of leading one household per extended family, people had to learn to divide their kin into small clusters that were new to them. Traditionally, polygamy was quite popular, however, under the missionaries' rule, these practices had to be abandoned (Yost 1981a, p. 691). New knowledge regarding almost every aspect of life was introduced, including diet, dress, tools, as well as politics and worldviews (Yost 1981a, p. 695).

The group's spirituality traditionally manifested itself in shamanistic practices. Shamans worked with forest spirits in order to help their community. They cured diseases, foretold the future, explained dreams, and indicated the best hunting spots. Shamanistic practices were eradicated by the missionaries and although there still is a shaman in one settlement, the majority of Huaorani define themselves as Christian. Only in the most remote settlements do people openly admit to their shamanistic practices, regarding them as a regular part of their life.

Now over 60 years since full contact with the Ecuadorian state was made, it is difficult to assess the scale and pace of the changes that Huaorani culture has undergone. Many researchers have written about Huaorani describing their cultural practices (see: Cabodevilla 1994; High 2015; Rival 2002, 2016; Robarchek & Robarchek 1998; Yost 1981a, 1981b; Ziegler-Otero 2004) yet there are still many gaps in our knowledge.

The Huaorani's territory was granted to them in 1990. It overlaps with parts of the Yasuní National Park and covers almost 70,000 ha of tropical forest (Paymal, Sosa 1993, p. 185). It is located in the eastern part of Ecuador called the Oriente, which encompasses the Amazonian part of the country and constitutes almost one third of Ecuador. Vast areas of the Oriente are still covered with pristine tropical forest. However, the industrialization of the country has left its imprint even there – the

forest has been cut, roads built, and settlers have come to the area. The Oriente is home to ten Indigenous groups and to some extent their lives still depend on resources found in the tropical forest.

Over 2,000 Huaorani people live in several dozen settlements. They sustain themselves mostly by hunting and gathering in the forest, as well as by cultivating family gardens. Those who have paid jobs usually spend their earnings in the nearby cities on food, tools, and other necessities. There is no need for money in everyday life in a Huaorani settlement. Nevertheless, they often earn some money to be able to buy additional commodities, such as metal pots, knives, gas for cooking, gasoline for motorboats, cellular phones, etc. A small number of Huaorani live permanently in cities.

Before contact with the outside world, every extended family (called *nanicabo*) moved between a few households that were about a day's walk apart, so that every two-three years it was possible to move into a house with a garden ready to harvest. Nowadays settlements are permanent due to fixed structures such as school buildings, soccer fields, basketball courts, church buildings, and landing strips for small planes that enable transport and communication, as well as supply medical aid etc. In effect, gardens are often located further from houses than before (Amazonian soil is quite poor and it becomes much less fertile after a year or two of cultivation, so the plots need to be changed often).

Many ethnographies emphasize war practices that used to be an important part of Huaorani culture (cf. Robarchek, Robarchek 1998; Rival 2002). Battles with other Indigenous groups (as well as later with oil workers and loggers) along with war raids were a part of never-ending vendettas, avenging the death or illness of family members. Extended families used to maintain peaceful contact with several groups and were at war with others. However, the widespread view about these practices may in fact be a result of twenty or thirty years of intensified fighting that took place at the beginning of the twentieth century and was fixed as a cultural trait. As was discussed elsewhere (Wierucka 2015, p. 104) it is possible that before 1920 internal war and vendettas were not so common. Nevertheless, war activities were an important part of Huaorani life and today they are the main topic of many stories and conversations. One *nanicabo* that maintains voluntary isolation still actively undertakes attacks on other Huaorani groups as well as other people who enter their territory. The group is called Tageiri/Taromenane, and events initiated by this *nanicabo* are often discussed (among people as well as in the media) because they influence the opinion about all Huaorani in Ecuador (cf. Cabodevilla 2008). Huaorani living in close proximity to Tageiri/Taromenane territory undertake some precautions in case of encountering the people of this group, e.g., they leave their clothes behind when hunting and wear only traditional *come* around the hips in order 'to be recognized as Huaorani'. The threat of the Tageiri/Taromenane attacking has existed in the surrounding settlements for many years, however the local Huaorani present an amicable attitude towards members of the group living in voluntary isolation (Wierucka 2015, p. 123).

One of the main traits of Huaorani culture has always been the division between *huaorani* and *cohuori* – the former means 'people' (and *huao* means 'man') and the latter means 'stranger, non-human'. Many activities undertaken by Huaorani people

during and after contact were circumscribed by this division as it defined their main social concept and was the key to accepting or rejecting communication with outsiders. Huaorani refused *cohuori* access to their villages and organized attacks on oil workers and loggers' camps on their lands. The division is deeply rooted in most cultural practices and thus allowed the Huaorani to stay outside of the Ecuadorian state until the mid-20th century. Over the last decades, the strength of this social division has somewhat slackened. Many mixed marriages have been formed and more strangers live amongst the Huaorani. Nonetheless, only someone born to Huaorani parents and who speaks the Huao Terero language is considered a Huao – everybody else is called *cohuori* despite their connection or even kin relation to the community. People of different ethnicities are currently treated as strangers, however, this is not necessarily connected with hostility, as was the case in the first half of the twentieth century.

METHODOLOGY

It is important to discuss the concept of 'youth', as it refers to the specific time of life when a person is no longer a child, but not yet considered an adult. In the ethnology of the Amazon it is usually described as connected with various rites of passage (Virtanen 2012, p. 5). In the case of the Huaorani, before full contact with Western culture was made, the end of childhood was marked by a ceremonial ear piercing when the child was 8–10 years old. The mother or father would make a little hole in the earlobe using a sharpened *chonta* palm (*Bactris gasipaes*) splinter. A small balsa (*Ochroma pyramidale*) stick would be placed in the hole to stretch it over time. The earlobe once stretched to a specific size symbolized readiness for marriage (Wierucka 2015, p. 87) and thusthe beginning of adulthood. Since Huaorani children learned to hunt or do household chores from an early age, the years following the ear piercing were devoted to mastering the art. This way, by the time the earlobe was stretched to the appropriate size (around 3–5 centimeters in diameter), the person would be able to support their future family. Young men usually married at about 20 years of age, young women earlier, in their late teens. Therefore, the period that can be counted as 'youth' lasted about eight to ten years. The transition to adulthood should also be perceived through the development of personhood. In a majority of Amazonian cultures, including Huaorani, people construct their identity through a complicated web of relations with other people, expressed by caring for them, generosity, and sharing (Virtanen 2012, p. 13). Relations with non-human beings also play an important part in gaining identity and maturing (Virtanen 2012, p. 37). Until sixty years ago young Huaorani established these relations during treks in the forest, shamanic practices, or dreams. Some of these practices are maintained to this day in some communities. In the case of the *nanicabo*in which our research was carried out, young people still practice treks to the forest and also have contact with their local shaman.

The study site is inhabited by about 80 people, with 17 people that can be considered youth (interlocutors were 15 to 25 years old). Everyone in this age group gave their consent to participate in research and was interviewed during fieldwork in May

and June 2017 and January 2018. Among the interviewed individuals, 7 were female and 10 were male. The age range that is considered 'youth' has recently increased. This is due to changes introduced over the years by missionaries, national officials, and others. Creating schools altered the patterns of learning, becoming an adult, and readiness for marriage. Huaorani no longer pierce earlobes and the stretched hole signifying readiness for marriage no longer has symbolic meaning. People tend to get married when they are older, however, among our interlocutors 7 people were married (and usually had children). Nevertheless almost all of the interviewed people were still attending school, so they were still preparing for their adult life (despite the fact they were already married).

Our fieldwork was facilitated by pre-established relationships with the group which were the result of our previous visits to the site. We had previously met some of the young people and could therefore begin interviewing them soon after our arrival. They then introduced us to others we could work with. The youth were eager to help with our research and willingly shared their experiences.

Some of the interviews were rendered during an annual celebration marking the establishment of a different settlement and some were conducted at the settlement where the interviewees live. All young Huaorani speak Huao Terero as well as Spanish because it is taught in schools. Semi-structured interviews in Spanish were used as the primary means of data collection, so that the responses could be compared with one another. However, the interviews often covered other topics, such as various aspects of life in the settlement. Notes from the interviews were transferred onto prepared forms as the very first stage of analysis in order to find possible gaps in our knowledge. The data was then analyzed and interpreted.

Non-structured interviews were also conducted with some of the parents of the studied youth, as well as with leaders and local school teachers in order to obtain a wider context for the life of youth in the settlement.

We carried out participant observation by sharing everyday life with our interlocutors – work, meals, fishing and hunting expeditions. We witnessed their use of knowledge about the forest and were also able to observe their interactions with tourists when they were in the area. During that time we were able to gather information about their approach towards strangers and tourism and the logistics of young people's local work. We spent time with youth who shared their experiences and we listened to their plans and dreams. With time, the increasing amount of collected data could be analysed to look for emerging patterns relevant to occupational plans and opportunities of the Huaorani youth living in the settlement.

The settlement is located along the Cononaco river. The reasons for choosing it for research were fourfold. First, the distance to the nearest city is quite significant (two days by motorboat), which makes moving there more difficult than for inhabitants of settlements located closer to urbanized areas. Therefore, the number of community members is quite stable as people do not move very often to other places. Second, the community is based on blood ties, so people are closely related and family matters are of high importance. Furthermore, the settlement has its own school (primary and high school), so youth is not required to move to other places for education as often

is the case in other settlements. Finally, this settlement is considered by Ecuadorians as well as Huaorani themselves to be more retentive of cultural practices than are others. Shamanistic practices might be a good example of this: people of this *nanicabo* consult a shaman living in the settlement for various purposes. The settlement is located in the forest and further away from the oil industry facilities. It is known for keeping to itself – e.g., this *nanicabo* ran away from the new settlement where all of the *nanicaboiri*[1] were relocated in the 1960s. Members of this family returned to their remote territory and have stayed here ever since. In effect, over the past decades, changes were introduced to the community less frequently and at a slower pace.

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF INCOME

Huaorani living in other settlements or in the city work in various paid jobs, e.g., as nurses, secretaries, mechanics, health promoters (a job paid by the government; health promoters serve as local nurses), and teachers. However, most of them are employed in the oil industry or tourism. Over the last few decades, the former has been one of the main sources of income for Huaorani people. The oil industry has been operating in Ecuadorian Amazon since the 1960s, but the peak of income from oil extraction for Ecuador came in 1980, during the war in Iraq, when oil was supplied by South America. However, this substantial economic growth based on oil was interrupted here by a drop in oil prices and additionally by the earthquake which damaged the pipeline, causing it to shut down for over six months. As a result, the 80s and 90s were marked by economic crisis, currency devaluation, and strikes due to an increase in taxes. The situation was even more complex as globalization brought new technologies and an awareness of social inequalities.

Since the 1990s the devastation of tropical forest caused by the oil industry has become an object of increased public scrutiny. This can be attributed, among other factors, to the publication of Judith Kimerling's book *Amazon Crude* (1991), which revealed Texaco's devastating impact on the environment. The lawsuit against Texaco was finalized in 2011, when Chevron Texaco was sentenced to pay nine billion dollars to Ecuadorian communities affected by the pollution their activities had caused (Romero & Krauss 2011). Chevron Texaco did not acknowledge this verdict and is trying to annul it to this day (Chevron 2018).

Michael Cepek stresses that oil extraction involves not only physical infrastructure, but also social invasion (Cepek 2018, p. 236), which is especially true for Indigenous communities. Many workers, government officials, and even the military enter the lands where oil is extracted and they interfere with the everyday cultural practices of local people.

Oil extraction in Ecuador continues despite all the environmental and social issues associated with it, such as pollution, deforestation, and the violation of Indigenous

[1] *Nanicaboiri* is the plural form of the word *nanicabo*.

rights. In 1990 the Ecuadorian government lifted a ban on oil extraction in Yasuní National Park, which is also home to several Huaorani groups. Despite the pressure of locals, the Indigenous people, as well as of numerous international activists, this decision was ultimately upheld in 2013 (Puig 2013). In the meantime the government prepared a program to sell rights to oil blocks and to extract oil (Garcia 2012).

Because the Ecuadorian constitution gives Indigenous people the right to refuse consent for any kind of external activity on their lands (Ecuadorian Constitution, Chapter 4), in the past, oil companies tricked many local groups into giving consent for drilling (by either offering attractive and often useless gifts or by intimidation). On the other hand, over the years oil companies offered jobs to local people. They were poorly paid and basic ones, but often provided the only source of money for workers. As a result, many Indigenous people worked for the oil industry in order to be able to buy commodities in city stores.

Nowadays, some companies still hire local people, though the main purpose is not to obtain cheap labor, but to be able to label their company 'pro-Indigenous'. An interesting example is the company that received consent to build a drilling shaft right next to one of the Huaorani settlements. In exchange for consent, the settlement got a concrete house for every family as well as employment in the company. Huaorani usually work as guards for the building site. It is not our intention to criticize the agreement between local leaders and the oil company, as we are sure everybody acted with their own best interest in mind. However, it is possible that another arrangement may have served the community better, such as one related to education, health, or youth well-being. One of our informants mentioned that this community is divided and the decisions were not unanimous: thus, not all inhabitants might be content with this solution.

The other source of income for Indigenous people (including Huaorani) comes from the second biggest industry in Ecuador, namely, tourism. Tourism was not of significance in the past, but it has been steadily growing in the last few decades – indeed, recently it has become one of the most important elements of the Ecuadorian economy. Oil and tourism are interwoven in Yasuní, the biggest national park in the country and also a Biosphere Reserve called the biodiversity hotspot of the world. Thus, it draws in a growing number of tourists every year. Yasuní contains several different habitats, including inundated forests and alluvial plains. Several rivers flow through the Park: Yasuní, Tiputini, Cononaco, Nashiño, and Curaray. Inhabiting the Park are over 2,000 species of trees (more than in the United States and Canada combined), 100,000 species of insects per hectare (Swing 2012), almost 600 documented species of birds, 300 species of reptiles and amphibians, and almost 200 species of mammals (Bass et al., 2010, p. 6). Tourists mostly come to experience this unspoiled nature. Wildlife tours, where tourists can see wild animals, old trees, and rivers and lakes in the forest are a main attraction. However, there might soon be fewer and fewer areas where such tours are possible, as oil extraction in the Park encompasses more areas every year. Even if the 2018 referendum clearly shows that Ecuadorians want to reduce the number of oil extraction sites in Yasuní National

Park (Mongabay 2018a), this does not necessarily mean that the changes will be introduced in a reasonable timeframe.

The Huaorani people have an advantage when it comes to tourist services, namely, their vast knowledge of the forest and its ecology (Rival 2016, p. 86), which makes them superior local guides. Tourists quickly find out that they can experience much more by having an Indigenous guide with them. Of course, this is also true in the case of other Indigenous guides – Quichua, Shuar, or Siekopa'ai – however, the Huaorani still to a greater extent live in the forest and their knowledge is obtained through intergenerational transfer.

In some settlements the Huaorani offer stays in 'jungle lodges' that are a popular choice among tourists who want some luxury and good service while being in the forest – there usually are comfortable cabins with electricity, a food service, and a bar. Attractions include kayaking, bird watching, fishing, cultural activities, etc. The majority of tourists looking for an adventure choose to stay in these facilities. This is quite a luxurious experience of the tropical forest, as lodges provide visitors with all the comforts of a regular hotel. The Huaorani, as well as other Indigenous groups of the Amazon, quickly took advantage of the demand for them Some Huaorani work as guides and advertise their services directly to tourists in the near-by city without a mediating agency. Ecuadorian law prohibits visitors to wander into protected areas without a licensed guide (*Reglamento Especial de Turismo en Áreas Naturales Protegidas – Special Regulation of Tourism in Natural Protected Areas*, 2002), everyone needs to hire a guide who possesses the appropriate permit. Many Huaorani guides have obtained the required certificates to continue working and sharing their knowledge of the forest with newcomers. Many other Huaorani people are employed in the tourism industry as cooks, boat drivers, and maids.

JOB PREFERENCES OF LOCAL YOUTH

The settlement is located quite deep in the forest and its location influences the opportunities that young people have to undertake paid jobs once they need money. Searching for jobs in the city or in other areas demands long travel. However, young people do not want to leave the *nanicabo* for extended periods of time due to family ties. In the area, the oil and tourism industry are the main sources of income.

Local Huaorani have been opposed to oil extraction in the area since its beginning and have been trying to remove the intruders. In the 1950s and 1960s they fought with their spears, attacking oil camps and taking no captives (Wierucka 2015, p. 168). Over the years, the means of contesting the oil industry had to change. Nowadays, Huaorani usually rely on legal measures to demand protection of their constitutional rights (NRDC 2018; see also Mongabay 2019 about Huaorani winning a lawsuit against the Ecuadorian government).

The oil companies operating in the Yasuní National Park are moving their activities closer to the studied settlement. Petroamazonas, a division of Petroecuador,

has recently started extracting oil 15 miles from the *nanicabo* and there are plans to drill a total of 97 wells in the Yasuní area (NRDC 2018). On the one hand, this gives some Huaorani an opportunity to obtain paid jobs relatively close to home, yet on the other they do not want to cooperate with the oil companies. As they say, 'tourism is better than oil'.

The services offered to tourists allow the guests totemporarily become part of the community.The main idea is to draw the tourists directly to the settlement so they can experience at least some of the local practices but at the same time not interfere with the families too much, as they are housed in a separate building – a system that has been applied by Amazonian Indians for some time now (cf. Hutchins 2007; Stocker 2007, p. 20). The old church building earlier used for the purpose of accommodating tourists was replaced with a large house with a porch and thatched roof alongside the river. The Huaorani we interviewed stressed that the reason for the new building was that tourists 'staying longer than three or four days start to annoy local inhabitants'. Nobody in the settlement was ready to invite strangers under their family's roof when the previous building for tourists deteriorated.

For over ten years, around 40 tourists per year led by guides from this *nanicabo* find their way to the settlement. Tourists are usually recruited by the guides themselves at the city port and are offered the experience of living with Indigenous people of the region. The initiative also reaches potential guests on the Internet: a website created for this purpose provides information about the available attractions, encourages tourists to contact the organizers, and promises to tailor the trip to the needs of the visitors. Additionally, some visitors make their way to the settlement through tours offered by other agencies – around 60 people per year. Thus the total number of tourists amounts to around 100 per year.

Jobs available to the Huaorani within the tourism industry include working as a guide, cook, boat driver, or a porter. Some youth profit from these opportunities. In accordance with the Ecuadorian law mentioned above, some of the young people in the settlement obtained proper certificates allowing them to become legal tour guides in the Yasuní National Park, which adjoins the settlement. Presenting knowledge about the local forest is an important part of tourism services. As argued elsewhere (Wierucka 2018), the ecology of the local forest is a significant part of this knowledge: knowing how and where specific plants grow brings knowledge of the occurrence of animals that feed on these plants (Rival 2014, p. 227). Hunting, something often included in the tours, is always rooted in an understanding of the forest. Huaorani knowledge about plants differs from that of Westerners: every part of the plant is named differently, and the names depend on the state of its maturity. Furthermore, the plant never exists in this system on its own, it is interwoven into the ecological web of all other organisms linked to it – plants, insects, birds, and other animals (Davis 1996, p. 276–77). It is not considered a representation of a species, rather, as Rival argues, 'it is treated as an individual member of a class belonging to a specific environment and as a specific living organism undergoing a continuous process of change' (Rival 2016, p. 86).

The Huaorani knowledge of the forest is also based on understanding it as a heritage left for the living by previous generations. Thus, knowledge of the forest is not only important for livelihood, but also for linking society to the story of their ancestors (Rival 2009, p. 56). As a result, as Rival puts it, trekking in the forest constitutes the Huaorani way of reproducing society across generations (Rival 2009, p. 56). From this stems the quality of the tourist services of Huaorani guides. During tours, apart from knowledge about the forest, other aspects of day-to-day life are often shared as well – 'we talk about medicinal plants, trees, the process of making *curare* and other cultural elements'. Other cultural practices that are being commodified are traditional dancing and singing. Young tour guides arrange "performances" by older Huaorani for visitors (young people do not take an active part in dance presentations).

Nevertheless, to some extent everybody in the *nanicabo* profits from tourism – some sell handicrafts (either directly to visitors in the settlement or in a store in the city), some work with tourists, while others provide services not necessarily noticed by guests, such as taking care of the facilities, checking supplies etc. Shared income (for the whole community) is also obtained through fees paid by external travel agencies that bring their own tourists to the settlement.

During our research it became clear that a majority of the settlement's inhabitants are involved in tourism and earn money from it. For some it may be an occasional (e.g. once or twice a year) handicraft sale, and for others – as mentioned before – stable and long-term work as guides. What is interesting is that the Huaorani define this as a 'job' which indicates financial gratification. Living in the village does not require having any money, so when asked about 'work' young people point to types of external work connected with remuneration. Data from our structured interviews for these activities includes tourism (any form), steering motorboats orcanoes, carrying wood, and airstrip maintenance. Additionally, a majority of youth still attend the local school. Many of the people interviewed reported multiple types of employment.

Involvement with tourism also sheds some light on the changes in the cultural division into *huaorani* and *cohuori*. The division still stands, although nowadays it does not prohibit accepting tourists in the settlement for short periods of time. The income that tourism generates benefits the whole *nanicaboiri* and thus it is accepted and results in a positive attitude towards visitors.

There are other benefits from providing tourist services in the settlement. As observed by one interviewee: 'it restrains many young people from migrating, because we can earn money here. So tourism generates income and keeps people here'.

It can be argued that the oil industry no longer appeals to young people in this specific settlement. Their parents performed various services for oil companies, but in our research only one young person indicated that they used to work as a seismic company assistant in the past[2]. Tourism appears to offer more possibilities. Addition-

[2] Seismic companies precede oil companies in the search for oil – seismic trails are vehicle paths cut into the forest to enable the use of heavy machinery that uses sound waves to accurately locate oil reserves in the ground.

ally, many of our interlocutors emphasized that tourism does not take them away from home – they can earn money without being separated from their families.

Money was introduced into Huaorani life according to the local system of the circulation of goods within the *nanicabo*. In the Huaorani culture, sharing food within a *nanicabo* is an important element of everyday life and certain unspoken rules are associated with it. Sharing is not reciprocal, as giving and receiving are not contingent (Rival 2002, p. 104): it is not based on obligation, but rather on free will and choice. The same rules apply to money.

Money is not necessary in the settlement – food is abundant in the forest and in the gardens (or even in the river if all else fails). Money can be used in the city, mostly for additional goods that are not necessary for everyday life and are perceived as luxurious commodities. Almost everyone who was interviewed mentioned sharing their income with other family members (one person indicated a sick person outside of their family and one chose to use their earned money just for personal needs).

Many of our interlocutors started the aforementioned work at quite an early age – some were 15–16 years old at the time, but some were as young as 3 years old. This indicates that introducing new ways of education after the full contact did not necessarily eradicate the traditional ways of upbringing. Similar to other Indigenous groups, Huaorani used to educate their children by example and through the children's natural curiosity. Young people were not pressured to obtain particular knowledge in a specific timeframe – they would simply follow their parents and learn through observation and at will. Children used to take an active part in completing household chores at an early age and in the process they became valued members of their community. The new system of education introduced by missionaries involved imposing a new religion and new cultural values, as traditional ones were perceived by the educators as an obstacle to proper knowledge acquisition (Rival 2000, p. 112). Schooling as a system where children gain abstract knowledge (often not connected with everyday life) was an enigmatic concept for the Huaorani. Its introduction affected many aspects of life, as teachers were also supposed to familiarize local people with new ways of maintaining food production as well as hygiene (Rival 2002, p. 163) or work. In effect, children turned out to be a non-productive part of community (they stayed at school for at least half of the day) and became fully dependent on their parents (Rival 1996, p. 358), which was in contradiction to the Huaorani view of the value of an individual in the group. Huaorani are highly independent people and children are perceived as valued members of community that are able to increase its well-being.

Formal schooling influenced the perception of the forest as well. Traditionally it was understood as part of life – it was the source of spirituality, a resource for satisfying both everyday needs and simple pleasures (e.g., Rival states that Huaorani like to trek the forest for the pure pleasure of it, as well as for all the practical aspects such as finding food; Rival 2002, p. 68). Missionaries viewed the forest as a domain of 'wildness' that needed to be removed from Huaorani lives (Rival 2000, p. 111). Therefore vast areas adjoining the settlements were deforested in order to 'civilize' the Indians.

Fortunately, and despite the missionaries efforts, traditional forest knowledge endured and can be successfully used by local tourist guides nowadays. All of the young people from the settlement under study possess traditional knowledge about the forest, and this is also true for other settlements – the youth are proud of their skills as hunters and trekkers. Tourism may be an additional reason to cultivate this knowledge and to transfer it to the next generation. Similarly, the traditional upbringing where children learned through observation and undertook work at their own will in order to become full members of their community is still practiced to some extent. Some of this work is paid because it is related to tourism services, but some is connected with helping parents with their tasks and the skills are learned through observation. Also, sharing income with the family proves that the traditional model of contributing to the wellbeing of the community is still highly valued.

The settlement offers education in primary and secondary schools, which allows youth to stay in the settlement (young people from other settlements often have to move to bigger ones to be able to attend high school). A majority of our interviewees are still students andthey realize the importance of education for their future life. Nevertheless their plans are mostly linked to staying in the settlement. A few of them intend to continue working in tourism services, some plan for a future occupation associated with extended education (studying to be an airplane pilot, a teacher, or a musician). Two people find their life's dream in being able to educate their children, one wants to work for the oil company, and two do not have any specific 'dream job' in mind. Some of them plan to lead *durani bai* life: live as their grandparents and parents, relying on the forest. As one of our interlocutors put it, 'follow the grandfather's footsteps, to live as Huaorani'. In practice this means living in the forest settlement, sustaining themselves by gardening, foraging, and hunting and having a close relation with the forest. A majority of youth in the settlement already live this way even if they also have paid jobs. Those who plan to find jobs that require formal education also prefer to be back in the settlement and work and live there. The closeness of family members, the presence of the forest, and the possibility to live in a quieter environment are the main reasons for the decisions to come back.

The diversity of these answers indicate that youth in remote settlements have knowledge of the different employment opportunities that exist and know that there are possibilities to make them a reality. Many young people from the settlement travel to the cities in the area – they participate in the same activities as their peers living there: they are active on the Internet (especially social media), use their mobile phones, like to meet with friends and drink as well as buy fashionable clothes or recent technological innovations. The frequency of travel spans from once a month to 2–3 times per year, hence they are not very frequent. From time to time they undertake short-term jobs in the city, however, even then their stays last no longer than one week.

The data indicate that almost all interviewed persons see their future in the settlement and do not want to move to the city. Only two young girls stated that they would prefer to live in the city and one did not have an opinion in this matter. A majority

perceive the city as too noisy and too hard to live in due to the need for money. Other reasons are the danger,theft and the bad habits of city people: 'city is not good for the Huaorani – they learn bad things and when they are back, they share them with the community'. By contrast, the settlement was usually described as quiet and easier to live in due to the abundance of food, proximity of the forest, presence of family and friends as well as a slower pace of everyday life. Similar advantages of life in the settlement were indicated by youth from other *nanicaboiri* that were living in the city. Therefore, it may be interpreted as a common notion among young Huaorani.

Our observations indicate that even though the youth from this remote settlement do have the opportunity to leave, they choose to stay because they value their life in the community. Furthermore, they would also like their children to live in the settlement and not move to the city (it needs to be stressed that a few of the interlocutors were quite young and did not plan to have children in the near future and therefore did not reflect on this problem). This of course is their wish as parents (or future parents) and it may be verified by their children's future plans. However at this moment the youth wish to remain in the settlement with their descendants.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A growing body of literature suggests that employment opportunities can be a strong migration factor for Indigenous people, particularly youth (Farrugia 2015; McSweeney, Jokisch 2007). Young people leave their settlements in search of better occupational opportunities and future prospects. Research conducted in May-June 2017 and January 2018 proves that Huaorani youth in the settlement under study have life plans connected with their settlement and do not want to leave. Thus our findings are in accordance with those of Davies et al. (2016) as well as others (cf. Bremner 2013) and in part confirm their results obtained through surveys and statistical methods. Our qualitative data from one settlement proves that Indigenous youth do not necessarily desire extensive life changes and may be satisfied with life that includes traditional livelihood.

Our interlocutors stressed that they prefer to stay in the settlement despite inconveniences such as distance to the nearby city, presence of venomous snakes, and problems with technological communication. The latter issue was recently resolved as wireless Internet was installed. It operates only for a couple of hours every day, nonetheless, it allows young people to be active on social media or to check the latest news. Young people use modern technology to a greater extent than their parents, and thus their presence in the settlement is quite vital for tourism logistics, the spread of information, and communication with family members living further away. According to our interviewees, living in the settlement definitely presents more advantages: the abundance of food, closeness of the forest (that is still important for the well-being of the settlement's inhabitants), the presence of family and friends, and reasonable prospects for the future. Young people from one of the most remote settlements in

Ecuador do not need to search for better opportunities elsewhere, they are content with the options they already have within their *nanicabo*.

According to one of the adults living in the settlement, 'Huaorani maintain a vision of life where tourism as well as the oil industry are a part of the world, although tourism serves the Huaorani communities much better than oil extraction'. Thus, in being torn between the demands of the modern world, the Huaorani choose tourism – they would like it to flourish because then they are able to disseminate knowledge about their culture as well as sustain some cultural practices and facilitate their intergenerational transmission.

Our findings may not be valid for residents of other settlements, where the situation of youth may differ from what we have encountered. People living in settlements located closer to bigger cities or to oil camps might interpret their options differently and their plans for the future may be connected with other values or prospects. Nonetheless, the youth in one of the most remote settlements of Ecuador is content due to tourist activity, modern technological advances that are available to them, and the closeness of family and friends.

As Virtanen argued, 'Indigenous youth's passage to adulthood is not guided by different actors as much as in the past' (2012, p. 15) – young people take an active role in this transition and find their own way through the complicated web of modern demands, requirements, and needs – and although they are burdened by everyday and long-term predicaments, they are still able to maintain traditional knowledge and apply it in novel contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude towards the Huaorani in the community we studied for sharing their experiences.

This research has received funding from the National Science Center, Poland (DEC-2017/01/X/HS2/00741).

LITERATURE

Bass Margot, Finer Matt, Jenkins Clinton, Kreft Holger, Cisneros-Heredia Diego, McCracken Shawn F., Pitman Nigel C.A., English Peter, Swing Kelly, Villa Gorky, Di Fiore Anthony, Voigt Christian C., Kunz Thomas H. 2010, Global Conservation Significance of Ecuador's Yasuni National Park, *PLOS ONE*, Vol. 5, no. 1, https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0008767.

Bremner Jasen Lee 2013, *Population Mobility and Livelihood Diversification among Indigenous Peoples of the Ecuadorian Amazon* (A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, DOI 10.17615/m3fw-e817.

Cabodevilla Miquel 1994, *Los Huaorani, En la historia de los pueblos del Oriente*, Cicame, Quito.

Cepek Michael 2018, *Life in Oil. Cofan Survival in the Petroleum*, University of Texas Press, Austin.

Davis Wade 1996, *One River. Explorations and Discoveries in the Amazon Rain Forest*, Simon and Shuster, New York.

Davis Jason, Sellers Samuel, Gray Clark, Bilsborrow Richard 2016, Indigenous Migration Dynamics in the Ecuadorian Amazon: A Longitudinal and Hierarchical Analy-

sis, *The Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 11, pp. 1849–1864, DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2016.1262028.
Farrugia David 2015, The Mobility imperative for Rural Youth: The Structural, Symbolic and Non-representational Dimensions Rural Youth Mobilities, *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 19. No. 6, pp. 836–851, DOI: 10.1080/13676261.2015.1112886.
Garcia Eduardo 2012, *Ecuador to Launch Oil Block Auction Amid Protest*, Reuters 28.11.2012, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/28/ecuador-oil-auction-idUSL1E8MR3I120121128 (accessed 02.03.2018).
Gerlach Allen 2003, *Indians, Oil and Politics. A Recent History of Ecuador*, Scholarly Resources, Wilmington.
High Casey 2015, Victims and Warriors: Violence, History and Memory in Amazonia, University of Illinois Press, Urbana.
Hutchins Frank 2007, Footprints in the Forest: Ecotourism and Altered Meanings in Ecuador's Upper Amazon, *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 75–103.
Kimerling Judith 1991, *Amazon Crude*, Natural Resources Defense Council, Washington.
McSweeney Kendra, Jokisch Brad 2007, Beyond Rainforest: Urbanization and Emigration among Lowland Indigenous Societies in Latin America, *Bulletin of Latin American Research* Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 159–180.
Paymal Noemi, Sosa Catalina (ed.) 1993, *Amazon Worlds. People and Cultures of Ecuador's Amazon Region*, Sinchi Sacha, Quito.
Puig Juan Falconi 2012, The World Failed Ecuador on its Yasuní initiative, *The Guardian*, 19.09.2013.
Rival Laura 1996, *Hijos del Sol, padres del jaguar. Los Huaorani de ayer y hoy*, Abya Yala, Quito.
Rival Laura 2000, Formal Schooling and the Production of Modern Citizens in the Ecuadorian Amazon, [in:] *Schooling the Symbolic Animal. Social and Cultural Dimensions of Education*, B.A.U. Levinson et al. (eds.), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, London–New York.
Rival Laura 2002, *Trekking Through History. The Huaorani of Ecuadorian Amazon*, Columbia University Press, New York.
Rival Laura 2014, Encountering Nature through Fieldwork: Expert Knowledge, Modes of Reasoning, and Local Creativity, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*,Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 218–236.
Rival Laura 2016, *Huaorani Transformations in Twenty-first-century Ecuador. Treks in to the Future of Time*, The University of Arizona Press, Tucson.
Robarchek Clayton, Robarchek Carole 1998, *Waorani: the Contexts of Violence and War*, Harcourt Brace College Publishers, Philadelphia.
Romero Simon, Krauss Clifford 2011, Ecuador's Judge Orders Chevron to Pay $9 Billion, *New York Times*, 14.02.2011.
Stocker Karen 2007, Identity as Work: Changing Job Opportunities and Indigenous Identity in the Transition to a Tourist Economy, *Anthropology of Work Review*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 18–22.
Swing Kelly 2012, *Science in Yasuni Sheds Light on Impacts of Oil Development in Amazon*, National Geographic Society webpage, https://blog.nationalgeographic.org-/2012/12/26/science-in-yasuni-sheds-light-on-impacts-of-oil-development-in-amazon/ (accessed 03.07.2018).
Taylor Ann-Christi 1981, God-Wealth: the Achuar and the Missions, [w:] *Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador*, N. Whitten (ed.), University of Illinois Press Urbana.
Wierucka Aleksandra 2015, *Huaorani of the Western Snippet*, Palgrave, New York.
Wierucka Aleksandra 2018, Living with Strangers: Huaorani and Tourism Industry in XXI Century, *Anthropological Notebooks*, No. 24 (1), pp. 97–110.
Virtanen Pirjo Kristiina 2012, *Indigenous Youth in Brazilian Amazonia*, Palgrave, New York.
Yost James 1981a, Twenty Years of Contact: the Mechanisms of Change in Wao 'Auca' Culture, [in:] *Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador*, N.E. Whitten (ed.), University of Illinois Press, Urbana.

Yost James 1981b, People of the Forest, [in:] *Ecuador in the Shadow of the Volcanoes*, P. Gordon-Warren, S. Curl (eds.), Libri Mundi, Quito.

Ziegler-Otero Laurence 2004, *Resistance in an Amazonian Community. Huaorani Organizing against the Global Economy*, Berghahn Books, New York.

Internet sources

Constitutión de la República del Ecuador 2008, http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/es/ec/ec030es.pdf (accessed 25.07.2018).

Chevron 2018, https://www.chevron.com/ecuador/ (accessed 3.07.2018).

Mongabay 2018, https://news.mongabay.com/2018/03/indigenous-women-march-in-ecuador-vow-to-defend-our-territory (accessed 30.06.2018).

Mongabay 2018a, https://news.mongabay.com/2018/02/ecuador-votes-to-reduce-oil-exploitation-in-yasuni-national-park (accessed 30.06.2018).

Mongabay 2019, https://news.mongabay.com/2019/05/historic-win-by-ecuadors-waorani-could-re-shape-extraction-activities/(accessed 30.08.2019).

NRDC 2018, https://www.nrdc.org/onearth/village-ecuadors-amazon-fights-life-oil-wells-move (accessed 28.06.2018).

Reglamento Especial de Turismo en Áreas Naturales Protegidas 2016, https://www.turismo.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/REGLAMENTO-ESPECIAL-DE-TURISMO-EN-%C3%81REAS-NATURALES-PROTEGIDAS.pdf (accessed 27.07.2018).

ALEKSANDRA WIERUCKA, TOMASZ LIDZBARSKI

BETWEEN OIL AND TOURISM – HUAORANI YOUTH'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Key words: Indigenous youth, mobility, occupation, livelihood prospects, Ecuador

This paper explores the occupational plans and prospects of Huaorani youth living in one of the most remote settlements in eastern Ecuador. A qualitative methodology was applied to assess how Indigenous young people negotiate their future and employment prospects. Our study demonstrates that youth living in the settlement studied do not plan to move to the city, but intend to lead a moderately traditional life while working in local tourism initiatives.

Authors' addresses:
Dr Aleksandra Wierucka
Institute of Cultural Research, University of Gdańsk
ul. Bażyńskiego 8a, 80-309 Gdańsk, Poland
E-mail: aleksandra.wierucka@ug.edu.pl
ORCID: 0000-0001-8683-4847

Tomasz Lidzbarski
Institute of Cultural Research, University of Gdańsk
ul. Bażyńskiego 8a, 80-309 Gdańsk, Poland
E-mail: tomaszlidzbarski@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-6035-5570