

**CHOOSING HOME:
QUECHUA YOUTH MIGRATION FOR EDUCATION IN OLLANTAYTAMBO, PERU**



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Continuing with my studies is very important because with my knowledge I can move forward.
~Qora

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I remember playing volleyball outside in a small yard with a group of young girls. We ran around, hitting the ball back and forth with our palms. The girls had an impressive ability to keep the ball afloat: diving in the dirt, sacrificing themselves. Comfortable with the talents of their companions, it was evident that the girls had played together before. This experience was my first interaction with the Sacred Valley Project, a small organization in Ollantaytambo, Peru, that provides structure and a safe place to stay for girls who have migrated from small communities to pursue secondary education. I was 18 years old and I was on the route to Machu Picchu, stopping in Ollantaytambo for just a night before continuing on. My guide to the Inca citadel was also the founder of this project, and hanging around with the youth and staff was his way of filling the afternoon. As the girls and I bumped the ball back and forth, we communicated with laughter and eye contact but made no attempt at verbal conversation. Gestures were the preferred medium of interaction since those of us playing volleyball, both teens from the United States and the Quechua girls living at the Sacred Valley Project's dormitory, seemed to have found solace in our shared discomfort with the Spanish language.

That same afternoon, participating in a language exchange with the girls at the Sacred Valley Project, I learned that they had all migrated from tiny villages nestled in the

mountains above Ollantaytambo where people speak Quechua, not Spanish. We shared words and laughed at each other's butchered pronunciations. Before this very minimal interaction with the Quechua language, I was unaware of its existence. In meeting these girls and thinking about the Sacred Valley Project, I became curious about their transition into secondary school. It was obvious to me that their experience was uniquely difficult. They had to live away from their families, they did not have a mastery in the language of instruction in school, and they were living in a much more urban environment than where they were raised. I started thinking about these variables. I started thinking about the sacrifice involved in migration for education and wondered how living away from home would affect the girls' relationships with their communities in the future. I began to read. A few years later I returned to Ollantaytambo to learn more.

I attribute my introduction to the Sacred Valley Project as sparking my awareness of complexities in seeking education for Quechua youth, specifically those living in the Andes Mountains near Cusco. In the highlands, communities of Quechua people lack access to the most basic public services, including quality education. Children must walk several hours to the nearest secondary school—a journey that is impossible to make daily and one that often deters youth from pursuing education beyond primary school. Because of distance, if adolescents hope to continue post-primary school, their sole option is to migrate to an urban center and live away from home, forcing them to habituate to unfamiliar settings where they are met with additional barriers such as poverty, racial discrimination and bullying. Perhaps most disorienting of all, most children from Quechua communities are

raised as monolingual Quechua speakers, yet the Peruvian education system is Spanish-language dominated.

What it means to be Quechua in Peru

Quechua was the language spoken by the Incas. It is now “both ethnic and linguistic, referring generally to the Quechua-speaking ethnic minorities of the Andes” (Hill, 2013, p. 384). Quechua communities populate the Andean mountain range and have preserved their language and culture because they are isolated in rural areas that are nearly inaccessible by any means of transportation other than by foot. While remote location has helped protect Quechua tradition, as a result of isolation, Quechua people are often very poor as they still rely on pastoral farming for their livelihood.

About 76% of those living in extreme poverty in Peru live in rural areas (Ames, 2005, p. 150). These people are referred to as *campesinos*, or peasant farmers, and are highly discriminated against by Spanish speaking *mestizos* or people of mixed Indigenous and European descent. This term, *mestizo*, is packed with layered meanings. In Peru it has taken on cultural connotations related to speaking Spanish and adopting European customs (“Mestizo”, 1998) creating a dichotomy between ‘indigenous’ and ‘mestizo’ where to be Quechua is associated with tradition, backwardness, underdevelopment and ignorance and to be mestizo is identified with progress, modernity and enlightenment (Garcia, 2005, p. 2). This dichotomy persists even though about 40 percent of Peru’s population is indigenous (Garcia, 2005, p. 5) and the Peruvian government has made many

half-hearted efforts to encourage interculturality and appreciation for Quechua language and culture.

Because of experiences of poverty generated through structural inequalities and the lasting impact of colonization and post-colonization processes, the majority Quechua children in Peru must participate in duties that contribute to their family's economic survival. This means that leaving time for school is a huge sacrifice for the entire family, considerably complicating ability to migrate from home in pursuit of an education. Rather than focus on school, Quechua children are more likely to work, repeat grades and never graduate (Damon and Hysjo, 2016), but despite Quechua youths' hindered ability to focus on schooling, education is recognized as a tool to break free from poverty and of the inferior status placed upon Quechua people by mestizos. Operating under this mentality, to overcome poverty means not just becoming educated, but also confronting all that comes with getting an education in a Spanish-speaking, mestizo dominated society, including coming face to face with the discrimination and oppression of Quechua people (Garcia, 2004; Garcia 2005). In my specific case study, the journey that youth at Sacred Valley Project make from home to school, while intended to improve their quality of life, calls the Quechua identity into question.

In this thesis I examine the struggles that youths at the Sacred Valley Project endure when they migrate to pursue a secondary education. I argue that this migration forever changes their life-trajectory. Initially it temporarily distances the girls from home but eventually they will not return. When the girls migrate, because of profound environmental and cultural differences between Ollantaytambo and the communities, they

must undergo a strenuous transition in order to adapt to their secondary school and its urban location. This transition is initially intense, so to cope with feelings of isolation and inferiority, youths must shift their personhood from shy monolingual Quechua-speaking children to bilingual young women who have gained urban proficiency. Once the girls have acquired the agency to navigate the city and exist outside of their villages, they will no longer imagine these communities as homes for the future. The girls will strive for a “professional job” that is not dependant on the meager returns of agricultural work. They will live and work in the city. They will go home only to visit, not to live.

Contextualizing Gaps in Access to Education



Figure 1.1. Two girls leaving Huilloc’s primary school (Huilloc, Peru).

“The education reform of the revolution is aimed at creating an educational system that: satisfies the necessities of the entire nation; that will reach the great masses of [indigenous] peasants, always exploited and always deliberately kept in ignorance... (Garcia, 2005, p. 65)” spoke Velasco Alvarado, President of Peru in 1972 as part of the socialist reform initiated during his military dictatorship. This reform sought to extend resources to all Peruvians, a gesture that highlights a history of exclusion and forced subordination of indigenous people: a history that is wildly visible in current discriminatory education practices reminiscent of the history of Spanish colonization of Peru.

The educational reform that Velasco Alvarado instated in the late 1900s perhaps represented the acknowledgement of a guilt complex woven into the country's dark past of castilianisation, the imposition of Spanish language learning onto the countries non-spanish speaking populations. Quechua was the official language of the Inca empire before contact with the Spanish. Then, the Spanish language was imposed as a tool of colonization and replaced Quechua as the official language (Garcia, 2010, p. 349). Despite colonizers attempts to smolder the dialect, Quechua prevailed but not in its previous glory. It survived as the language of the oppressed. Now Spanish was the language of the rulers and was able to reinforce its dominance when written language became used as a means of asserting political power (Garcia, 2010, 349).

Forcing Spanish on non-spanish speaking populations was common practice in Peruvian education practice. The initial creation of rural schools was riddled with colonial mentality since they were created specifically so Indigenous people could study, learn

Spanish and then disappear into the anonymity of the mestizo masses. This as well as other actions geared toward assimilation of indigenous people function under the greater mentality of castilianisation, aiming to meld all into one nation unified through common speech.

While educational systems attempted to disappear indigenous people into the dominant Spanish culture, landowners preferred that “Indians” remain an uneducated labor force (Garcia, 2010, p. 350). Perhaps because of mixed agendas of those in power, attempts to eradicate Quechua culture failed and a large number of Quechua speakers populate the Americas today. What was successful however was relegation of the language to an undervalued status (Garcia, 2010,p. 350), and as legacy of a secondary status, the various constitutions since 1821 up until Velasco’s presidency subordinated Quechua to Spanish as Peru’s official language (Garcia,2010 351).

When Spanish became the official language of Peru in 1821, close to 90% of the population had no Spanish mastery and instead spoke an indigenous language (Valdiviezo, 2009). In the 1900s, a movement called Indigenismo pushed back against mestizaje (racial or cultural mixing) as the principal nation building project. It was a liberal movement that focused on the uplifting of “the Indian” and was carried out by urban middle and upper-class intellectuals who began to portray romantic visions of Andean peasants in their literature and artworks (Garcia, 2010, p. 353). The pushing of an Indian focused narrative made its way into national politics and in the 1920s, channels widened to acknowledge Indigenous demands for education, land, suffrage and even allowed for the creation of the first national indigenista organization. This organization included

self-proclaimed indigenous leaders and intellectuals; people who resisted suppression of indigenous languages and cultures and called for indigenous literacy and citizenship (Garcia, 2010, p. 353)

While in its initial onslaught, the indigenista movement focused on a romanticized Andean past, in the 1940s, the movement sought to steer focus away from an idealized history and focus on the present. Proponents worked with ethnologists to understand contemporary life and circumstances of indigenous people in their communities. Indigenismo took a turn toward social science and in 1946 the Peruvian Indigenista Institute was founded and the Ministries of Education and Public Works took an interest in programs that highlighted recovery of indigenous language, art, culture and religion. Following this trend the Ministry of Education implemented bilingual education in indigenous schools (Garcia, 2010, p. 353).

Peru's history of suppression of indigenous language and culture in attempt at national unification was turned on its head during Velasco Alvarado's military dictatorship of (1968-1974) when he attempted to use indigenism to accomplish the same goal that castilianisation had previously sought to accomplish: developing a cohesive nation. The use of native languages for teaching had been prohibited since the 1780s, (Garcia, 2010, p. 354) but now, a country that once hoped for total erasure of Quechua, declared it an official language (Valdiviezo, 2009) and advocated the implementation of bilingual education in all highland, lowland and coastal areas where Spanish was not the only language spoken.

Following attempts at initial implementation of bilingual education was a period of intense unrest. The 1980s and early 1990s was a time of internal conflict and brutal

violence between the Peruvian armed forces and the Maoist guerrilla group called Sendero Luminoso. Conflict began when Sendero Luminoso initiated its armed struggle in the highlands in 1980, throwing Peru into a bloody civil war that lasted for more than a decade. The clashing of revolutionary and government forces lead to thousands of deaths and disappearances (Crivello, 2009, p. 9). The violence took the heaviest toll on indigenous highland communities who were caught between Sendero Luminoso and the Peruvian military's counterinsurgency forces.

The extent of the violence suffered by these communities was revealed by The Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2003. The Commission was contracted to examine the abuses committed during the 1980s and 1990s and after two years of investigation, the conclusion was an estimated 69,000 deaths and disappearances. Not surprisingly, the violence had most heavily impacted indigenous highland communities (Crivello, 2009, p. 9). Indigenous non-Spanish-speaking people constituted approximately 75% of the victims of Peru's Civil war, a conclusion that highlighted explicit racism in Peruvian society (Valdiviezo, 2009).

In 1992, Abimael Guzman, the head of Sendero Luminoso was finally captured. This turning point marked the smoldering of Peru's civil war and a slow transition toward democratic rule. In response to the atrocities committed against the country's indigenous people and the racism made apparent by The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, the government enacted a new constitution, designed, among other things, to 'recognise and protect the ethnic and cultural plurality of the nation' (Article 2). Here, the

state promised a commitment to intercultural and bilingual education that would be designed to fit the characteristics of each region (Article 17).

While language and education had previously been linked to national integration policies geared toward assimilation of indigenous groups, intercultural bilingual education (BIE) was designated as the post-conflict attempt to recognize and respect the cultural identity of indigenous communities. Apparently, the BIE program was not meant to be an alternative to the national curriculum, rather the curriculum had been altered for regions with Indigenous populations in order to revitalize indigenous culture and language.

It is ironic that empowerment and appreciation of indigenous people was the stated mission of BIE programs because under this policy, the indigenous speaker must learn Spanish but the monolingual Spanish speaker is under no obligation to learn an indigenous language. In fact, this program is regionally specific meaning that appreciation of indigenous culture is exclusive to those who live it. This shows that even with implementation of bilingual education, indigenesness is marginalized. Another disadvantage associated with BIE programs is that they were only established at the elementary level meaning that after sixth grade, non-Spanish speakers had to be competent enough in Spanish to move into the monolingual system that is historically the site of suppression of indigenous language and culture (see Valdiviezo, 2009).

Problems for indigenous students root even deeper. Schools in highland communities are often under-resourced and dysfunctional. They are generally staffed with teachers who have low educational qualifications and don't feel prepared to teach where they are assigned because of language and cultural differences with their students. This is

probably the result of insufficient teacher training and the fact that the schools themselves have inadequate infrastructure and lack access to appropriate educational materials and furniture (Ames, 2012). Perhaps most striking of all problems related to the BIE program is that the parents of children attending these schools *do not want* bilingual education for their children (Garcia, 2005). This fact highlights a huge discrepancy between the state's policy and the desires of those who the policy apparently attempts uplift. Garcia, raising apparent disregard for Quechua parents in a paper she published in 2010 said, "When I noted that many parents of Peruvian Quechua children also reject bilingual education in their schools, the response among those in office was unanimous: Peruvian indigenous parents just did not know any better (Garcia, 2010, p. 359)."

The pursuit of education is a prominent matter in Peru's Sacred Valley. Here, communities of monolingual Quechua speakers must make decisions regarding their children's education, decisions that have much more to do with perceived progress than with any government indigenous language revitalization project. When pursuing education, students must come head to head with a school system that discriminates against them. The youth who I interviewed who come from communities in the Sacred Valley, recounted that they almost exclusively learned Quechua in primary school. Every single girl at the Sacred Valley Project entered secondary school unprepared for monolingual teaching in her non-dominant language. Because their primary schools represent failed attempts at bilingual education, the decision to go to secondary school left the girls hanging where their primary schools left off: unprepared and unable to understand when taught in Spanish. Not only is there no continued programming to "recognise and protect the ethnic and cultural

plurality of the nation” in place in secondary schools, but there are not even secondary schools within reach of highland Quechua villages. A nation plagued by discriminatory education practice is apparently not just a thing of the past.

Field Methods

In this thesis, I hope to expand current knowledge on Quechua youth migration for education. My exploration of this topic began through analysis of research surrounding a variety of subtopics including discrimination against the Quechua people, both generally, and also in the context of the Peruvian education system and practices, the oppression of the Quechua people in Peru, and the reasoning behind the pursuit of education for Quechua children despite discrimination and despite required migration. Because of the paucity of literature on the effect of the migration on youth’s view of home, I decided to conduct my own ethnographic research specifically directed toward this topic. In this section I lay out the framework of my research and the methods employed during my one month of fieldwork. I used qualitative methods that included semi-structured interviews and visual observation. My connection to the Sacred Valley Project afforded me a unique opportunity to hear voices of youth impacted by migration from home, voices that I didn’t find highlighted often enough in existing literature.

For this study qualitative research was essential because I seek to understand the problem through the perspective of the local population in order to present culturally specific information. Additionally, the rich textual description that qualitative research provides is essential for tackling a subjective theme like “view of home.” I wanted quotes

and stories from the research participants so that I could learn about intangible factors like social norms, gender roles, anxieties, values and inter-personal relationships: things that are not easily quantified.

In January 2016, I conducted thirteen interviews with Sacred Valley Project students who lived at the dormitory as well as three members of the Sacred Valley Project's staff. My sample population consisted of only the youth and staff at the Sacred Valley Project because I had already built relationships with these people. I was specifically interested in the migration of *Quechua-speaking youth* and their transition into secondary school so the students at the dorm offered a controlled sample that specifically fit my criteria of being first-language Quechua youth under the age of eighteen who had migrated to pursue a secondary education. While the girls were the focus of my research and I wanted their words and experience to be the highlight of my writing, I also interviewed the staff at the Sacred Valley Project, people who I have known for years and consider friends. I hoped that their involvement in the Sacred Valley Project, much more entrenched than my month of immersion, would offer different insight on migration and prepare me for interviews with the girls. I therefore interviewed the staff first.

Because I was an outsider- a young white, English-speaking woman with a university education and a higher socioeconomic status than the Quechua youths- I wanted to be sensitive to how I approached the communities. I therefore initially relied heavily on staff from the Sacred Valley Project in order to gain access to the population I would be observing in as non-intrusive and comfortable of a way as possible. I spent months refining my methods in an application to the Institutional Review Board to properly solicit

information from a potentially vulnerable population. Informed consent was collected from every interviewee as well as the parents of all of the girls who were minors at the time prior to any interview.

Recruitment for my study was open to all students currently living at the Sacred Valley Project Dormitory who fulfilled the criteria of speaking Quechua and migrating to attend high school. Before I arrived every youth living at the dorm was informed of my research and invited to participate. I requested support from the Sacred Valley Project staff in coordinating my initial interviews. Gabriela, the Program Director at the project, presented my research proposal to gauge the girls' interest in participating. We decided to have her facilitate the initial introduction because she had been with the project for years and had a close relationship with the girls. For this reason, we assumed that the students would feel safe and confident telling her if they had no interest in participating. When she told the girls about my project, about half, six girls, expressed interest in being interviewed.

Gabriela told me that in the weeks leading up to the initial interviews, the girls who originally had not expressed interest in participating became envious of their peers and changed their minds, asking to get involved. My sample population was updated to include three staff members: Gabriela, the Program Director, Joseph Levitan, (I refer to Joseph by first and last name because I cite his interview as well as his writing on the Sacred Valley Project) the Co-Founder and Director of Educational Programming, and Juan, the President of the Peruvian Association of the Sacred Valley Project, all of whom had been involved in the dormitory for over five years, as well as thirteen girls under the age of eighteen who

were first language Quechua speakers and lived away from home for five days a week in order to attend secondary school in Ollantaytambo.

I chose to conduct in-depth semi-formal interviews because I felt this was the most appropriate method to answer my research questions. I wanted to hear personal histories and experiences so I created a series of open-ended questions that I paired with follow-up questions and probing. This gave participants the opportunity to share their own words and display personality rather than feeling confined to fixed responses. Also, due to my positionality, I felt uncomfortable using a survey or a formal interview. I didn't want to be an outsider who, using a survey or formal interview, would receive answers she had already anticipated. Because I suspected that the girls would give answers that I had not imagined, I allowed a large degree of flexibility in my conversations with informants.

I conducted one interview with each member of the staff and two interviews with each of the girls. The questions I asked the staff were different than those for the youth, and I did staff interviews first so I would understand the structure of life at the Sacred Valley Project before making day-trips to see the girls. In working with the youth, Gabriela suggested that I conduct very basic preliminary skype interviews with those who had volunteered so that they could see me, hear my voice, and feel somewhat familiar with me before meeting me in person or opt out of the investigation before I arrived. Gabriela stressed that many of the girls were shy so meeting them first on skype would help them feel at ease. These short, informal interviews allowed me to develop a better understanding of my topic and to create meaningful questions for more in depth conversations that I would later carry out on site.

I lived in Ollantaytambo for a month and used the city as a home-base: a launching point from which to journey to the various villages where the youths resided when not in school. These villages were not easily accessible and some were particularly difficult to reach. I had to figure out what days were market days, which roads were good enough to drive up in car or taxi, and which places could only be reached by walking or mountain biking. I visited six villages: Camicancha, Anapaua, Pomatales, Socma, Picobamba, and Huilloc. There I met the participants and conducted interviews in spaces of their choosing. I asked open-ended questions pertaining to the five themes that came out in initial skype interviews: education, migration, language, home, and identity, but gave myself flexibility by asking follow-up questions that were based on participant's initial responses in order to elicit more involved answers. The interviews ranged in length from twenty minutes to over an hour long. I tape-recorded every interview and later transcribed these tapes for analysis.

I coupled interviews with observational data. My field notes were based on ethnographic observations made in Ollantaytambo and the communities. Because migration is an integral part of this study, I found it was important to document transportation to and from the communities. Indeed I took avid scribblings, some quite illegible while bumpily riding up mountains in *combis*, or on the side of the road as I trekked back to home base. In Ollantaytambo, I also spent time observing, exploring, and taking notes. These ethnographic methods were vital to my research because I needed to understand the differences and similarities between Ollantaytambo, where the girls went to secondary school, and their home communities because I wanted figure out what factors

made the move to Ollantaytambo such a huge transition for a child coming from a more rural area.

To enhance my observational data I took pictures so that I could revisit important spaces while later doing analysis. I did not plan on incorporating participant observation into my field work but witnessing people in real life and sometimes getting involved in activities was unavoidable during my trips to communities. The mothers of the students I interviewed would almost always prepare me a huge meal before I was allowed to return to Ollantaytambo so this meant that I was often placed in unplanned situations, participating in various group or family interactions, observing dynamics.

After collecting field research, I had to go through a process of transcription, coding and interpretation. I transcribed almost fifty hours of interviews and typed up all notes I took while in the field. I then coded the transcribed text by labeling and categorizing parts of the text into patterns that I came across while re-reading. The general themes that emerged were language, education, discrimination, parental and family involvement, and migration. These became the overarching topics for which I coded.

Research Questions



Figure 1.2. Dog in Doorway (Camicancha, Peru).

Considering Peru's history of discrimination and violence toward indigenous people as well as the current lack of access to secondary education for Quechua speaking youth in rural highland areas, I sought to uncover the complexities involved in Quechua youth migration for education. While interviewing and collecting observational data, I focused on four main questions to frame my research and to unravel how this migration could impact youth's view of home. Below I present these questions and explain why they are relevant to my research.

What are differences and similarities between Ollantaytambo and the communities and how does place play into the migration?

Lack of access in highland communities triggers migration but migration is not only about living away from home. Lack of access means youth must migrate to a place that is starkly different from where they grew up. Rural to urban migration represents a huge change in the lives of adolescents at the Sacred Valley Project and is accompanied by need to assimilate and gain acceptance in a new environment. Therefore, taking a thoughtful look at the setting the girls experience at home versus at school gives meaning and insight into how their lifestyles alter when transitioning between environments. To understand contrast between Ollantaytambo and the communities is to begin to understand the suffering the girls endure when they first leave home.

What perception do youth and their families have on migration for education and why is migration pursued?

I wanted to understand why some families choose to send their children to school and some do not. While all of the girls who I interviewed mentioned that other youth from their villages travel to Ollantaytambo for school and rent rooms or stay with relatives, many others do not continue schooling after primary school. This is because allowing children to leave home and pursue secondary school constitutes a hardship on the family as it entails scraping together funds to purchase books and uniforms and subtracts a body from the family's labor pool. In interviews, the girls explained that going home for the weekend meant taking animals to the field, washing, doing laundry, cooking, caring for

siblings and assisting their mothers in household upkeep. These responsibilities are taken on by other members of the family when the girls are away at school, showing that by supporting migrations, the family is making a sacrifice. Because it is evident that youth migration for education is a burden on the entire family, education is obviously linked to some perceived benefit. I paid close attention when youth mentioned their parents' willingness to support them or their own dreams and aspirations for the future in order to comprehend why people will sacrifice to stay in school.

How does migration shape and change identity?

Because of precarious dynamics of race and discriminatory views toward indigenes in Peru (De la Cadena, 2001) I was curious about experiences of discrimination that the girls encountered upon their relocation from a community to a city. Because each of them comes from such an isolated area, I imagined that their previous interaction with mestizos, or simply people who are not Quechua, was limited. Additionally because educational institutions represent a history of discrimination toward indigenous people I was curious as to how the girls may experience aggressions or exclusion when entering a Spanish dominated secondary school. Then, because I was interested in the topic "view of home" and how it is altered by the process of migration, I needed to consider that the girls might face isolation and discrimination when leaving home and that this transitional experience may be formative.

How does migration shape 'view of home'?

Migration for education requires that the youth leave home and in doing so they are exposed to a lifestyle very different from what their previous experience. New exposures intrinsically shape the girls' lived experience and may impact their aspirations for the future. I wanted to know how contact with an urban, spanish-speaking environment influenced youth's ideas about their futures and whether or not the youth could envision themselves maintaining a connect to their communities once they have moved away. This question looks at whether the girls can still see their childhood home as future home after leaving.

CHAPTER 2

OLLANTAYTAMBO AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES



Figure 2.1. Man with flowers (Cusco, Peru).

The Sacred Valley

Lush and fertile, the agricultural fields of the Sacred Valley (El Valle Sagrado) supply the city of Cusco with much of its corn, vegetables, and fruit. The valley, also known as the Río Urubamba (Urubamba River), is home to major towns and cities like Pisac, Ollantaytambo, Calca, Yucay, and Urubamba. The steep valley, characterized by flowing rivers and gullies, sits just 15 kilometers north of Cusco. Filled with Inca monuments, the region's rich agricultural lands were once prized by the lords of Tawantinsuyu. From various vantage points in the valley one can see meadows, lakes, and even mountains

capped in white snow. The main towns in the region are connected by well-paved roads, making transport between them relatively fast. Ollantaytambo is one of these well-connected and prominent cities in the Sacred Valley, even though it only has a population of about 10,000 people.

Ollantaytambo: First Exposure to City Life



Figure 2.2. View of Ollantaytambo from above (Ollantaytambo, Peru).

Youths who stay in the Sacred Valley Project's dormitory come from the smallest communities perched in pinprick mountain peaks along the curving spine of the Andes. For these girls, their first encounter with city life is Ollantaytambo. Ollantaytambo's main attraction is the remnants of an Inca town that boast impressive stonework and an irrigation system that still functions today (Hemming & Ranney, 1990; Protzen, 1993).

Flowing waterways from nearby rivers connect to canals that line the streets of Ollantaytambo. Equidistant between Cusco and Machu Picchu, two major touristic sites, Ollantaytambo has a major train stop, making it a bustling tourist base with restaurants, hostels, and an upscale hotel. It is also a common starting point for the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, a hike for those who wish to take a four-day trek rather than a two-hour train ride.

Ollantaytambo possesses a magical character, a personality haunted by shadows of the past. Its skinny, winding cobblestone streets snake around to create a story book maze that contrasts with a main plaza filled with tourists, restaurants, unreliable internet cafes, busses, and *colectivos* (cars used for public transport). These streets are the same ones trampled by the sandals of the Inca royalty and the boots of the Spanish conquistadores. It has witnessed the retreating troops of Inca rebels moments before their disappearance into the jungles of Vilcabamba. Ollantaytambo is now a second home to the girls I interviewed. While some have previously travelled to the city to buy and sell produce or to purchase small goods, for those participating in the Sacred Valley Project this former Inca town has become their home during the week.

The Sacred Valley Project: Recreating Home

In 2009, village leaders and community members from rural villages of the Sacred Valley came up with a plan to build a structure in the town of Ollantaytambo where their daughters could live while attending high school. This idea became reality a year later with the creation of the Sacred Valley Project, which offered boarding and supplementary education to girls from poor, rural villages around Ollantaytambo. Children from these

communities must walk several hours to the nearest high school -- too great of a distance to commute daily. The Sacred Valley Project aimed to make secondary education an option for young women from these communities because they were less likely than their male counterparts to attend school. Had they chosen to pursue an education, however, they would more likely pass on knowledge to their children and families. This shows that the education of women is a powerful way to reduce the intergenerational transfer of poverty ("Our Mission", 2017).

Living in the project's dormitory, girls are provided with a safe place to stay, well-balanced meals, access to public schools, and private tutoring. The dormitory, just a short walk from the Plaza de Armas, is meticulously clean. There are shared rooms with warm blankets and individual beds for each of the girls. Outside, there is a shared bathroom and a yard where the girls play sports. When I first visited the project in 2012, there was a chef from the United States who was volunteering and preparing healthy meals for the girls. Since then, other volunteers have implemented their own projects, adding to the extra activities that the girls can participate in through their residence there.

The Communities: Rural Isolation



Figure 2.3. Feasting piglets (Camicancha, Peru).

Most of the Sacred Valley's residents live by the river, but some Quechua farmers live in the surrounding mountains (Levitan, 2015, p. 59). I first visited these outlying communities in 2016. As I was planning to travel to these villages, I asked Gabriela for the girls' phone numbers so I could alert them of my arrival. Chuckling at my ignorance, Gabriela told me that while some of the parents do have phones, there is actually no service (signal) in the communities, so I should just go and hope for the best.

Once I saw the communities I understood. While by my standards Ollantaytambo was no more than a small town, I instantly recognized it as being gargantuan in comparison to the size of the communities. Size was not the only notable difference; the communities had little or no electricity, no running water, and such small and narrow roads that would

not allow vehicle access and thus isolate residents from public services. As a result of this isolation these communities rely on traditional methods of agriculture and livestock herding for sustenance (Levitan, 2015, p. 60).

An Overpriced Sublime



Figure 2.4. *Sublime* chocolates (Cusco, Peru).

The first time I went to Huilloc, a community where a few of the girls live, I walked into a small business to buy a *sublime* - a tasty and hard-to-resist milk chocolate. These chocolates were sold in just about every store in Peru and always cost just one Peruvian sol. So I entered the store with my one-sol coin in hand and stood in front of the counter, arms crossed, waiting to be addressed. I looked around. The inside of the shop was tiny

and the shelves were poorly stocked with various oddities: there were a few old tomatoes, cookies, Inka Cola, and other drinks and candies.

No one acknowledged my presence other than a man from Cusco who was speaking Quechua and eating his lunch with two people who worked in the shop. Because he was the only one who made eye contact with me, I asked him if I could buy a sublime. He then translated my request into Quechua for the woman who owned the shop. He listened for the price in Quechua and gave it to me in Spanish. Two soles! Unheard of! I had bought this candy probably a thousand times in places ranging from bus stations on the border with Chile to small stores along the train tracks to Machu Picchu, and never had this candy cost me more than one sol.

I left and Juan asked me how much I had paid for my chocolate. I thought that my accent and leggings had determined my fate, but he told me that I wasn't up-charged because I'm gringa, but because these shops are rarely fully stocked. Vendors would bring a few things up the mountains on sporadic trips from Ollantaytambo. Because they do not re-stock often and buy goods at regular price, everything was more expensive than normal to cover the cost and effort required to get it there.

All the girls' natal communities were 'rural communities' in Levitan's (2015, p. 58) definition: a settlement with less than 500 residents and removed from the main paved highway in the Sacred Valley by at least a two-hour journey on foot. When Juan and I started planning trips up to these rural communities, we had to get creative if we didn't want to walk because each village had its own unique mode of access to transportation. This meant finding out which days were market days, which roads were good enough to

drive up in our own car or taxi, and which places required that we walk or mountain bike. Getting to the villages was precarious and often an adventure. Usually, in hopes of hitching a ride, we would walk for over an hour before we were passed by a single car or motorcycle.

Our ears became acutely aware of the sound of an approaching engine and my heart would palpitate, anxiously awaiting the approaching vehicle. While the sound of an approaching engine came to represent the potential end to hours of walking, often the transport that passed had already breached maximum capacity. Motorcycles that zoomed by could be carrying three young men, and truck drivers would cram up to four people in the front seat. I once rode from a village to Ollantaytambo in the front of a butcher's truck with an ox in tow and two young children on my lap. Put simply, finding transport is either a hefty bout of good luck or a very long wait. Walking is the only sure way to get up and down.

Huilloc



Figure 2.5. Women watching a soccer game (Huillo, Peru).

I first went to Huillo. I planned the trip on a market day to take advantage of the limited transportation up to the village. I found the *combi*, a large white van, in a side alley near the main market in Ollantaytambo. A young boy in a woven orange poncho loaded a bicycle onto the top as I got in. Almost everyone on board was speaking Quechua. The three women in front of me were dressed similarly, wearing yellowish top hats with black ribbon around them. They wore their hair in long braids and one was peeling corn.

In the *combi*, a vehicle the size of a minivan, 15 of us were stuffed in the back and three sat side by side up front. The women next to me yelled that the *combi* was well over full and we pulled away, heading towards a conjunction of houses made of adobe that became more and more sparse as we journeyed upwards. The road turned to dirt and we climbed up above Ollantaytambo. There was something regular, rhythmic about this ride until I realized that along the road we hit a small village about every 10-15 minutes. We ascended until we reached an altitude of 4,226 meters. Everyone in western clothing, other than myself, had gotten off well before we reached Huillo. When we arrived and I stepped off the *combi*, I saw brightly colored fabrics popping against monotone greens. Huillo was a weaving community and this is evident in the sharp hues stitched into the clothing of its residents.

It took over an hour and 2.5 soles, about 80 cents, to get to the community in *combi*. Just over 1,000 residents lived here (Sisa) and I could see the entire village from the spot where the driver dropped me off. I saw livestock in people's backyards and dogs and cats

in the street. Children ran around the primary school, a bright pink building located in the heart of the village. This was common in the villages I visited: a primary school in the village center, cute and small, usually painted a bright color.

One characteristic unique to Huilloc was its apparent integration into the tourism industry, evident in a large yellow sign that read “Asociación Turismo Rural Comunitario Vivencial Inca Ayllu Huilloc.” As a destination for “rural community tourism,” Huilloc was advertised as a Quechua community that “still keeps alive its customs and ancestral traditions”. Its inhabitants are proud representatives of the Inca legacy and are happy to share it with its visitors from every corner of the world. In a fast-paced world, they provide an alternative of hospitality governed by ancient rituals that make visitors feel like honored guests (“Huilloc”, n.d.). The website advertised activities such as participation in agricultural work, ancestral rituals, and the production of red poncho.

Due to the presence of a tourist industry in the community, Huilloc had a few features not found in any of the other villages, including a handcraft store, a health center, and a fish farm, places that offer some employment alternatives to subsistence farming. It seemed that the houses closest to the center belonged to wealthier families involved in the business of hosting guests. These houses, while small and made of adobe, were often stuccoed and painted on one side, displaying a small wooden sign listing the name of the family that resides there and a small symbol representing the family’s occupation as either weavers or farmers. Aside from homes and an elementary school, the community had a community hall and a sports court.

Leaving Huilloc, it took me over three hours to descend, leaving me exhausted, thirsty, and very glad that I had chosen to walk down and not up. When I recounted this experience to the girls from Huilloc, they asked me if I had taken the shortcuts on my walk, to which I responded, “What shortcuts?!” They laughed and told me that in a half jog and using the shortcuts, they can make the trip down in 2.5 hours and the trip up in about 3 hours.

Camicancha



Figure 2.6. A stuccoed and painted house (Camicancha, Peru).

Camicancha is not a weaving community like Huilloc. It sits at a lower elevation of 3,281 m and is less secluded than some of the other communities. It takes half an hour for a *combi* from Ollantaytambo to get to Chillca, another town that sits below Camicancha.

From the Chillca bus stop, Juan and I had to walk in an almost vertical ascent to reach Camicancha. In the center of the village, there is a small primary school painted red. Currently it is used as a center of community life, but this may change because the community of Camicancha has been in the process of building a community center for about three years. Without a separate location for community meetings and parties, the primary school is often left in disarray.

Camicancha seemed wealthier than other communities. There I saw more satellite dishes, televisions, houses that were painted and stuccoed, and even some wood detailing on balconies and around windows. Because of its relatively easy access to Ollantaytambo, it seems that the people of Camicancha have more contact with the city and as a result some Spanish is spoken. The village was much more densely settled and “packed in” than Huilloc: homes, the primary school, livestock, and fields were close together and people were out and about, in close contact, interacting with each other.

I was invited into the home of the president of the community. He spoke broken Spanish. In his home he had dish television and a small refrigerator. This was the only refrigerator I saw in any of the villages; perhaps he was able to purchase it because of the lucrative community store he had set up inside his house: the only store in the community. The shop was set up in a space where he could simultaneously receive guests, feed his chickens, and sell water, candy, ice cream, sodas, and beer. I saw a few children come in and buy candy or an Inka Cola but another more popular economic and social exchange I witnessed was the making and selling of *chicha* (fermented corn beer). There was a house located in a central part of the community that was marked by a tall leaning stick with a red

bag tied to the top. Here, *chicha* was brewed and sold. Older people came to chug a glass of *chicha* and then go back to work; kids ran to the house with empty plastic containers to fill and bring to parents working in the fields. By provisioning a hot commodity -- *chicha* -- this house functioned as a site of social interaction as people took breaks to sit on a bench outside, fill their glasses, chit-chat, and drink their beverage before returning to work.

While in Camicancha, I noticed that people shook my hand by giving me their wrist because their hands were dirty from working outside. Additionally, people typically wore *ojotas* (sturdy sandals made from tires) with more western clothing than what I had seen in Huilloc. I saw men in soccer jerseys and pants, younger women in leggings and sweaters, and older women sporting long skirts and wearing their hair in braids that stretched down their backs and were topped in top-hats. The dress here was starkly different from that of Huilloc or Ollantaytambo.

Anapaua and Pomatales



Figure 2.7. A two-story adobe house (Anapaua, Peru).

While on some days it was possible to encounter transportation at least part of the way to a village, no such good fortune could be found when travelling to Pomatales and Anapaua. Pomatales is below Anapahua and they are considered two separate villages because Anapahua is about an hour's trek from Pomatales. They are connected by a single road. I took a cab up to Pomatales with a mountain bike strapped on top. From Ollantaytambo, the cab drove to a nearby town called Pachar and from there it took a turn upward and ascended. The road turned from concrete to dirt as sheep and cows crossed in front of the car. Upon arrival to Pomatales it was clear that the town was tiny. No more than 15 houses surrounded the center, the town's primary school. Most houses were made of unpainted adobe with tin roofs. I visited a house that had no running water aside from a sink outside used to fill water buckets for cooking and cleaning. The family was putting in an outhouse but previously had no such facility. The mud yard was a chaos of ducks, dog, cat, peeled corn cobs, bottle caps, and wood. The village consisted almost entirely of houses with tin roofs, unpainted adobe, and a mud yard. The exception was one house that was painted and bigger than the others. The owner of this house, the father of one of the Sacred Valley Project girls, was a very successful peach farmer.

From Pomatales it was another hour's walk to reach Anapahua. The walk was straight uphill and there were no houses along the way. The road up was bumpy and made of dirt and rocks. I did not see much of the actual town of Anapahua other than the secluded house belonging to one of the younger girls that I interviewed. Her house stood

almost completely solitary with only one other house below it. I visited this house twice. The first time I went, Flor, the girl I wished to interview, was not home.

When I returned, I entered what I thought was her room but soon realized the room was actually the entire house. The floors were of trampled earth and there were 3 beds. It was very dark inside, for there was no electricity, and the kitchen space was a corner near the front door. Flor's house was the only example I saw of Anapahua but from my experience I could tell that this community was not concentrated around a center like the other villages. The nearest primary school for children in Anapahua is in the center of Pomatales, which is a decent walk downhill, especially for a young child. As framing is the main industry here, it makes sense that the landscape is characterized by sprawling fields filled with timber.

Socma, Picobamba, and Rayan

Socma is a small agricultural village that sits at 3,330 m above sea level. It is about a four-hour walk from Ollantaytambo. The road that leads to the community is smooth at first and gets rockier and curvier as it ascends. This road often gets flooded and closed off due to landslides. Once again the center of town is marked by the primary school and a small soccer field. Less densely settled than Huilloc, houses in Socma climb up the community's hilly terrain. I went to this village with the director of the Sacred Valley Project for a meeting which took place at the house of one of the girls in the project. No one spoke Spanish other than her father, the president of the community. Because the meeting was at her house, I spent time observing my surroundings while the meeting was going on.

The house had one room with a dirt floor. The cooking area was next to one of the beds and guinea pigs scampered around the room. At this meeting were people from Picobamaba, a town of 50 residents about a 20 min hike from Socma, and Rayan, which is 12 kilometers from Socma and sits at an elevation of 3,650 m (“Socma”, 2013). I understood that all three communities shared the same primary school.

Defining Place, Identifying Difference

In the main plaza of Ollantaytambo, a woman meanders around selling choclo con queso (corn with a chunk of salty cheese) and a group of Australians or New Zealanders are seated in a cutesy cafe sipping espresso drinks. There are Toyota and Hyundai cars mixed with small tourist vans and three-wheeled taxi bikes. They circle the street that outlines the plaza. I see three men in baseball caps and sunglasses and a Quechua woman in a colorful skirt and hat selling yarn bracelets. Motorcycles pass frequently. I look up and see Ollantaytambo’s ruins. There, tourists are charged admission to experience the site. Their tiny figures look like ants climbing tiny steps. A Peruvian boy is wearing a Nirvana sweatshirt and a Yankees hat. Here in Ollantaytambo one notices a hodgepodge of culture, but moving into the highlands the scene changes. Now I am in Camicancha. We pass by a bull tied to a spoke. Someone named Raul is working in his backyard, a muddy area, and he invites us in. The room in which he receives guests is the same room where the chickens are fed. The floors are trampled-hard dirt, the ceiling is low, too low for Juan to stand up straight. There is one light bulb and I see the wire it is connected to hanging down. Huayno music is playing. Juan

and I sit on red cases filled with empty beer bottles. Chickens are pecking at corn and beer caps scattered on the floor.

The youths at the Sacred Valley Project live in areas so secluded that they have barely been grazed by state infrastructure. Often the communities have no running water or electricity and the roads leading up to them are thin or dangerous (Levitan, 2015, p. 60), hindering access. “Access” is a major theme in my research because the youths I interviewed did not have easy access to schools. Ollantaytambo has a secondary school but the communities do not. That being said, access to secondary school is not the only point of contrast between the rural and urban environments. The discontinuities between Ollantaytambo and the communities have impacted the youths’ lives as they navigate between contrasting spaces in pursuit of an education. To understand the effects of migration to Ollantaytambo, it is essential to listen to the youths’ voices and pay attention to what they notice as the principal contrasts between the places. Their awareness of difference highlights cultural and social differences that they had to adapt to when they first migrated.



Figure 2.8. A two-story house (Ollantaytambo, Peru).

To start I will describe a difference that the girls often mentioned first when I asked them to contrast Ollantaytambo with their village. Interestingly, more than half said they noticed the materials used in the construction of houses. Perhaps because of their intimate knowledge of their own homes, they were hyper aware of the difference between the homes in Ollantaytambo and their personal residences. They told me that while their own houses are made with straw, adobe, and corrugated iron or tin rooftops, houses in Ollantaytambo are made of cement or brick, covered with *yeso* (plaster), and roofed by terracotta tiles. They noticed that even if the houses in Ollantaytambo were made of adobe, a familiar material, they also happened to be plastered. Illaris said “here [in Ollantaytambo] the houses are painted but my community only has adobe.” Later Juan explained to me that the girls, in pointing out the differences in construction, were actually noticing disparities of wealth and privilege. While the youths focused on the destructible

or perishable nature of their own houses -- thatched roofs, tin, plasterless adobe -- they also recognized the more durable building materials (e.g., brick, concrete) that characterize Ollantaytambo's houses. The adobe houses of Ollantaytambo are often plastered to make them more resistant to weathering and dilapidation.

Many girls talked about lifestyle differences between their communities and the city. Because of the seclusion of the villages, agricultural work is the focus of daily activities. The livelihood of the girls' parents generally depends on subsistence farming where the family grows just enough food to sustain itself but has little left over to use as a commodity. The girls told me that when they go home on the weekends they hardly rest because of all of the chores that must get done. Sami said "when I go home I am helping my mom. I work in the fields, sometimes I bring grass to our bulls."

There was a general consensus that life in the communities meant working outside and washing and cooking for the family. Nunafrom Rayan contrasted her community routine with that of Ollantaytambo, saying that "in Ollantaytambo I don't do things like I do them at home. I can rest a little in Ollantaytambo. At home I don't rest, I help my mom, I graze my animals, I cook. The difference is that I rest a little more in Ollantaytambo." She and Sami both said that when they are at home they work but in Ollantaytambo they do homework and that is it. In the city there is not as much farmland, therefore agricultural work is not part of daily life. In the villages, however, they are surrounded by fields, live in proximity to livestock, and provide for themselves through manual labor. Because of the central role of farming in the daily lives of the villagers, the girls consider their time in Ollantaytambo as more relaxing and not as difficult.



Figure 2.9. A good time in the city (Ollantaytambo, Peru).

In the villages, sprawling land is abundant, but Ollantaytambo is not this way. Ollantaytambo has a main plaza that is paved and bustles with vendors, cars, taxis, and businesses. One can buy Mexican food, pizza, artisanal beer, cappuccino, coffee, and souvenirs, and connect to wifi. There is an ATM machine in one corner of the plaza and the place is sprinkled with *Claro* (phone company) service dishes. Signs of abundant electricity in the city include streetlight, freezers filled with ice cream, and bathrooms with toilets. Ollantaytambo is more city-like and I refer to it as “city” and “urban” because it is considered as such by the youths I interviewed. Here there were a range of amenities and conveniences that made it a comfortable place for tourists even though the communities have none of this infrastructure.

In doing research it was impossible to coordinate my visit with the girls because there is no cell phone service up in the highlands. Joseph Levitan told me that some of the communities are starting to get electricity, but if they have electricity, it is one light bulb so they have a little bit of light at night. "Having a computer, having books [in Ollantaytambo] is pretty cool for them."

Looking again at Ollantaytambo's main plaza, taxi drivers wait to pick up tourists and yell out of their windows advertising various tourist destinations. This hustle and bustle indicate the volume of people passing through the space. There are hostels and a nearby campsite catering to temporary visitors, making Ollantaytambo a site of interaction between strangers. I learned from the girls that their villages are not this way but in fact are much more insular. When I went to the villages, I never knew where my specific destination was because there were no addresses. I would arrive in the community and ask the first person I saw where the youth I was interviewing lived. In every instance the person I initially approached knew exactly where the girl's family resided because the communities were that small. This lends to interaction between neighbors and familiarity among residents. When I asked Paqari from Camicancha about differences between Ollantaytambo and her community she told me that in her community, she knows everyone. Nuna from Rayan elaborated by saying that "because we live in the countryside, there are fifteen families, no more. My community is small."

Because of the intimate circle of interaction that the girls are accustomed to, certain things come as a shock when they first arrive to Ollantaytambo. Yanay from Picobamaba told me "In the city there is more contamination but where I live there is little

contamination and we have plants and corn and everything!" Also, because Ollantaytambo is much bigger than the communities, noise pollution came as a negative surprise. Koya told me that birthday parties were the worst part about moving to Ollantaytambo. "They were right outside of the dormitory," she explained, "music played and it was difficult because we slept so close to the noise. You would just want to be sleeping with your parents but you wake up and see where you are." Koya appreciates disconnection and tranquility, and Yanay is obviously drawn to nature. These preferences for disconnection, however, are not without problems. In the same way that the communities lack access to secondary school, they also lack access to other public services. Law enforcement officials were noticeably absent in the villages. While there was constant police patrol in Ollantaytambo's center, a police force did not operate in the villages. In the same vein, the girls told me that there is no hospital in their community and that they have to go to Ollantaytambo if they "stay sick" (Nuna, Socma).

Another gap in access is the lack of a market in the community while Ollantaytambo has two main markets. There is an artisan market below Ollantaytambo's most visited ruins that features a variety of artwork for a hefty price. In addition to the artisan market, Ollantaytambo has a vendors' market that is three floors high. The first floor has food: a section filled with fruit, a section with vegetables, and other aisles for cheese and meat. Upstairs the second floor has restaurants and shops with bras, clothes, notebooks, school supplies, cheese graters, and other oddities. This is not a grocery store. Each vendor sits with his or her products and prices change depending on who is buying. Outside the market there is a constant flow of cars and busses leaving town. The city is connected to

the external world, an international hub accessible by both its residents and foreign visitors.

I now consider what isolation means for youths pursuing education. When I asked Tamyá what distinguishes her village and Ollantaytambo she said “there are no cars here.” Sisa also said that in Ollantaytambo there are cars passing every second but in her village there are normally no cars except sometimes on Wednesday and Friday because those are the market days. The markets in Ollantaytambo actually increase access to the villages. For example, in the case of Huilloc and Socma, cars go to their communities on market days for people to purchase or barter goods and produce. Vendors can come down and sell food at Ollantaytambo’s market and community residents can purchase goods and bring them back up to the communities.

While this occasional transportation offers an alternative to long walks, there is no obvious schedule that the combis run on, so it is not possible to use them as a reliable form of transit. This means that the only reliable way that the girls can travel to school is by walking. I rode in combis from Ollantaytambo’s market up to Huilloc twice and both times the driver waited until the car was overflowing before pulling out. The second time, we sat in the combi for almost half an hour before a man said “let’s go! I have to get to *faena* (community communal work).” The driver then started the engine, showing that rather than working within a time frame, his schedule was influenced by the passengers. This lack of a regularly scheduled transportation eliminates combis as a reliable option for getting to school. I learned from the girls that the shortest walk is almost two hours and some of them must travel five hours on foot because they cannot rely on vehicle transport.



Figure 2.10. Driving up to Pomatales (Cusco, Peru).

Koya told me that the paths the girls use are dangerous and their parents often worry about them walking to and from school. She said that cars honk at them and that they encounter people who are *rateras* (rats; petty thieves) when walking alone. Gabriela, who is one of the girls' main caretakers at the dorm, mentioned feeling worried about the walk. She also said that she often felt anxious about the girls falling and breaking a bone. While living in the dormitory eliminates much of this transit and allows the girls to travel only twice a week instead of every day, it means that they are soaking in a city lifestyle for the majority of the week and are not experiencing life in their communities. As previously highlighted, the routine of life in Ollantaytambo is starkly different than the routine in the communities, so migration significantly alters the girls' young adult experience. In

Ollantaytambo they are exposed to new technologies, electricity, running water, traffic, noise, and a more urban way of life.

CHAPTER 3

THE CHALLENGES OF MIGRATION AND INITIAL ADJUSTMENTS



Figure 3.1. Walking down from the community of Huilloc (Cusco, Peru).

Why Migration is Pursued: The Parents' Sacrifice

For children growing up in resource-poor communities, going to secondary school requires immense sacrifice on the part of the youth and their family. Because education is viewed as the best shot at escaping poverty (Crivello, 2009, p. 1), migrating to attend secondary school has become a logical response to the lack of access. As discussed in Chapter 2, the communities and Ollantaytambo are vastly different and it takes multiple hours to get from one to the other. If distance is not enough of a deterrent, the paths leading up to the villages are dangerous and transport in vehicle is highly irregular. Even

considering these circumstances, the youth I interviewed are willing to sacrifice. They travel long distances and work hard in school in hope of obtaining the perceived benefits of an education. While it is the youth who leave home, the decision to go to secondary school involves their entire family. In conducting interviews it became evident that this move requires hefty parental involvement. The parents' own life experience and views on education trigger their immense support for their daughter's pursuit of secondary education.

Lack of access to school in the rural highlands of Peru is related to distance as well as poverty. Aside from the long walks to school, families must scrape together money for fees, school supplies, and uniforms and endure the additional cost of the loss of the child's labor contribution to the household (Leinaweaver, 2008, p. 116). When I asked Gabriela if parents worry about their girls while they are living at the dormitory, she said "more than worry about their daughters, the families are missing someone to work in the house. The girls cook, wash clothes, care for younger siblings, and take care of the animals, so when a child goes to study, who does all of this work? This is the first worry." Here Gabriela speaks to the sacrifice families are making when choosing to send a child to school. Harshly illustrated in Sisa's case, she told me that she gets to go to school instead of her 18-year-old sister because her parents perceived her as more intelligent and they could only afford to sacrifice the labor of one of their daughters. Her family's scenario mirrors that of many: because it is an economic burden to send a child to school, parents must decide if it is worth the investment (Levitan, 2015).

Parents and youth are investing in upward mobility when they choose to buy into education. Leinaweaver (2008) mentions the “Andean racial complex” and says that part of this mentality is the perceived “continuum between peasant and professional (p. 117).” She says that “in a context where ‘peasants’ is officially code for ‘Indians,’ education is a technique for divesting oneself of certain ethnic markers (Leinaweaver, 2008, p. 118)” and can be used as a tool for overcoming a “devalued race and class.” The expectation is that children will learn to read, write, and speak Spanish, and be able to carry themselves in an urban environment. This then will lead Quechua youth to find “better” jobs and overcome the discrimination that is cast toward Quechua people in Peru (Ames, 2012). In speaking to Flor, who lives in one of the most remote communities, it was clear that her parents had internalized the discrimination against Quechua people. I asked her why her parents think it is important for her go to school in Ollantaytambo, and she said they told her that if she didn’t go to Ollantaytambo to study, she would be a “savage.”

“Professional” is seen as the opposite of “savage” and many parents believed that upward mobility culminates in “becoming a professional.” The word “professional” was thrown around a lot when I asked the girls why their parents wanted them to go to school but what I understood was that while the word held different meanings for each of the girls, “professional” was a beacon; a desired end-point. Joseph Levitan told me that “having talked to their parents about aspirations for their kids, they want the kids to become professionals. That is the biggest desire that they have. They want them to do what they want but they also want them to be professionals and make a salary.”

While a professional career was the identifiable finish line in the pursuit of education, it was harder to pinpoint what the families actually meant when using this term. Taken directly from interviews, the girls imagined being a professional as “achieving a goal you have always dreamed of,” “becoming someone who works hard,” “being someone who speaks Spanish and knowing how to sign your name,” “going to a university and achieving what you thought you would,” or “having a career and actually make money.” Based on the varying descriptions given to me by the girls, I agree with Gina Crivello’s (2009, p. 12) definition of “professional” as a “catch-all term referring to any non-manual, salaried, preferably governmental job which brings security and respect.”

Although the girls each defined “professional” in her own way, they all felt strongly that being a professional meant that one must study. When I questioned them about whether their parents were “professional farmers,” they scoffed and told me that to be a professional means precisely that you don’t work in the fields. More specifically, when I asked Sisa if she considers her father to be a professional farmer, her response was “A professional farmer? That doesn’t make any sense.” Naira told me that “without studying, you can’t do anything.” She said that her parents suffer because they are uneducated and that when you are not educated you can’t work as a professional. Both girls agreed that to be a *campesino* or to be a professional are mutually exclusive identities. Paqari drives this point home saying that being a professional means “to not be *here* working in the fields.”

Youths and their parents shared dreams of work disconnected from suffering in the fields and zeroed-in on education as the route to this future. Here, parents’ own experiences in physically strenuous, tiring, not very lucrative, and very uncertain laboral

pursuits came into play as those experiences meant striving for something different. Many of the girls told me about how their parents' jobs require them to endure physical pain. Nuna from Socma said that "when you are a farmer your feet hurt and you have to be with everyone who goes to work really drunk." Sisa and Qora whose mothers are weavers told me how their mothers' backs always ache and Naira, whose father works as a porter on the Inca Trail said that he must carry a fifteen-kilogram sack on his back for days and that it is both very difficult and very uncomfortable.

The girls highlighted the pain their parents endure but they also expressed the uncertainty that these jobs entail. The girls whose mothers weave told me that while their mothers have constant back pain from weaving, often their textiles do not even sell. In terms of agricultural work, Miski mentioned that sometimes "*no te sale bien*" meaning that you can never count on producing a good crop. Ultimately, parents' physically tiring and materially precarious jobs are simply not profitable. Sisa said, "My dad, because he is a farmer, makes almost nothing. He barely makes enough to sustain us. I want stable work."

Now let's consider the repeated phrase "be something better", a phrase echoed to girls by their caretakers, chanted repeatedly, urging them to stay in school. Koya explained that her parents want her and her younger sister to be "better with education and to not work in the fields grazing animals." I asked her what it meant to "be better" and she said that her parents are always crying, "they are suffering from their work and they sacrifice so much to educate us so they don't want us to be like them and suffer." Also commenting on ideas about "be something better", Sisa described both of her parents as illiterate. Her father only finished his second year of primary school and her mother never went to

school. Her parents suffer and want their daughter's experience to be different.

Interpreting their hopes for her future, Sisa channeled her parents' words into plans to continue with her education and move to the city where she dreams of getting a stable job working at a bank. To her "something better" is something urban and more monetarily dependable than work in Huilloc.

Some of the girls mentioned that their parents felt that, because of their educational inexperience, they felt immobile and optionless and got pigeonholed into jobs they never wanted. According to Gabriela, Flor's mother was orphaned when she was four years old so she had to take care of her younger siblings. When she was twelve years old she was raising the younger children and therefore never went to school. She doesn't know how to read or write and she doesn't want her daughters to have the same reality she did. From her own feelings of restriction she realized the value of education and decided it was important to her that her daughters have the chance to acquire options and comforts that she never had. Parents tend to imagine that education means progress, enough food, good health, and a job that pays (Leinaweaver, 2008). As a direct response to parents' personal experience and feelings of immobility, they will sacrifice for their child's education, hoping that as a result, their children's futures will be full of fortune; less restricted.

Parental support is essential for the child's education because without this support, the child can't succeed. Gabriela told me a story about a girl whose father was always intoxicated. Gabriela went to the community various times in hopes of talking to the father about his daughter's struggles in school but he was always drunk, even at eight in the morning. She tried to talk to him anyway and he yelled that he did not want his daughter

studying. Eventually this girl dropped out of school even though she was a good student. Because her father would not assist her, she was unable to carry on without his financial support.

Aside from this particular father, Gabriela said that in her experience, whenever any of the girls are having a problem in school, she calls the parents and they come down to the dormitory. Joseph Levitan confirmed immense parental involvement saying that what he is most proud of is that parents are happy to support the girls and they will come down from the communities even just to discuss how their daughter is doing in school.

Qora and Sisa had an exceptionally difficult transition into secondary school but their story highlights parents' unwavering dedication to their daughters' education. Both sets of parents provided tremendous financial and emotional support to their daughters, initially encouraging the girls to walk three hours twice a day to get to school because they did not know about the Sacred Valley Project dormitory and decided it would be unacceptable for their children not to get proper secondary education.

Qora recalled that when she would arrive home exhausted after school her parents would tell her that she had to keep going because school needs to come first. Then, because the girls were so exhausted from the six hours of walking they had to do every single day, both sets of parents got together and used the little money they had to rent a room in Ollantaytambo for the girls to share during the week to avoid the daily trek to and from Huilloc. The girls recalled burning their food and not knowing how to cook when they lived in the city alone, so to ease their daughters' anxieties about caring for themselves, their

parents relentlessly came down to the dorm to insist that their daughters be accepted at the dormitory for the following year.

I asked Qora if her parents treat her the same now as they did before she went to secondary school and she said no: every time she goes home they treat her better and better because she is “studying well” and they are so proud of her. Their support and sacrifice have enabled her to stay in school. Qora’s parents hope that by taking on this sacrifice she will be able to get a ‘professional’ job in tourism.

Illustrated well by Qora and Sisa experiences, for a girl from a rural Quechua community to get a secondary school education, she needs money and she needs to travel. She cannot do these things alone. Her family needs to allow her to leave the community. They must pay for her school supplies and her uniform and accept that they will lose her labor. Ultimately, her parents must prioritize education above all else. Youth at the Sacred Valley Project and their parents take on pursuit of secondary education as a shared mission because they believe that fighting to succeed and fighting to graduate could lead to upward social mobility. They hope that by staying in school, youths may be able to “become something better.”

Initial Challenges: Stages of Transformation

“Those who continue with school will be all right. Those who don’t will regret it.”

- Yanay, Pomatales

While parents in the Andean highlands believe that education is a way out of the suffering associated with herding and farming (Boyden, 2013, p. 586), by attending school in the city, youths face discrimination from urban residents and must come face to face with loneliness, humiliation, and mistreatment. They must quickly learn Spanish and hide their Quechua roots in order to avoid ostracization and marginalization by peers. Educational institutions for this reason are sites that both nurture social mobility and exclude Quechua identity (Douglas, 2013), causing youths to feel isolated until they are able to assimilate. The transition was actualized when the girls at the Sacred Valley Project began to feel comfortable and even confident in their new environment in Ollantaytambo. At last they stopped feeling meek and afraid. They created relationships with peers. They reported being able to happily navigate urban life, showing that because of their migration, their identity must alter.

The adjustment process, triggered by the pursuit of education in the city, began with entering secondary school as a rural and timid monolingual Quechua speaker. At the end of this developmental process (an idealized, maybe even problematic evolutionary trajectory) emerges a confident, bilingual young woman who is capable of navigating an urban environment. This process has multiple stages. Stage 1, *Entering Secondary School Unprepared*, is the beginning of this sometimes multi-year process. In this first stage the girls feel fear and reservation about the move to Ollantaytambo. They are wildly unprepared to start secondary school because they do not have the Spanish language skills they need to succeed. From here the girls are led into Stage 2, *Hardship and Suffering*. This stage is still linked to poor Spanish skills but most prominent here is the hurt the girls

experience because of discrimination against Quechua students in urban environments.

The girls were bullied by both teachers and peers leading them into Stage 3, *Silencing*. This stage includes literal silencing as the girls chose not to speak in order to avoid attention; it also includes muting of markers or symbols of Quechua identity such as clothing.

During the first three stages, the girls change as they acquire usable Spanish skills, allowing them to learn what is taught in school and comport themselves more confidently in Ollantaytambo. Simultaneously they are picking up implicit knowledge through repetitive action, the Bourdieuan *habitus*. Just by spending time in the city, the youths develop an understanding of city behavior, teaching them how to morph behavior in order to fit in. Finally, the girls pass into Stage 4, the final stage, *Altering Identity*. While identity is consistently altering from the very start, change occurs in momentous strides once the youths have acquired good Spanish skills, allowing them to make friends and gain confidence. This confidence building is further stimulated by a program specific to the Sacred Valley Project that teaches the girls traditional gender roles -- not how to maintain them, but how to challenge them.

Stage 1: Entering Secondary School Unprepared

While youths at the Sacred Valley Project hoped to “become something better” and leave poverty behind to seek “fortune in the Spanish-speaking urban environment” (Hornberger, 1987, p. 559), this progression came at a cost. The girls experienced difficulty adjusting to existence away from their families and felt out of place when they moved to Ollantaytambo. This was partly because they arrived extremely unprepared for secondary

school taught in Spanish and therefore could not make a smooth adjustment. In their first year, the girls had trouble understanding their teachers and often failed their classes.

Initial failure in secondary school is partially due to the inadequate instruction youths receive in primary school. Quechua youths are handicapped when they come to the city because their primary schools have failed to prepare them for what is to come. Even though the Peruvian government put primary schools in the villages, the instruction is basic. There are not enough teachers who show up to teach and even those who do often don't come everyday (interview with Gabriela Scarafioca). Another problem with rural highland schools is that many practice Bilingual Intercultural Education (BIE) which, though required to teach Quechua and Spanish equally, often do not do so. While younger students could really benefit from being taught in both their native and second language, primary school teachers in the Andes teach almost entirely in Quechua, stating that they feel their monolingual Quechua students would not understand if taught in Spanish (Valdiviezo, 2009). This is detrimental to the students because dual language instruction only exists in primary school; after sixth grade, students enter secondary school (taught in Spanish) without having properly learned the language.

Lacking quality Spanish language instruction, the girls I interviewed entered high school feeling timid and inadequate in their ability to communicate and learn. They felt that they lacked a foundation of knowledge to build from and while the stated purpose of BIE schools is to value and support indigenous languages and culture, Quechua youth soon realize that their language and culture are only valued at the schools in their communities. When they come to the city, they realize that their language is no longer useful and their

culture is discriminated against. Joseph Levitan said that “especially during their first semester, the girls all fail and get disappointed.”

Spanish language acquisition wove through the youths’ entire post-migration transition process and lay behind the identity shift they underwent after years of living in the city. While it is initially the root cause of anxiety upon arrival in Ollantaytambo, once the girls improved their skills, Spanish language acquisition alleviated feelings of isolation. Language acquisition therefore is a continuous process in the girl's transformation. While poor Spanish skills kept the girls from “becoming educated,” improvement meant ability to acquire two types of knowledge that I will attribute to eventual assimilation: the explicit knowledge taught in school and unarticulated, implicit knowledge that allowed them to fit in. As their Spanish improved so did their opinion on Ollantaytambo. As they became bilingual, they started to feel at home there.

When the Sacred Valley Project ran for the first time, the staff had no idea that the transition into high school would be so challenging for its students. By the end of their first semester all six students in the dormitory’s opening class were failing multiple classes. This was how the staff realized that even though the girls were recognized as academically gifted by their primary school teachers, that did not mean they could successfully transition into secondary school.

The staff were made aware that many of the girls were functionally illiterate or only semi-literate in Spanish. Some could read written words but they did not understand what they were reading (Levitan, 2015, p. 66). Language acquisition proved to be a major obstacle once it became obvious that the girls came down from their communities speaking

only limited Spanish. To get by in school, the youths' identities as a multilingual Quechua speakers had to change. They had to learn Spanish. Sisa spoke to this alteration, "I remember when I was in the first year of primary school and it didn't even interest me to learn Spanish. My peers and I said 'what is this?' and when the professor came, the professor who taught us Spanish, we didn't understand anything she said. In Quechua we said to each other, 'what is she saying?' She tried to say slowly, little by little that it is important to learn Spanish, but we didn't think so then."

Sisa acknowledged that she did not need to learn Spanish when she was living in her community because there was no use for it. Asking the girls if they preferred to speak Spanish or Quechua in their communities I learned that the answer was always Quechua. When I asked why, they explained that they don't have the option to speak Spanish at home because their parents only speak Quechua. Learning Spanish becomes a valued project only after the girls migrate and realize that they struggle without it. At this point, due to the difficulty the girls endure without Spanish, many become acutely fixated on language acquisition because their choice becomes either learn or drop out.

When I asked Qora if there was anything she didn't like about primary school she said "Just that my teacher didn't teach me to speak Spanish, she only taught Quechua so my difficulty was not knowing the language of my secondary school. I didn't know anything, really anything." Juan told me that when the youths arrive at the dormitory, their Spanish is very weak and they act timid and shy, making communication with them very hard. There are no special services at the school for Spanish language learners, so the girls "sort of adjust as they go along, acquiring language skills...you know they don't have the

privilege of just sitting down and taking Spanish classes. But we do language, vocabulary, and grammar classes at the dorm to supplement the immersion they are getting by being in a Spanish dominated environment.” Because they are learning Spanish informally while fighting to stay afloat in secondary school, their Spanish isn't as rich as their Quechua and this has a huge impact in their studies.

Gabriela and Joseph Levitan gave additional insight into the girls' early struggles with Spanish. Gabriela said that the girls spoke Spanish translated from Quechua which set them apart because they structured their sentences differently from their classmates. The example Gabriela gave was that instead of saying “my aunt (*mi tia*)” the girls would say “from my father his sister (*de mi papá su hermana*).” The other example she gave was that in response to “whose is this (*de quién es esto?*)” the girls answer “it is from me (*es de mí*)” instead of “it's mine (*es mío*).” Her examples point to the obvious difference in speech patterns that arise when the girls translate from their native tongue. Naira's comment on her experience with this phenomenon was “I don't know....there (in Ollantaytambo) I felt uncomfortable...I don't know, it's that there I don't speak well with my classmates.” Noting that she “does not speak well,” Naira points to the fact that the early stages of language acquisition cause some of the youths to have feelings of inadequacy.

While differences in speech patterns cause the girls to feel timid or unsure while speaking, these differences are not necessarily detrimental to the girls' ability to get by in school. Joseph Levitan gave an example that is much more problematic. He said that the youths had trouble with reading and specifically with reading comprehension. He would have students read a sentence in a very basic book and then ask that they explain what they

had read. Even if the girls could read the words, they could not understand the meaning. Qora talked about struggling with reading: "I practiced alone reading books so that I could improve. I experienced so much difficulty, I couldn't do much. Even in my second year (of secondary school) I couldn't read much. When I was in my third year, then I spoke good Spanish and it was easier." Inability to comprehend written Spanish leads to poor grades and adds to lack of confidence.

Joseph Levitan pointed out that the girls' reading comprehension was poor when they arrived, but the girls themselves told me that their oral comprehension was equally lacking. When I asked Flor what her least favorite class was in school, she told me she hated the course "Science, Technology, and the Environment" because the professor spoke too fast. Sisa echoed her peer's sentiment about this course saying that she despises it "because I don't understand the professor's explanations I don't understand the formulas and the chemistry. It makes everything harder for me when I don't understand, that is why I don't like the class, because I don't understand what he teaches so I can't do the formulas." Paqari made the same statement more sharply: "When my teachers talked fast I couldn't comprehend [the material]."

I asked Miski if she felt that her teachers were willing to help her when she had difficulty in class. She told me "Yes, I ask some teachers for help but some I do not ask. I don't know, I am scared I think." I asked why she is afraid and she said, "because maybe they are going to tell me 'you haven't understood' and this is a fear I have." Miski shows that she feels self-conscious about not understanding and sometimes does not feel comfortable asking for help. Speaking differently, poor reading comprehension, poor oral

comprehension, and fear of asking for help are all obstacles in obtaining the necessary language skills to succeed in school in the city, which lead to initial timidness and shy behavior.

Stage 2: Hardship and Suffering due to Discrimination in Education



Figure 3.2. Women walking to town center (Camicancha, Peru)

In the same conversation about language preference that I went through with all of the girls, Nuna from Socma and I began talking about language preference among peers. I asked if she prefers to speak Spanish or Quechua when she is with her friends. She said she prefers to speak Spanish with her friends because her peers don't speak Quechua and those who do are embarrassed. She said she only speaks Quechua with a friend if she trusts that person but with classmates she would never speak in her native language.

Shaya sadly stated “before I moved to Ollantaytambo, I thought I would suffer there.” I asked her why and she said “I thought that they would treat us (girls from Huilloc) badly.” Shaya correctly predicted what was to come. Girls at the Sacred Valley Project were made fun of and treated as inferior and different, causing them to experience discrimination and shame upon arrival in Ollantaytambo. In Stage 2, the youths quickly realized that their language and customs were not valued in the city, showing them that they are not like everyone else and causing them to feel isolated. The girls experienced passive discrimination in education when their knowledge and culture were ignored but they were more impacted by the active discrimination they faced. Partly because they spoke Quechua and partly because they were from rural villages, the girls were ridiculed when they spoke at school. The girls hoped that eventually they would learn Spanish and divest themselves of certain obvious markers of Quechua identity, but in Stage 2, they still felt timid and rejected and therefore suffered. They could not integrate socially or academically without Spanish mastery.

I was alerted to passive discrimination that the girls experience in school when Joseph Levitan mentioned that the skills the youths have when they move to Ollantaytambo fall outside of the type of knowledge that is appreciated in school. He talked about how girls are really adept at things like using a knife, cutting a carrot in their hand, they know about plants, how to take care of livestock, how to farm and many know how to weave. They have advanced skills that they acquire living in their communities but these skills don't translate into what it means to be a student in an academic sense in Ollantaytambo. Tamyá remembered that she had liked how in her primary school she learned about plants

and got to play outside. Flor shared that in her primary school she got to weave with wool and make a doll. These hands-on skills that the girls have some mastery over are not integrated into secondary school curriculum.

Knowledge that is useful in secondary school catered instead toward urban mestizo students and further ingrained the idea that Quechua culture is relevant only in the countryside. Three examples that support this idea came out in interviews. First, the school elects what the girls could wear within its walls. They wear western-style uniforms: button-up shirts and slacks or skirts, excluding traditional Andean clothing from the school setting and normalizing the hiding of visible examples of Quechua culture. Second, in school in Ollantaytambo all students had to take a religion class in which they learned only about Catholicism. This is problematic because the religion of most Quechua people is a mixture of Catholicism and traditional Andean beliefs. Lastly, various students reported that computation class was the most challenging class for them. Sisa said that because she had never used a computer before, she didn't know how to type and would get bad grades because she did not know how to use a computer and the other kids did.

Considering the last example in more detail, it is important to remember that there is hardly even light in the communities let alone computers or laptops. Every girl who lived at the dormitory told me that there are no computers in her village and that technology factored into her culture shock upon arriving to Ollantaytambo. The girls were not used to cars, hot water or electricity much less were they prepared to type on a computer. The uniform requirement, religion class and computation class confirm that knowledge that the girls' acquired with their families in rural environments was not relevant in their

secondary education. The girls had to accept that they would not weave and they would not be asked how to nurture soil or prepare a meal for ten. The skills that they used everyday in their village had no place in Ollantaytambo. This is a passive dismissal of indigenous knowledge by the Peruvian education system and it ate away at Quechua students' confidence. Consider Nuna who said that in her first year in Ollantaytambo she felt below her Spanish speaking classmates because they understood better than her and could participate but she couldn't.

I asked Gabriela if she thought that the girls were proud of their ability to speak in Quechua. She said that "yes, but not at school." She continued, explaining, "here (at the dormitory) they love it but that is because they know that no one will discriminate and because here, when different people come visit, we do exchanges and let the girls teach words in Quechua and I don't know, I think they are happy to be able to teach something that is their own, but yes, at school they are embarrassed because there is heavy discrimination against people who are from the *campo* (fields)." Joseph Levitan separately emphasized the same point. He told me that at the dormitory they intentionally create rhetoric around roots and "where you come from" in order to work against the schools because the schools do not make any effort to value indigenous language and culture. At school, aggressions by both adults and peers mean that the majority of Quechua youths' social interactions are discriminatory and make them feel nervous, ostracized and silenced.

I understood teachers' disinterest and dismissal toward indigenous students when Kayara talked to me about her favorite teachers. She said that the History and English teachers were her favorites because "when I don't understand, I can ask and they will

explain to me. They come close to where I am and explain until I understand.” I asked her if other teachers were as willing to help her when she didn’t understand. “No,” she said, “they sometimes ask if I have understood and if I say no they say that they will not repeat what was just taught.” She made it is clear that patience is not the norm and actually it seems that intolerance is more commonplace. Koya recounted her relations with teachers at school, “they are not patient. When you ask for help they say they don’t understand you. That is how they are, they say ‘you were playing, that is why you don’t understand.’” This behavior exemplifies teachers’ intolerance toward their Quechua students but unfortunately, discriminatory actions exhibited by teachers went further than solely their disinterest and lack of warmth.

According to Juan, he has seen issues at the dormitory over time with the girls saying that they have been ridiculed by teachers and even that they have been physically abused. Joseph Levitan disclosed a conversation he had with a teacher in which the individual said that the dormitory initiative is wasting its time because the girls are unteachable and “simply less capable than other students” (Levitan, 2015, p. 67). “These teachers are just like, ‘I don’t want to work with these kids (Quechua students),’” explained Levitan. Gabriela was the first to tell me that the schools still use corporal punishment. “The professors hit the students when they don’t have good grades so the girls are worried.”

Nuna remembered that school was shocking at first because she couldn’t speak Spanish and that anxiety was amplified by her fear of her instructors. Miski also expressed distress saying that she doesn’t ask for help because she is afraid of her teachers. I

questioned her, wanting to know the cause of her fear and she told me “I am afraid because maybe they will tell me that I didn’t understand. This is a fear I have because some say ‘you did not understand’ and then they will not explain for you (the material).” As Nuna and Miski both address, teachers unkind and even abusive treatment towards the girls caused them to feel afraid in school.

Youths at the Sacred Valley Project were not just treated poorly by teachers, they also mentioned being bullied by their peers and said they suffered as a result of overt meanness and purposeful exclusion. This treatment was prevalent when the girls were still acquiring Spanish language skills and is inherently tied to language acquisition. First, the girls’ felt that their learning was inhibited because their classmates would make noise and yell while the teacher was talking, making it impossible for them to take in information in Spanish (Interview with Sami from Picobamba). Paqari confirmed that her classmates would engage in mischief and not let her understand. When she said she didn’t like that they acted this way, they would bother her more by calling her names. The tendency for youth to notice that their classmates inhibited their learning demonstrates a general lack of respect toward Quechua speaking students.

Worse than this, the girls experienced social stigmatization. Sisa explained that during her first year of secondary school she felt afraid to go to school because she thought that no one would speak to her and that people would discriminate against and insult her. Her fears were not unwarranted. Various girls told me that that their classmates laughed at them when they confused Spanish and Quechua. Some of the girls prayed their teachers would not assign group projects because when this happened, no one wanted to be in

groups with them. Paqari remembered a lack of confidence when she had to work in groups, “I got a little nervous and could not speak because our classmates are a little... they bother you that’s all, they laugh, and you see, if you mess up, they make fun of you.” Sisa also said that she felt like she had no one to talk to when her teacher assigned group projects. Group projects made her feel nervous because she feared her group would laugh or be mad about how she speaks.

Most of the girls suffered cruel treatment daily in their first year of secondary school. Paqari, when asked about her friends at schools said, “My classmates, when people come from the *campo* and don’t speak good Spanish, everyone called them ‘mote’ and I didn’t like that.” Interviewing her, I was not sure what “mote” meant so I asked that she explain the term to me. Her response was, “this means they are criticizing you for not speaking Spanish. When I said to them ‘don’t say that’, they said it to me too so I just tried to ignore them.” Kayara also complained about her classmates being aggressive toward her. She said “Some of my classmates were a little bit aggressive.” I asked for clarification and she explained, “They are bad, they know how to discriminate against us and they told us that our parents don’t want us and that is why we are in a dormitory. When they said that, it hurt me.”

The girls do not endure such mean and intense bullying without it impacting them in some way. This hardship and suffering causes the youths to gravitate toward Spanish rather than Quechua in order to fit in. Perhaps because they want to be able to understand their teachers, present in front of the class, and be able to socialize with peers without ridicule, every single one of the girls reported that unless they are in their homes, they

prefer Spanish over Quechua. This preference was not based on comfort, it was based on perceived usefulness of Spanish and desiring acceptance.

Naira said that when she is in her house with her family she prefers to speak Quechua because her parents can't speak Spanish but when she is in Ollantaytambo she prefers to speak Spanish because "when you speak more Spanish, you confuse less words. If you speak more Quechua, you are confusing yourself and the native Spanish speaker." Her response shows an inclination toward preference for Spanish with intent to improve in mind. Koya's response was slightly different. She reported that she likes to speak Quechua at home because her parents don't speak Spanish but that in any other environment she prefers to speak Spanish because it is easier to write than Quechua. Her opinion points toward a learned importance and educational benefit of Spanish. Perhaps placing value on Spanish over Quechua is the product of bullying in school which conditions the youths to feel the need to learn Spanish to avoid ridicule. Even though youths were more comfortable communicating in Quechua, they elect discomfort because they have to become competent Spanish speakers.

Kayara shared a relevant tidbit about her intrafamilial dynamics, explaining that she taught her younger siblings to speak Spanish and Quechua because she wanted them to learn both languages. When I asked why she wanted them to learn both she said "because if you learn when you enter high school, you get confused but because I am teaching them from the time they are very small to speak Spanish, maybe they won't get confused." Nuna's actions underline her own hardship with the language and tell of her personal struggle with confusing Spanish and Quechua. The girls mixed up Spanish and Quechua and feared

making these small mistakes because such errors distinguished them from native Spanish speakers. Youths begin to see Flawless Spanish as the key to academic and social success. Buying into the importance of Spanish, girls simultaneously feel that Quechua is not valued outside of rural communities. The youths at the Sacred Valley Project internalize this hierarchy. They attempt to become Spanish speakers and in doing so, they are not only learning a language, but they are experiencing failure and suffering until they do so and this is impactful.

Stage 3: Silencing



Figure 3.3. Face off with bull (Camicancha, Peru).

Sacred Valley Project youths are subject to high stakes when transitioning into a mestizo-dominated environment because they are ostracized by their classmates if they show obvious signs of being Quechua such as mixing up words, not speaking Spanish, or

dressing differently. Because bullying is directed at the girls for being Quechua, they learn to silence markers of this identity. First I will explain silencing of voice, a phenomenon that was expressed when Quechua students feared speaking and therefore chose to simply not talk. Then I will address clothing in the villages versus clothing at school and explain how youths chose to mute visible markers of Quechua identity. I will then raise Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus and tie it to the assimilation tactics the youths implement during this third stage of transition.

"When I make mistakes the teachers get mad still and then it draws attention to us." Said Koya. She was one of the students who highlighted the idea of choosing silence to avoid negative attention. Acknowledging elected muteness was common so I started asking girls if they spoke in class and noticed that the younger girls expressed fear of speaking and the older girls recounted the remembered fear. The girls had intense memories of electing silence: Sami from Picobamba expressed a long period of time where she collapsed into herself, "I had difficulty in my first year, when I arrived the first year of high school I did not want to spend time with my classmates. I did not speak to them and I did not speak to my professors either... I was afraid of them. I thought they would yell at me if I asked a question, now I just ask, that's all." She is a perfect example of the painful transition the girls went through, passing a full year mute out of fear.

Responding to bullying with silence is a phenomenon that Sergio Caggiano mentions in his study of Bolivian Aymara migrants to Buenos Aires. He discovered that child respondents in the population he looked at reacted to racist micro-aggressions like bullying, insults and correction of pronunciation by speaking very softly or rarely speaking

at all (Caggiano, 2010). Similarly, Michael Douglas detailed this trend when describing the alteration of character of a Quechua woman named Gina who had an educational experience similar to that of the Sacred Valley project youth. In speaking about her transition into life in the city after growing up in a rural community he says, “Not surprisingly, Gina’s first months of school were filled with isolation, alienation, and marginalization...She hid behind the taller girls in the desks in front of her and tried never to look her teacher in the eyes...While she feels her strategy worked in a sense, Gina also reflected on its enduring costs, which she described quite literally and eloquently as a loss of voice and a sombering effect on her character (Douglas, 2013).” While it is essential to note that both examples confirm and validate the girls’ experience of silence, I did not find that choosing to be mute was an enduring circumstance in their cases. Instead I found that it was a temporary coping mechanism used until assimilation was achieved.

While many girls remembered periods of silence, Sisa most clearly highlighted that silencing was a phase in a longer transition process that was very intertwined with learning Spanish. She told me that in her first two years of secondary school she did not know “correct Spanish”, so while she could understand, she did not speak for fear that “the pronunciations would not come out”. Qora similarly remembered feeling mute and isolated as only a stage, saying, “I didn’t have friends. Now yes I have a lot of friends, I have all of my friends now but before I was so quiet. I didn’t go out to recess, I never went out.” I asked her what she did and she said “I stayed in the classroom, sitting, that is all I did, I just sat there that is all.” “Alone?” I asked her. She responded that yes, she sat alone and her teacher never asked her why she was there. Everyone just went to go eat and left her.



Figure 3.4. Two girls fishing (Huillo, Peru).

Another coping mechanism that the girls used to blend in and assimilate was to mute markers that identified them as coming from communities or families of rural campesinos. Qora verbalized negating her Quechua identity in a conversation we had about her communication with teachers. I asked if she felt that they had helped her when they knew she was having trouble understanding their lessons. She said, “no, its that, I didn’t tell them I’m from here (Huillo).” I asked her why she had chosen not to share that information and she recalled, “It’s that they never asked me what I was. I was always silent and they just said I was shy and quiet.” When Qora says that her instructors never asked her “what she was” she means that they never asked her if she was Quechua. Naira similarly omitted information that pertained to her Quechua identity. I asked her if her friends from school had ever come to visit her in her community and admitted that no, they

had not. I asked why they don't come up to Huilloc and she said "because I don't invite them. I don't tell them I am from here."

Clothing is another mutable marker that the girls changed when they learned that the clothes they wore in their villages were not accepted in Ollantaytambo. The same way they chose silence or to omit information about where they come from, the girls in a sense "muted" their traditional clothing to hide visible markers of Quechua identity. Altering dress was most visible with the girls from Huilloc because it is a weaving community and there it was mandatory to dress in traditional clothing. For women this meant wearing a Lliclla or cape made of a woven cloth that covers the back and shoulders, a chumpi which is a belt worn to hold skirts in place, a montera or hat decorated with beads that ties under the chin and polleras which are wide skirts made of wool and are embroidered differently depending on the region of the person sporting the piece ("Traditional Andean Clothing", 2017). When I interviewed the girls from Huilloc, I went to their communities and they were dressed in this way, colorfully adorned in various pieces they and their mothers had made. Seeing the girls in traditional clothing, I was taken aback when Gabriela told me that of the four girls from Huilloc, only one travels to the dormitory in traditional clothes.

Sisa said that people from the city aren't nice to people from Huilloc and they make fun of the way they dress. While she told me that she only sometimes travels to Ollantaytambo with her "skirt from above (Huilloc)", her sister often arrived in Ollantaytambo on market days in traditional clothing and has been made fun of. Koya and I also conversed about clothing. Where she lives, they do not use traditional clothing, so I did not expect her to alter her dress based on location, but I was ignorant to certain subtleties

that she was attuned to. I questioned her about clothing used in Ollantaytambo and not in her community and she said, "Here we don't use shoes but in Ollantaytambo we do." "You are wearing shoes right now," I responded. "These are hojotas," she explained. She told me that one should not use hojotas in Ollantaytambo because it is city and only people who come from the campo use hojotas in the city. She said that she brings hers to the dormitory but that she could not go out onto the street in them.

In her reasoning, it was obvious that Koya did not wear hojotas out because she did not want to be seen as coming from the *campo*. Taking this a step further, she did not want to be seen as coming from the *campo* because she did not want to be seen as Quechua and be mocked or bullied at school. She dressed like her classmates. She tried to fit in. In her own words she said that one should not wear hojotas in the city because "some people have cuts on their feet and will be seen as ugly by others because everyone always discriminates against people from the *campo*...it is just a custom." The other way she distinguished between her dress in her village versus her dress in Ollantaytambo was by wearing old clothing in her community and buying new clothing when she moved to Ollantaytambo, once again attempting to make herself appear more like her schoolmates, intuned with the standards imposed on her by the city.

Learning what constitutes normalcy in a new place is more subtle than clothing choice. To understand the identity shifts the youths made in the first three stages of transition to an urban Spanish dominated environment it is essential to understand *habitus*, Pierre Bourdieu's concept that refers to the "physical embodiment of cultural capital, to the deeply ingrained habits, skills and dispositions that we possess due to our life

experiences (“Cultural Capital”, 2016).” Habitus is generated via the structures that make up environment and defined by Bourdieu as “systems of durable, transposable dispositions...the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules” and “collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor (Bourdieu, 2013, p. 72).” Habitus is covert and acquired when what is normal becomes intrinsically understood and can be projected unsuspectingly through subtle actions.

By Stage 3, the girls have spent significant time living in the city and have picked up on the minute details that characterize city behavior. They have adjusted their routines, blending into the monotony of habit creation in an urban environment. Solely by spending time in the city the girls became alert to social cues and norms that are not learned explicitly. This inarticulate knowledge lies at the center of cultural life (Mukerji, 2010) and the girls absorbed and carried this knowledge as cultural capital that they then use to project behavior that is acceptable in the city. Projecting culturally relevant behavior in attempt to fit in becomes repetitive and therefore natural in daily existence for the youths and exhibits itself in the form of intricate actions such as changes in posture and eye contact as well as grander actions such as routinely showering or altering diet. Even when youths were taking early steps along the arduous path to Spanish language acquisition, they began to inherit behavioral changes, acquiring urban habitus that contributed to their eventual acceptance in the city.

A shift in routine that Gabriela mentioned was showering. The youths came to the dorm never having showered as a habitual action but Gabriela said, “once they feel what it is to take a hot shower and feel a clean body, they come running back to the dormitory on Sundays to be the first in line.” I noticed slighter actions as I conducted interviews with the students. I encountered difficulty in responding to the behavior of some of the younger girls.

Yahira who had just begun secondary school in Ollantaytambo sat almost facing away from me when I interviewed her. She spoke in a voice so quiet I could hardly hear if she was answering my questions. She never looked at me and curled into herself, shoulders high and back crouched. Sisa on the other hand had been living in the city for four years when I interviewed her. She sat almost on top of me and spoke loudly, a mile a minute, looking at me as she rambled, she touched my shoulder sporadically, searching for confirmation and connection. Sisa exhibited behavior that I viewed as normal and comfortable. The drastic gap between Yahira’s and Sisa’s behavior obviously can be attributed other factors, but behavior like Sisa’s was common in the older girls. Koya and Qora were similarly engaged while the mothers of the girls, women who have not participated in formal schooling and whom have always lived in a rural community exhibited behavior similar to Yahira, they stood far away from me and did not make eye contact or directly address me, causing me to attribute these behavioral intricacies as alterations to personality learned through immersion in the city.

CHAPTER 4

NEW IDENTITY, NEW VISION OF HOME



Figure 4.1. Side of shop (Cusco, Peru).

Altering Identity

As the girls spent more time living in Ollantaytambo they had to learn Spanish to keep afloat. Their language skills improved. They began to value Spanish. They spoke it better than their parents, they were no longer monolingual Quechua speakers.

Transitioning to city life was tough but not infinite. Particularly the older girls, recognized the point in which they no longer felt timid and afraid and began to feel confident in and even prefer Ollantaytambo. Koya said, "I didn't want to live in Ollantaytambo. I just wanted to go for one day or two days and not more. But now I like it. I feel good". To explain the factors in the transition from initial fear and marginalization to actually liking

Ollantaytambo, I will first touch on how becoming proficient in Spanish, making friends and

stepping out of traditional roles of women in the communities leads to confidence building and feelings comfort and happiness living in the city. Eventually, sentiments preference toward an environment that originally provoked feelings of marginalization is evidence that the girls are largely shaped by their migration.

“We don’t speak Quechua because my classmates say they don't speak Quechua, so we speak only Spanish. Everyone is embarrassed to speak Quechua and so we speak in Spanish, that is all.” This was a quote from Izhi, the oldest girl working with the Sacred Valley project. She was about to graduate from secondary school when I interviewed her, meaning that she lived in Ollantaytambo for five years. Expressing her language preference for Spanish, she sums up a multiple year transition process into a simple statement: they make fun of us when we speak in Quechua, so once we learn Spanish, that is the language we speak. When the girls learned Spanish they could finally navigate urban life, changing their personhood. Their identities shifted as they became bilingual, shedding the shame the city teaches them to associate with being a monolingual Quechua speaker.

The amount of time that it took each girl to integrate into and enjoy life in Ollantaytambo depended on how long it took her to learn Spanish, further emphasizing its important role in the transition process. For some girls finding their place took more than a year and for some it took only a few months. This time period was correlated with the next transitional factor: making friends. Interviewing Sisa, I asked her if she could tell me about a day when she felt happy at school in Ollantaytambo. She told me, “When I learned to speak Spanish and when I met my classmates I wasn’t as scared but rather I was happy because now I could speak to my classmates. In my first year, when I came, I didn’t know

anyone.” I asked about the timeline of her transition and she remembered learning Spanish in her second year of secondary school and then reported that it also took her until her second year to feel comfortable around her classmates. Shaya, one of the younger girls, was in her second year of secondary school when I interviewed her and she spoke very good Spanish. She told me that it took one month for her to get to know her classmates. They invited her to play and “made her have fun (me hicieron divertir)”. Contrasting the experiences of these two girls unveils a relationship between ability to speak Spanish and ability to form friendships with peers at school.

Older girls like Qora remembered initial isolation and lack of social involvement but reported feeling happy and accepted when they began talking to their classmates. Qora, as mentioned previously would spend recess alone in her classroom but continued her story by saying “in my second year I hung out with the majority of my classmates and so everything was a success.” Flor also recognized a change of heart about Ollantaytambo after feeling included by classmates, “Only in the beginning I walked alone, sad. I didn't like it (Ollantaytambo) because I didn't hang out with my friends still.” Naira shared yet another similar experience saying that now she feels more comfortable in Ollantaytambo than she did before. She said, “Yes because now I am used to it, I have friends, I can talk to someone.” These three girls expressed an almost unanimous sentiment of feeling happy in Ollantaytambo once friendships were developed and remembered integration with classmates as the best part of their secondary school experience.

As explained in the earlier section on *Hardship and Suffering*, youths arriving from the communities are certainly not initially accepted by peers but instead are mocked and

bullied. If the girls can eventually feel happy in Ollantaytambo it is because they have finally achieved sought after acceptance. Here it is evident that because youths are not initially treated well, inclusion by peers must derive from their ability to assimilate. By spending extended time in Ollantaytambo they become more cosmopolitan and attune to city behavior and mestizo normality, allowing them to finally form relationships with those who initially saw them as too different to associate with.

The only girl who did not express comfort in Ollantaytambo or acceptance from peers was Tamyá. She had just finished her first year of secondary school and told me she didn't really speak to many of her classmates at school. She was very timid and struggled with Spanish. While I spoke with her, she avoided eye-contact and preferred to respond with gestures rather than speech. She told me that she was still learning Spanish and was the only girl who reported preference toward speaking Quechua even when not just with other Quechua speakers. I asked why and she said, "Because I don't know much Spanish." This led me to believe that she, being one of the youngest girls, was living a moment that the older girls had experienced and then superseded. I believe Tamyá represented the initial shyness that the girls later shed as they acquired confidence from improved Spanish and improved relationships with peers. Perhaps she, still new to the city and still opting to be silent rather than speak in Spanish, will prefer Ollantaytambo once she passes through the stages of transition.

Learning Gender as Power



Figure 4.2. Traditional cusqueño dish: boiled potato and Andean cheese sprinkled with julienned onion and diced tomato (Pomatales, Peru).

For youths at the Sacred Valley Project, learning Spanish and building relationships led to a developed confidence and modified character but so did stepping out of the roles traditionally assigned to women in their communities. Leaving home and going to school, the girls deviated from the route taken by young women who stay and missed the general experience of coming of age in their villages. Seeking and attempting to finish a secondary

education is an uncommon decision, especially for women, and choosing this route gave the Sacred Valley Project girls skills and experiences that their own mothers never had.

This raises the question of how the girls could ever return home and fit into defined gender roles in their villages after drifting so far from the norm. Additionally, the Sacred Valley Project, striving to make the girls feel more confident in school, teaches them about female empowerment, further calling into question their family dynamics and their roles in their households. In striving to make the girls feel like “empowered female leaders” (“Our Mission”, 2017), the dorm teaches students about possibilities for young women that are not in congruence with their realities at home, changing how they view themselves and their future possibilities.

In an article written by Patricia Ames about the exclusion of rural girls in Andean areas of Peru, she examined the discrepancies in boys’ and girls’ school attendance and tried to explain what factors work against girls and hinder their completion of primary school. Her study was inspired by the fact that 36% of women in rural areas are illiterate and their average number of years in school is 3.7 whereas rural men generally spend 5.1 years. City folk show much higher numbers: 8.3 years for women and 9.2 years for men (Ames, 2005, p. 149). Ames found that general reason that rural girls have a precarious relationship with school is because of the fragile economic reality of their families and because of the different social and cultural expectations of girls and boys. Specific expectations for girls weigh on their school attendance, causing failure and school dropout (Ames, 2005, p. 150).

Ames explained that girls in rural Andean communities are expected to assume most of the domestic work in their household as well as some of the agricultural work. Then, between the ages of 11-15, they begin to take on more responsibility such as spinning, knitting, sewing, making clothes, cooking, harvesting and grazing the family's animals (Ames, 2005 p.153). Many girls choose to leave school because they feel that school focuses on information far removed from their realities and interests. In lieu of school attendance, girls will often take on work that they feel has more value in their households (Ames, 2005, p. 160).



Figure 4.3. Scampering guinea pigs in the kitchen (Camicancha, Peru).

The girls at the Sacred Valley Project did the opposite. They blew the numbers of average years in school for rural girls out of the water. They leave home and are away for five days a week, making it impossible to regularly contribute to the labor needed to maintain a household. This shows that they prioritize education over traditional woman's

work, distancing themselves from other women in their communities. Since it is through participation in agricultural and domestic activities that children learn the necessary skills and abilities to become economically active adults in their communities, (Ames, 2005, 158) the girls are forfeiting the opportunity to gain knowledge pertinent to success at home and instead choose to strive for knowledge needed to succeed as adults outside of the highlands.

In speaking with the youth it was clear that it was no accident that they distanced their trajectories from those of other women in their villages. Koya said, “girls don’t want to study when they have lovers, they drop out of school and stay home. Now they no longer study and if they want to work they will have no resume to send. Flor told me that she wanted to study because if she didn’t, “maybe I would be like my peers who don’t study and who start to drink beer and get pregnant, maybe that is how I would have been if I wasn’t at the project (Sacred Valley Project).”

There seems to be an imagined dichotomy between mobility, freedom and success and lovers, babies and lack of opportunity. Koya and Flor mentioned that those who don’t get educated will get stuck. They will become mothers before they have a chance to pursue their own goals. These ideas probably come from the girl's own family experiences as a few of the them, like Sisa and Shaya, have older siblings who were pursuing an education until they or their partner got pregnant. The event signaled the end of the siblings’ mobility and in both cases resulted in the decision to move back to Huilloc to raise the child. Perhaps to maintain her freedom, Sisa’s personal reaction to having children was that she will not be a

mother and she does not want a partner. She told me she thought it would be better to just take care of herself and her own siblings rather than have a family of her own.

The overarching understanding of gender roles in the communities and the decision to diverge comes from the youths' experience of dynamics within their own family units. The girls' model of what it means to be a woman in her village comes from the example set for her by her mother. I met the mothers of Qora, Sisa, Yanay and Miski, Koya and Tamyá and Shaya and the best Spanish speaker was Miski and Yanay's mother who spoke no more than a few words. When I was interviewing Qora, her mother sat with Juan and I while we waited for Qora to do her hair. She did not speak to us and when Qora came outside, she addressed only her daughter and spoke in Quechua. Qora translated for us, offering us tea. When her mother walked away, Qora said, "she understands but she does not speak." I had a similar interaction with Tamyá and Koya's mother. She wanted to feed Juan and I so she sent Tamyá to tell us to wait in the yard while she prepared a meal. She then cooked us a heaping portion of food but did not speak or sit near us while we ate. Because of their mothers, when I asked if they preferred to speak Quechua or Spanish at home, the answer was always the same, "I speak Quechua at home because my mother does not know Spanish."

Before I did any interviews, Gabriela pointed this out. "Pay attention," she said. "This is a difference in gender. The fathers can speak two languages, they speak Spanish, not well, but they can communicate." The difference between the mother and father's ability to speak Spanish has to do with both mobility and education. Some fathers work on the Inca trail to Machu Picchu, carrying bags and setting up tents for tourists, allowing

them to pick up some Spanish. Other fathers simply went to the city more often than their wives as, “andean women tend to bear the majority of the burden of housework: slow cooking over fires, hand-washing clothes and caring for small children (Leinaweaver, 2008, p. 126).”

Additionally, fathers were able to complete more years of schooling than the girl’s mothers. Sisa justified this by saying, “before it was not important for women to study. For men it was more important.” Shaya said, “my father finished primary school, my mother never even entered. She said that women shouldn’t study.” Naira told me that her mother is not literate. Her father finished up to his fourth year in primary school but her mother “did not even ever know the school or studying” and often said “why study?” As demonstrated by their mothers’ lack of educational experience, the youth I interviewed are outliers. By the time they were 11 years old, the girls had already attended much more school and were infinitely more competent in Spanish than their mothers and even their fathers.

The belief that it is less important for women to be educated than men grows from greater patterns of *machismo*. When I visited the girls’ homes, their mothers were always in the house. The only situation when this was not the case was when I interviewed Flor. I was in communication with her father because he works in Ollantaytambo so I called him to coordinate an interview. They met me outside of their house in Anapauha. Before I left he said, “I wish I could offer you food but my señora isn’t here” implying that she is the only one who can cook and he could not possibly do a domestic task.

Gabriela explained to me that in the communities, *machismo*, which is defined as a strong sense of masculine pride and exaggerated masculinity (“Machismo”, 2017), is still

very prevalent. She told me that machismo manifests itself through family dynamics because it is the norm that the man, the father in this case, has all of the power and authority within the family unit. She said that the father even has the right to hit his wife or children and make all decisions for the family without listening to the input of others. She said “if the father wants anything, his wife or children have to do it. The women do not speak if the man is there and neither do the children.” She explained that in the dormitory, they have worked against this phenomenon and try to ensure that the girls become aware of their own family dynamics.

Gabriela also said that corporal punishment is something she sees as a big issue both at school and at home. When there are problems at the dormitory and she tells one of the girls that she is going to speak with their parents about an issue, the child often express fear, “No Miss! Please don’t tell my dad because he will hit me.” To sooth anxiety, when she speaks with the fathers, she says, “speak with your daughter, but speak, I don’t want you to hit her. Sir, you just need to speak, that is all, I don’t want to find out that you have hit her.” In conversation, Gabriela tries to teach fathers that if they discuss problems with their daughters instead of hitting them, the girls will trust them and be able to work though the problem.

Fathers have come to her and said things like “I am trying to do what you said, I am trying to achieve”, “yes, yes, now I don’t hit my daughter”, or “I speak nicely to my daughter, now I have more patience with her.” Gabriela felt that the fathers’ altered behavior has sparked changes in the girls’ attitudes because they become less afraid and more willing to assert themselves. She thinks it is important that the girls become conscious of machismo

and know how they should or should not be treated. She said, “for me, the girls are conscious of what should not be done but the next step is to defend themselves, for example to be able to say ‘no, no no, you can’t touch me’”.

At the dormitory Gabriela instills the idea that respect should come without fear. Following her lead, the dormitory does work to inform students about feminism in hopes of sparking their confidence and making them feel empowered. When I asked her if they talk about gender at the Sacred Valley Project and she said, “Yes, alot. But not from the fanaticism or the ‘women are the best’ outlook, no no no, but rather we say, ‘girls, men and women have the same opportunities. You can study, if you don’t like something, you can say so.’ They are very accustomed to the man being the one who decides and I want to try to have them understand that, no, they too can choose.” Joseph Levitan explained further, “We also wanted to have this women’s empowerment, social justice mission where we wanted the girls to be able to address injustices or inequalities that happened in their communities. There is a *machista* culture here and throughout Peru and up into the Andes too, so having strong women is the best way to change that. And giving them the tools and skills and knowledge they need to address these kind of really deeply embedded hierarchies and inequalities in whatever way they think is most culturally appropriate.” Through their empowerment initiative the dormitory is essentially un-teaching gender roles taught to the girls by their families.

Work intended to empower youths to become leaders as women changes their self-perception and the aspirations they have regarding their futures. The same way that youths at the project stray from the norm in terms of their ability to speak Spanish and find

their way in the city, the girls also deviate in terms of their expectations for themselves as women. Literacy, schooling and ability to communicate in Spanish are all socially valued forms of knowledge which determine a person's place, status and social recognition. While youth at the Sacred Valley Project gain the societal advantage of possessing these abilities, women who do not have this knowledge are often confined to subordinate positions (Ames, 2005, p. 161). By getting an education and recognizing their own potentials, Sacred Valley Project are freed from relegation to house work or serving a husband. These girls have career goals and expressed confidence that they will be fine on their own, no support or contribution of a husband necessary.

In conversations with Shaya and Sisa, I noticed that the Sacred Valley Project's empowerment work had an impact on them. Shaya confidently told me, "I am going to make my own money and live happily alone, not with my husband. No one is going to hit me, no." Sisa expressed an even more radical viewpoint saying that "In Hulloic, the general assembly doesn't have a woman president so I want to be the first female president. I want to give an example to all the women that a woman can be president too. I think that now they don't let women be president because they have low self esteem, but I don't know, I want to be president." I asked her what she would change as president and she said, "I want there to be no discrimination against women and that women can be presidents too because now for example, when women give their opinions during the general assembly, people don't let them talk and instead the men all laugh. I don't like this. We'll do it better than the men!"

As Juan explained to me and as is evident in Sisa and Shaya's candid expressions, the girls develop confidence over time while learning through the Sacred Valley Project's empowerment initiative. They become more sure of themselves and more outgoing. As Juan said, "when they come to the project at 11,12 years old they are little babies at that point, so shy, so tiny, so sheltered in their communities, so to come out here by the time they have graduated they are 17 or 18 and they have been in the city 5 or 6 years, so I think their level of confidence and maturity increases drastically during that time." The girls come to live at the project at such a tender age that they really grow up while living in Ollantaytambo. They are shaped by migration. Even though they come down at 11 or 12 and have already done a lot of learning in their communities, by spending years residing in the city, they lose the cultural norms of what it means to become an adult there, including how responsibilities and relationships look like for women in their villages.

How Migration Shapes View of Home



Figure 4.4. Backyard (Anapaua, Peru).

When discussing the shaping of ‘view of home’, I refer to the youths’ altered perception of their childhood home after moving away for the first time. Living elsewhere and accumulating new experiences, I found that the girls no longer envisioned the communities that were once their homes as potential homes for the future. When moving to Ollantaytambo, they felt the need to “progress” along a trajectory leading away from the lives their parents live toward an ideal of modernization embodied in urban living (Leinaweaver, 2008, p. 113).

Once living outside of their communities the girls realized that they appreciated having more leisure time and dreaded the chores they do in their villages. Additionally their view of the scale of the world and their own movement within it was extended when learning Spanish and graduating high school made the possibility of living elsewhere doable and desirable and led the girls to aim to continue with schooling in bigger cities and to take on jobs that lay outside the manual labor jobs available to them in the communities. The result of migration then is a fading connection to the site of childhood home linking initial migration to a more permanent split from the communities. While the girls see themselves working in the city and going back to visit, it would take zest and creativity to configure ways to make their acquired skills relevant and economically plausible in their villages.

“Salir adelante” // “Superarse”

Nuna told me that it was important to get an education so that she could “salir adelante”, meaning “get ahead”. She related “salir adelante” to becoming a professional and living in Urubamba or Cusco, two cities that are bigger than Ollantaytambo. She told me, “this is something I have to do in my life,” implying a pressure to follow a defined path. This “have to” mentality was expressed similarly in a quote from Paqari, “I have to be something, a professional, something, not be here working in the fields.” The girls both connected their migration to their personal goals of getting away from the community where they grew up. The idea of “salir adelante” that Nuna mentioned reminded me of a concept called “superarse” that I read about in the literature surrounding migration for education in Peru (Leinweaver; Hornberger; Douglas) which grapples with ideas of professionalism and urban-living as forms of escape from static rurality.

Hornberger explained that “superarse” “means to pull oneself up by the bootstraps... to leave behind the poverty and handicap of being a Quechua-speaking community member has been to leave the community and all it stands for and seek one’s fortune in the Spanish-speaking urban environment (Hornberger, 1978).” “Superarse” directs progress toward urban living which when looked at critically means “speaking Spanish instead of Quechua, dressing in store-bought ‘western’ clothing instead of woven skirts or felt hats or rubber-tire sandals, eating noodles instead of potatoes and drinking beer instead of trago, living in the city instead of in the campo (Leinaweaver, 2008, p. 110).” Before children even migrate to the city they have in mind that city is progress and strive to eventually live there permanently. This means that the initial move away from home

shapes the migrants habitat for the future as returning to the community to live is conceptualized as failure to progress.

Distance from Parents



Figure 4.5. Peeking piglets (Camicancha, Peru)

When referring to 'home' I am describing childhood home where each girl grew up and where her parents still live. The idea of moving forward, away from home, is inherently connected to the youths' parents and is intentionally aimed away from parents' lived experiences. Usually the parents themselves saw urban migration as a way for their children to escape entrenchment in a life of pain and suffering stemming from dependence on the land. Education, the alternative, was seen as a route to security, stability and wealth *in the city* (Boyden, 2013). Interestingly, even though parents of the girls strongly

supported their migration, they themselves had little or no education, so their daughter's schooling created distance in experience between them and their offspring.

For example, Nuna told me that neither of her parents went to secondary school. Her mother didn't even enter school and her father did one year of primary school before dropping out. This example is generally indicative of the experience of everyone's parents, meaning that a huge gap occurs between generations when youths make it to secondary school. Nuna said "for me it is important to have a good future in life, to not be like my parents who have never studied, who are, my mom is *ama de casa* (house maker) and my father is a worker but he doesn't work in other things, he is a farmer, I don't want to be like them. I want another type of future." After migrating, the girls begin to see their community a viable home for people like their parents (farmers, quechua speakers, people who did not pursue an education) but not for themselves. Moving away from their parents' experience means moving away from their childhood home. Viewing their parents' experience as undesirable means viewing 'home' as unfit for their ideal self.

Perks of City Life

MG: Do you think you will live here in Huilloc?

Naira: No.

MG: Why not?

Naira: It's just that I don't really like it here.

MG: Do you like the city more?

Naira: Yes.

Once the girls assimilated into urban living, they came to like it and even prefer it to living in their communities. After living in Ollantaytambo, youths came to see an urban environment as the site of their imagined futures and their 'home' as a fragment of the past. Regarding this change, Joseph told me, "it is a tricky spot to be in because we don't want them to lose connection with their community or their parents or their families and all that but they also don't really like being at home as much anymore when they are here." This happens because the girls are exposed to a different way of life while residing in Ollantaytambo and become accustomed to urban comforts, leading them to dislike the strenuous work required of them while in their communities. Joseph continued, "We had one student who is from Huilloc and she, when she goes home she has to go up into the mountains and herd her goats so she is just out there in the middle of nowhere in this house where she stays and cooks her food but she is just herding goats for the summer so she gets bored."

Gabriela explained, "the girls have a rough life in the communities and they have to do many things that they don't want to do or that bore them...then on the other hand when they are here they are studying, reading, they are in the company of friends; so the return to the community is hard because they will need to do a ton of chores." The girls become so fixated on their lives in Ollantaytambo that there are weekends when they don't want to return home. Gabriela said that they miss their families but they don't want to walk hours on end to get home and then have to work all weekend. They tell her, "oh no, I don't want to go to my house, I have to work hard." When the girls are home they don't rest at all, they cook, clean, wash, care for younger siblings and their animals.

A few of the girls told me that they consider both Ollantaytambo and their community “home” but most prefer living in Ollantaytambo. Nuna told me she is partial to Ollantaytambo because there she can rest a bit. “In Ollantaytambo I don’t do things like how I do them in my house. I rest a bit in Ollantaytambo but in my house I never rest... I prefer Ollantaytambo”, she told me. It seems that the girls learned to cherish the leisure time that they had not previously known along with other amenities they learn about after acclimating to Ollantaytambo. When I asked Juan what comforts the girls had at the dorm and not in their communities, he said “a clean floor that is not mud, warm blankets, showers and computers.” Regarding the final comfort, Sisa said that it is hard for her to be in Huilloc now because there is no internet so it is boring and she doesn’t have a computer so she can’t communicate with people she knows. I asked her about her dreams for the future and she said that the best thing would be to stay in the city. She loves the cars and the architecture and dreams of buying a house in Ollantaytambo or Urubamba.

Expanded World View



Figure 4.6. Market (Urubamba, Peru).

In chatting further about their dreams for the future, I expected that youths would imagine living either in the community where they grew up or in a nearby city after graduating but was surprised to find that many of the girls expressed interest in travel. Aside from growing to prefer an urban environment, living in a city exposes the girls to an expanded range of people and ideas causing some to dream far beyond the limits of their hometowns and even beyond Peru. Once they had lived life outside of the community where they grew up, their view of the scale of the world and their own movement within it was extended, changing their aspirations.

Kayara told me, “I will travel to the countries that I want to be in and after be a history professor. Also I want to live in the United States in New York.” Nuna said that she preferred to speak Spanish over Quechua because from Spanish she could learn other

languages like English and Japanese. Qora and Shaya expressed another dream of life far away as they obsessed over South Korea and told me they hoped to move there someday. Here, various youths expressed desire to see more and learn about new cultures and even live abroad. They do not confine their ideas for the future to their country of birth let alone their small hometown.

Naira: My parents are suffering because if you are illiterate you can't do anything

MG: You can't do anything?

Naira: And when you don't finish secondary school, you can't enter the workforce

Regardless of whether the girls dreamed of living in Peru or abroad, one thing was clear, in terms of employment, they are less qualified for work in their communities and more suited to work elsewhere. Quechua-speaking communities live by subsistence farming, producing at a level proportionate to consumption without much left over to sell (Hornberger, 1978, p. 559). Living in this way is difficult as one's sustenance is self-dependent. Learning to subsist in this way comes from participating in agricultural activities and an immense focus on obtaining the skills that it takes produce and survive. The girls let go of this cultural capital by spending five formative years living away from 'home' and grow instead to be fit to work for an income rather than to produce for themselves.

The girls didn't say they couldn't work in their communities, they said they didn't want to. Paqari said, "I don't want to work in the fields like my parents, it is tough and

tiring. I want to live in Cusco where life is easier.” Here, Paqari is really saying that it would be strenuous to live how her parents do and she would prefer to make money and buy what she needs instead of living off the land. Suyana said, “I don’t want to be like my siblings who are homemakers and farmers. Getting out is better.” Instead of farming, the girls envisioned first going to university and then starting professions such as doctor, chef, accountant, lawyer, guide, engineer or hotel owner. Some said they would live in Cusco, some Lima and some Urubamaba but the common thread was that the girls tied their future careers to residence in a city. This finding is consistent with the choices made by young women who had already graduated from the project. While I was not able to interview them, I asked Gabriela what graduates were doing and found out that one was at a university in Cusco, one was studying accounting in Urubamaba and the last was studying accounting at an *instituto* in Cusco. Not one returned to live in her natal village.

The capacity to which the communities were included in the youths’ imagined future was minimal. The girls explained that while they definitely would not be living at home they would be sure to visit. “I would come back on a Sunday, you know, to visit,” Flor said with a shrug. I prodded the girls on their connection to their villages after graduation in our conversations, often asking about where they dreamed of living and if and how they would maintain an active engagement with their childhood homes and families. Koya expressed a desire to live in Cusco so I asked her if she was also considering living in Anapaua. “No, I will live in Cusco but have a car,” was her response. Kayara barely had interest in visiting saying, “I will go back only to visit my parents but not to live...There isn’t a road to go back in car and it is far to walk.” Nuna from Socma imagined she would be even

disconnected. She told me she would live in Lima and bring her family with her. Then, perhaps the most depressing response of all Tamyas. When I asked her if she would return to Anapaua after graduating she said that at that point her community will no longer exist because everyone will have moved away.

A Fading Connection

It is impossible to know with certainty how the youths' choices pertaining to future residence will impact their engagement with the communities, it is only possible to consider the thoughts they shared about their future plans and analyze what is known: that none of the girls who have graduated live in their natal village and that very few of the girls are even remotely interested in moving back. Based on this information it seems dismal to think that the girls would prioritize a sustained bond with their childhood homes. Therefore it is relevant to consider how the girls imagined incorporating 'home' into life elsewhere. To envision this fading link between here and there, past and present, I will analyze two short anecdotes from girls in Huilloc regarding weaving.



Figure 4.7. Yarn shop (Cusco, Peru)

Because Naira expressed pride in Huilloc's weaving traditions and stressed the importance of maintenance of tradition, we spoke a bit about how she envisioned preserving these traditions or incorporating them into her life in the future. She told me that she absolutely loves to weave so I asked if she will weave when she is in university. She considered the idea but said, "No, not anymore, maybe by then I'll forget how to do it. Maybe by then I'll only remember that I wove." Her comment seems to imply that by spending extensive time away from her community, she envisions its continuously diluted integration into her life. She mentioned forgetting, which means that her weaving practice will lie dormant once she moves away and she will not preserve her practice even though it was something she loved. To Naira, moving away means growing both physically and mentally distant from life at home.

Sisa expressed herself differently. She said that she will not forget her culture. She will keep weaving and will consider wearing traditional clothing to work one day even though she may not be let in. She said she will never forget her family or her home and felt that it is important that people in Huilloc keep weaving because “it is part of our culture passed down from the Incas so we cannot forget.” Sisa imagined that she would be more active than Naira in preserving elements of her culture but even so she only mentioned wearing traditional clothing as a singular event rather than really integrating it into her life. A looping thread that pulls through the differing ideas about maintaining culture is: once the girls move away for good it will take a conscious effort to incorporate aspects of their culture into their lives. A fading connection to the community is the impending reality when the girls leave home. What they choose to continue to incorporate is their prerogative but without living in the communities full time, it will take effort to remember and uphold ‘home’ when away.

Reconnecting with Home

“The community doesn’t offer the girls work that interests them really. This is sad and and we always think about it. But also, what sense does it make for them to stay in their communities all their lives if they have the desire to do other things?-Gabriela

Because the girls refine their skill sets through years of academic focus, most then hoped to continue on to higher education and work in their field of specialization. This inhibits youths’ return to the communities because there is no existent job pool for them, making it seemingly unthinkable to consider communities as a potential post graduate

destination. However, for the few girls who wished to live at home, possibility for maintained connection to the communities is not as inherently dismal as it appears. The loophole in lack of job opportunity is creativity and entrepreneurship. If the girls wish to utilize their educational experience and work in their communities their option is to forge new spaces for themselves.

Sami from Picobamba said she wanted to study medicine and open a clinic to help people in her community, ideally using her schooling to fill an existing need. Tamyra wanted to offer a similar service saying “I’ll go back and help the people in the community and cure with the medicinal plants that we have there.” Both girls thought outside of the box, bringing in new ideas without erasing existing practices. Sisa gravitated in another direction after learning about feminism. She identified her goal of empowering women in her community and getting involved in government, striving to become the first female president of Huilloc. Finally, Qora, who had the urge to travel said she would be interested in being a guide. While she hoped this would take her to new sites, she also expressed interest in leading trips to Huilloc, giving her a means of working in conjunction with her community and using her acquired Spanish skills to spur the tourism industry at home. As demonstrated by these girls, although education creates a route out of the villages, it could also potentially give the youth the tools to consider contributing to their communities in a new way.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS



Figure 5.1. Dangerous roads (Sacred Valley, Peru).

MG: What do you think of the Sacred Valley Project

Flor: I like that they help me get my uniform and my school supplies and also in the dormitory they help us with our homework.

On one of my first few days in Ollantaytambo I ran into Gabriela on my way home from the market. I hadn't seen her for over three years so we chatted in the street for a bit. Before heading home, I asked if she had some time in the coming days for our interview. She told me that because it was summer and the girls were living at home, she was staying at the dormitory and would love for me to come by for dinner and to conduct the interview.

She told me that the Sacred Valley Project had purchased land and rebuilt since the last time I visited and she was excited to show me around. I listened as she gave me directions and then wandered home.

A few days later I stumbled over to the dormitory through a field in the dark, scraping my leg on chicken-wire while cutting across corn patches. When I arrived Gabriela gave me a tour and I was impressed by the new and improved dormitory. The building surrounded a central grass patio where the girls could play and garden. There were shared rooms where the girls sleep as well as two bathrooms and a small computer room. The kitchen functioned as a study space and had multiple tables and a white board as well as pictures and drawings. The dormitory felt comfortable and homey and I was impressed by how friendly, inviting, bright and well decorated the space was. When visiting the old site of the project, it was much more cramped and temporary, but this space was sturdy, hospitable and open.

Structure of The Sacred Valley Project

An attractive built environment and close proximity to secondary school are far from the only amenities the Sacred Valley Project provides for youths who live in its dormitory. After seeing the space I conversed extensively with Gabriela about the support this structure creates for its students. Not only can they study more comfortably, walking ten minutes instead of hours to school, but they are provided with every meal, school supplies, comfortable beds and showers, tutoring and workshops about health care and job searching. Further cushioning the girls, a fundamental component of the design of the

dormitory is that the girls have a house mother who is a bilingual Quechua and Spanish speaker and who takes care of them, living at the dormitory 24/7 for consistent support and mentorship. She has a background in education so that she can tutor in conjunction with two professional teachers who come each afternoon to work with the students in weak areas and facilitate extracurricular activities. Additionally, Gabriela is a psychologist and said “I don’t directly work as a psychologist but at the same time I do,” and finally, volunteers often come for chunks of time to carry out different projects.

On a normal day, the girls wake up at 5:00am and four of them make breakfast for the group and then go shower. Each student then must organize her room, make her bed, clean up breakfast, and go to school. They start school at 8:00am and come home at 1:00pm, make lunch, and clean the floors and the bathrooms. Then, the professional tutors arrive and the girls work with them in Spanish, reading, writing and math. Tutoring ends at around 6:00 or 7:00pm meaning that the Sacred Valley Project creates the equivalent of a full second school day for the girls to get them caught up.

Evidently, the Sacred Valley Project drastically intervenes in the lives of the youth, contributing copiously to their ability to succeed in school. The immense support the project provided Suyana shows this phenomenon to its most extreme extent. The project did absolutely everything they could to hold her up as she teetered on the brink of failing out of school. Gabriela explained, “Suyana, when she began primary school, did not speak Spanish and repeated the year because she couldn’t understand the language. The second year we assigned a professor to work only with her and the entire year she was with the professor all day and well, she achieved learning the language and now is pretty

independent.” Especially considering an example this extreme it seems valid to wonder if the girls would be able to graduate from secondary school without the foothold and boost that the Sacred Valley Project provides.

Parental Involvement

“My parents want me to keep studying and it is just that here there isn’t really transportation to go to school everyday. I had to wake up at four every morning and I would arrive to Ollantaytambo tired and I didn’t understand what was going on so my parents decided to have me go to the project.”

Not only does the dormitory provide a cradling structure to aid the girls in school as well as everything else related to living away from home, but the girls also have parents who are extremely invested in their lives and their education. This comes into play in the selection criteria for the dormitory. When vacancies arise, meetings are held and families are invited to come down to visit the project and express their interest in participating. This process is taxing, requiring significant effort on the part of the parents who must leave home and family to trek down to Ollantaytambo and up again afterwards. If there are more families at the meeting than open spots at the dorm, another meeting is held. Joseph Levitan said that having more than one meeting cuts numbers down significantly. “People are willing to make one trip but if you have a second one attendance usually cuts down by at least half, sometimes more.” The process continues in this way, chiseling down the candidates to include only those whose parents exhibit the utmost commitment to their child’s education.

Once a child is integrated into the dormitory, parental support continues without falter. Levitan told me, "I know one mother from Socma is sad because all of her daughters are away at school but she also knows that she is taking care of all the animals while they are gone because they are getting to go to school..." In addition to taking on their children's jilted labor and adding it to their own daily grind, parents are required to come down and do community service projects that Levitan referred to as "sweat equity" for the Sacred Valley Project. Families help with gardening, painting and general maintenance as a way of pitching in and building community around the project.

After the opening service day, parents are expected to show up at meetings in Ollantaytambo every month and a half to discuss the specifics of their daughter's experience in school and any new issues that arise. Aside from these meetings, Gabriela expressed feeling comfortable reaching out to parents if need be and said that parents feel the same way, coming to the dormitory on their own accord if there is any matter they want to discuss with the staff. Gabriela said she feels very content and proud of the dynamics the dorm and the parents have forged "they don't forget about the girls, some come down all the time without us calling, others don't and we need to call them but if we call them they come." Levitan was equally elated with parental involvement saying, "we confer with parents, I mean what we are most proud about is the parents are happy to come down here and tell us anything that is on their mind..."

In speaking with students at the Sacred Valley Project, my aim was to learn about their experience pursuing an education. I focused on youths' process of transition into secondary school and how spending formative years in the city impacts their view of their

home. In analyzing these themes I recognize that it is important to acknowledge that their experiences of struggle, of transition, of language acquisition, and of eventual graduation from secondary school exist within the structure of the Sacred Valley Project's dormitory and within the girls specific family units, both of which are outstandingly supportive and willing to go above and beyond to ensure the youths' success in school. I therefore think that it is essential to consider this question: could the girls succeed without all of the extra support that they get from the dormitory? Would they be able to stay in school without parents who are willing to sacrifice for them?

Ideas for the Future

In analyzing the difficulties inherently tied to the transition Quechua youths make when pursuing secondary education, I found myself considering how some of the hardship associated with this transition could be alleviated. I want to specifically thank Juan, Gabriela and Joseph Levitan for conversing with me and giving me an outlet to talk through some of the following possibilities. Here I will leave these ideas relatively unexplored, opening the doors for future research on migration for education of Quechua-speaking youths in the Peruvian Andes.

I mentioned that when I first visited the Sacred Valley Project I participated in a language exchange with the girls. In sharing words in our native tongues we laughed together and were inspired to think about the effort involved in learning and communicating in a second language. The Sacred Valley Project does small activities like this to make a conscious effort to acknowledge and appreciate where the youths come from. The secondary school in Ollantaytambo, however, does not make the same effort.

Perhaps if appreciation for Quechua language and culture were acknowledged in minute ways in the secondary school, the girls would not feel so alienated and ashamed of their roots. I believe that sharing pieces of experience could be a powerful way help the girls feel included.

Perhaps this could start with teachers recognizing that the girls are making a huge effort by coming to school. People who occupy positions of power could simply express interest, asking questions about what the girls value about their communities, paving the way for peers to do the same. While the girls mostly highlighted negative experiences with teachers in their interviews, Sisa told me that she experienced a turning point when one of her teachers told her that she should be proud of where she comes from and her ability to speak Quechua and that the sacrifices she has made to learn Spanish and live away from home, making her strong and resilient. After this conversation, Sisa remembered feeling proud of her personal history, showing that even a simple conversation with someone in a position of mentorship or authority can alter outlook and perhaps lead to feeling tough and even special rather than ashamed.

Another way to encourage positive associations with Quechua culture is to give youths ownership over sharing their experience. They could be put in the role of “expert” or “guide” and introduce others to their unique experiences. Joseph Levitan mentioned that sometimes the girls acts as guides to their communities and feel proud of sharing something of their own. This idea could be expanded to a school setting by getting the girls involved in extracurricular activities. Maybe in art class they could teach their peers basic weaving techniques or help install a garden at the school so that some value is placed on

skills they acquire in the communities. Positively acknowledging Quechua identity could help the girls feel that home is not hidden, alleviating some of the anxiety they foster related to coming from a community.

Another idea I want to highlight is Joseph Levitan's brain child that I will elaborate on. He said "I think having more infrastructure would be helpful...to have roads so that professors can get up to the communities and then we could have, instead of one professor per community, we could have two or three and then there could be school buses that come down and go up in 45 minutes...driving a bus instead of walking, you can get home and still have energy to do your homework." Because teachers must live in the communities to teach there, problems arise with educators not showing up to work. Having safe roads could eliminate this issue, opening the possibility of commuting from an urban center to a village, making the communities desired work sites rather than a last resort.

In addition, improving roads up to the communities could mean easy transport to school and home each day. Joseph Levitan mentioned circulating school buses carrying youth to a more comprehensive school day that would last from 8:00am-4:00pm instead of 8:00am-1:00pm. This would allow students to get everything done at school. They would finish the school day at two or three and then have an hour and a half to either participate in extracurricular activities or seek out tutoring. This way when students get home they can fully concentrate on family and community life, talking about their days with their parents, farming, doing some chores and then resting; waking up the next day refreshed and ready to learn.

This idea is important. The dormitory only serves 16 children, but many children do walk to and from school everyday. Like Qora and Sisa who traveled by foot for a year, this lifestyle is not conducive to learning because students feel exhausted by the effort entailed. That being said, living at the dormitory is not without flaw. Residence in a dormitory eliminates all contact with the students' communities for the majority of the week. The girls can't call home or go back for an evening, a celebration or a birthday and this greatly inhibits the relationship they can maintain with their villages. Living in the dormitory places Ollantaytambo at the forefront of lived experience for five years. With this in mind, maybe by providing transport to and from school each day, Quechua youths could live at home while studying, leading to cultural maintenance. If commuting to school, students could remain in touch with their village and family while still pursuing an education.

Joseph Levitan further developed the potential benefits of being able to return home each day, explaining that according to social construction theory, learning is often done informally through role models, examples and communication. This means that by spending more time at home, the girls would be receiving input from role models in their communities and sharing what they learn at school with friends and family. Interplay between rural and urban areas could chip away at the dichotomy of city as progress and community as failure that the girls seem to have internalized. Enhanced infrastructure could mean living in a community but working as an accountant in Urubamba, living in Ollantaytambo but teaching in Socma or farming in Huilloc and using the produce as a chef in a bustling restaurant. Ability to travel between rural and urban spaces complicates the

narrative of what “success” means, releasing the concept from its confines in urban living and distorting the path to “professional” and the need to *choose* “home.”

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