

Sexual Exploitation of Indigenous Andean Women in Peru: President Fujimori's impact in the 1990s and the current cultural implications¹.

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Abstract

The sexual exploitation of indigenous Andean women in Peru has been researched extensively over the past several decades. Peru received heightened international attention when the so-called “poverty alleviation” programs in the 1990s revealed that hundreds of thousands of indigenous women were forcibly sterilized. Today, groups around the globe fight for the rights of indigenous women in Peru for problems that have remained relatively unchanged in the past half-century. While there is extensive historical research as well as considerable resources describing current issues Andean women face, little work draws these two topics together. Through a substantive literary review, this project draws on the history of the 1990s to inform present controversies. By understanding the two subjects together, a strong argument exists that the national government has failed in protecting the rights of indigenous Andean women. As such, new methods and research are needed to preserve the rights of Peru's in-

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indigenous women. Due to both the normalized sexual exploitation across the nation and extensive cultural diversity across the Andean region, this research presents the argument that advocacy groups and researchers should begin seeking local and culturally individualized methodology for addressing these human rights issues.

Keywords:

sexual exploitation, indigenous women, Peru, human rights, Fujimori

Introduction

“Indigenous women, especially from poor and rural areas, were particularly marginalized.” (U.S. Department of State, 2016, pp. 477)

A human rights report conducted by the U.S. Department of State in 2016 includes a specific focus on both the indigenous population and the marginalization of women in the rural areas of Peru. Today, some of the personal testimonies of the indigenous female population are easily accessible online. Through forceful demands and choked sobs they tell us their stories.² “The women looked like slaughtered sheep when they were being operated on,” explains one woman, “After seeing that, I went back home frightened...they gathered us from town to town. They gathered us from house to house. They excessively watched us so that we wouldn’t run away.” “They took me with lies,” another states. “They operated on me against my will.”

Exploitation against indigenous Andean women in Peru has been a growing issue, especially as information continues to be uncovered from the past. Connecting past grievances to the present has demonstrated that little has occurred to reverse the systematic sexual abuse that was, and is, prevalent in the country.

I began an interest in exploring this topic after my own academic

2. The Quipu Project

and cultural experiences in Peru. As part of a study abroad experience with the honors college at the University of North Carolina – Greensboro, I spent four months studying in Peru at La Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola³. (USIL) and lived with a Peruvian family on the edge of the city of Cusco. Weekly, I had one to two excursions either within or outside of the city to neighboring indigenous communities with professors, including a business owner Alberto Chara⁴, and leading supervisor and architect in cultural preservation, Miguel Landa⁵. Witnessing issues of racism and sexism first-hand on the ground in Cusco and with the mentorship of multiple professors, I first began my interest in this topic of sexual exploitation issues with indigenous women and began attempting to contextualize their recent history with current phenomenon. The assumptions of my own western and American-centered bias I quickly discovered were ill-effective in the modern context of Peru and only by immersing myself in their historical background and culture could I understand what I saw around me every day in the region.

In this work, I seek to contextualize these types of stories of the 1990s into current issues of sexual exploitation that remain today. While issues of sexism, racism, and sexual exploitation, are combined to manifest an undeniably rampant human rights issue, any modern movements to resolve these issues cannot be successful without a careful review of the complicated historical background of Peru.

First, during my both academic studies and cultural immersion experiences in Peru, it was evident that current indigenous women's rights issues are strongly linked to the difficult recent past of the country; namely, groups like the Shining Path in the 1980s, back

3. Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola website

4. Alberto Chara Sr. Chara is a professor in modern history and current cultural issues. He additionally owns a business off Plaza de Armas in Cusco's city center and actively finds a balance between the tourist industry and Peruvian culture in Cusco.

5. Miguel Landa: Sr. Landa works for the Ministry of Culture in Peru and teaches cultural preservation techniques around South America. He's been involved with UNESCO and within my semester in Cusco, he was invited to teach a session in Ecuador in culture preservation relating to Incan structures and earthquakes.

through over a century of dictatorships and military oppression. I continued studies around this topic after my time in Peru and quickly recognized that while research exists concerning both the latter two decades of the twentieth century as well as current issues, few sources combine the convoluted past with the complexities of the present. In this literature review, I seek to do just that.

My methodology is to create a substantive literary review of the history, historical memory of Peru, and the violence and continuing terror that hold roots back to groups like the Shining Path. My goal is to present a clearer picture of current exploitation practices that target indigenous Andean women. Grounded in relevant history, I turn to contemporary misconceptions and failures to address human rights issues pertaining to indigenous women.

The first section of this paper examines Peru's history by highlighting key academic research that attempts to tie in history to current issues. It uses research published about the 1990s and research that spans that period and into the 21st century. Using research from both eras highlight the strengths, focuses, and context of the published findings as they differ in scope and understanding throughout time. Many of the works were published near the end of the 1990s while others have current information concerning the terrorist regimes that have come to light with reconciliation and truth attempts of the Peruvian government in the past couple decades (attempts that often resulted from international pressure). Multiple topics of significance surfaced within the decade of the 90s: 1) the sterilization program of President Fujimori, 2) the strategies of the Shining Path and the military groups that utilized rape and sexual exploitation, and 3) cultural contexts of family planning, marital relationships, parental relationships, etc. The second section of this paper addresses current events including 1) truth and reconciliation projects of Peru relating to the 1990s and current phenomenon that has affected indigenous women (namely, tourism and the western presence), 2) current research from

the last decade about the modern issues women are facing and the ineffectiveness of national government and, 3) analyzing advocacy groups with a selected example. All of these issues understood as a coherent picture of Peru gives us a clear understanding of the uniquely disadvantaged position in which indigenous Andean women are situated. Their case perhaps provides one of the best ways in which to see the impacts of intersecting identities. With the combined negative effects of sexism and racism, the damages of marginalization can be viewed from multiple directions: both outside and within the government of Peru, and even with a lack of understanding from the international sphere. Many groups have stepped into their world forcefully, adding only additional layers of abuse and trauma. Truth and reconciliation efforts have proved ineffective, advocacy groups frequently lack the bigger and complicated picture of their history and present circumstances, and researchers to find new ways to provide opportunities for individualized recovery from traumatic experiences in the past and present

Part One: Historical Context of the 1990s

The rich and complicated history of Peru itself adds a complexity to the current issues it faces. From the Incan empire, to Spanish colonialism, to dictatorships, up to the 1990s and present, intricacies from the past have evolved into current belief systems and cultural practices. Even the geographical makeup of the country (coastal, highlands, and jungle) introduce differences worth exploring to gain a full grasp of who the current Peruvian people are.

The Incan empire itself did not last much longer than a hundred years. Prior to its establishment in the 1820s, Peru held a rich history of various groups of cultures such as the Chimú, Mochi, Wari, and Nazca. Traces of the influences of their traditions and cultures can be found in the Incan empire and remaining artifacts. Upon the Spanish arrival, contrary to popular myth, the Incan empire was al-

ready weakening with what would have likely become a civil war. This resulted in an easy conquest by the Spanish. For the next couple hundred years, the focus was on the silver within Peru as Spain struggled to maintain dominance over the country. With the growing attention of other European powers toward “Spanish” silver as well as the physical difficulty that the Andean mountain range presented in transporting it, Spain quickly lost control when Napoleon drew their attention back to Europe. South America collectively managed to gain independence in the early to mid 1800s, and for the next couple hundred years, Peru fluctuated in and out of various dictatorships and wars with their neighboring countries. Corruption within the dictatorships was common and gradually became almost expected. This cultural attitude was evident in any political conversations with a Peruvian during my time studying in Cusco. Within the past decade, more popular movements and current politicians within Peru run for office with slogans that emphasizes the prevailing problem of systematic corruption and the need for undoubted truth.

For this work, I narrow the lens of which to view corruption in Peru to only those areas that had directly and obvious impact on Andean indigenous women. Perhaps the most common start within academic research on this topic, is with President Alberto Fujimori.

Alberto Fujimori and Sterilization Programs

President Alberto Fujimori presents one of the most complicated issues of corrupted politics within Peru. Currently, the former president is in jail in Peru and has been since 2009 for “human rights abuses” – specifically multiple killings during his presidency (BBC, 2018a). As the BBC rightly highlights, President Fujimori presents two narratives in Peru: “[he] was the president who saved Peru from...terrorism and economic collapse...he was [also] an authoritarian strongman who rode roughshod over the country’s democratic in-

stitutions to preserve his hold on power.” (BBC, 2018a). The country remains very torn in their opinion of his presidency. In 2017, Fujimori was pardoned on the grounds of health, only for that pardon to be reversed a year later (BBC, 2018b). While the human rights issues in question primarily are discussed via his approval of killings that took place during his presidency and war on terrorism, much less is discussed in popular news sources about the sterilization programs.

As more information comes to light, the significance and damages of the programs of President Fujimori in the 1990s in general has become more widely understood. Jelke Boesten⁶, a faculty member and researcher on Gender and Develop at the King’s College in London, has produced some of the most foundational academic work regarding the 1980s and 1990s in Peru – regarding human rights abuses against indigenous populations. She clearly outlines Fujimori’s impacts in the country both from a broad national perspective and the perspective of indigenous women in her work. Perhaps the most well-known impact of President Fujimori was his capture of the notorious Shining Path terrorist leader Abimael Guzmán in 1992. He garnered national popularity and support which he used to continue mandates that created incredible measures of control over the country and society (Boesten, 2007, pp. 5-6). While population control attempts had been made in the past, Fujimori revitalized them to new extreme measures. Contraceptives were still widely promoted but Fujimori showed a difference in his presidency by disregarding the beliefs of the church and much of the predominant cultural beliefs (unlike the presidents before him) and adding “voluntary” sterilization programs. This was met with both popular and monetary support internationally, furthering his popularity (Boesten, 2007, p. 6). Sterilization became vastly more widespread in rural areas in a short time. According to Boesten, however, a red flag introduced into the program was quota systems given to the doctors:

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“...establishing quotas to sterilize women is already sufficient proof of the political motives of this programme: setting quotas seriously implies that the programme was not motivated by concerns about women’s health, birth control, or even family planning; it was about national demographics in relation to economic growth.” (2007, p. 7).

To make matters worse, the programs were not sent to what were considered overpopulated areas, but to rural communities with poor and marginalized populations:

“Local healthcare personnel had to determine the number of ‘women in fertile age’ in their region, and sterilize a certain number of these women. Those workers who met their quotas received goods or money...Donated food was used as a stimulus for women to agree to sterilizations.” (Boesten, 2007, p. 7).

If donated food as a reward for agreeing to be sterilized wasn’t enough, the “food distributions” were set up in order to capture women and threats of imprisonment, threats of harm to their family members, and even physical force were all administered to pressure compliance. The government mandated that healthcare facilities in marginalized and rural areas were to ensure that any women who came for either a delivery or abortion didn’t “walk out without a sufficient method to prevent future pregnancies...” and as a result, women would leave sterilized without knowledge that it had happened (Boesten, 2007, p. 13).

Boesten additionally brings into perspective some of the claims about the sterilization program. While international press and advocacy groups states that between 200,000 and 300,000 women were

sterilized between 1995 and 1999, the claim is difficult, if not impossible, to prove. The Ministry of Health provides the information that 277,793 women were sterilized in the period, but it is unclear and impossible to know how much of this was either forced, manipulated into, or entirely voluntary (Boesten, 2007, p. 13). Regardless, we must too remember that these numbers were in a targeted people group: namely, Andean indigenous women. Whether this was intentional or occurred simply because these women were easier to manipulate due to culture and power structures, is also difficult to prove either way. Simultaneously, there is also little doubt that issues of racism and sexism were everywhere within the system and culture and impossible to eradicate – especially during that short span of time. Women claimed that they were abused by their doctors and nurses in the sterilization program with “humiliating remarks about women’s sexual behavior, their stupidity, their marginal position and their weak legal position.” (Boesten, 2007, p. 14). We must also remember that there was also the possibility of a language barrier between doctor and patient due to the indigenous language of these women. This would make explaining the sterilization process difficult, and women could easily have submitted to it with bribery without full knowledge of what they were submitting to. Using the excuse of poverty alleviation and giving women a “choice,” the execution of the program makes it obvious that this was only a guise in which to achieve another goal in targeting vulnerable women to stop their reproduction. This begs an important question: whether intentionally or not, is President Fujimori, among other crimes against humanity, additionally responsible for genocide? Fujimori used highly gendered strategy in his politics, and even solicited feminist demands for better birth control as justification for his actions. In many ways, he was considered a spokesperson and advocate for women, though he was ultimately “motivated by authoritarian politics [and] embedded in a patriarchal strategy of control over an already disenfranchised population...” (Boesten, 2012, pp. 369-370).

The Shining Path, the Military, and Rape

A key into understanding the context in which Fujimori was operating in his presidency are the cases of sexual violence against indigenous Andean women that had been in existence prior. Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (known as the PTRC or TRC) Final Report on the 1980s and 1990s states that over 40% of violence, death, and disappearances reported were in the Ayacucho area – one of the main indigenous communities in Peru (2003). The peasant or “campesina” population was the primary target of violence, resulting in 79% of rural populations and over 50% engaged in farming. 75% spoke Quechua rather than Spanish (Peru Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2003). Interestingly, the TRC report makes no mention (or demonstrates knowledge) on what percentage of these numbers were men or women – though it is clear that sexual acts against women during the two decades was significantly higher. Other research brings to light these human rights abuses against primarily indigenous women. In Kimberly Theidon's⁷ research on wartime sexual violence in Peru, she analyzes the testimonies of women who bore children out of wartime rape. “The army, the police, and the guerrillas of the Shining Path and Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement are all named...about rape-related pregnancies.” (Theidon, 2015, p. 193) While women were frequently forced into abortions by the same men who impregnated them, those babies that were born were taken away (Theidon, 2015, p. 193). In another one of her works, Boesten elaborates of the complications of the Shining Path's impact on indigenous women:

“The Shining Path... imposed strict rules upon communities, whereby adulterers and rapists, gay, transsexual people, and prostitutes were publicly and violently punished. Although Shining Path

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forbade its cadres to engage in rape and sexual abuse, there is ample evidence that Shining Path activity led to forced marriages, forced pregnancies, sexual torture, and sexual slavery....” (2012, p. 367)

Additionally, Boesten and the TRC both illustrate how sexual violence was “used strategically to terrorize communities, spread fear, and torture prisoners...” (2012, p. 366). Here we see that rape wasn’t simply a result of wartime, but it was utilized as a weapon of war in and of itself. It was frequently public and repetitive, traumatizing not just the women subjected but to their families and communities. Peru even allowed sexual violence within their 70 military bases, systemizing and generalizing its use. This resulted in what is still an unknown number of pregnancies (Theidon, 2015, p. 197). Additionally, women reacted to this oncoming storm of raping military men by getting pregnant on purpose with other known men in their communities. This was to both prevent them from becoming pregnant by an unknown man and gave them the ability to name their child according to their cultural practices (Theidon, 2015, p. 196). This issue of naming and knowledge of the father was crucial culturally, as will be elaborated in the following portion of this paper.

Cultural Contexts

There are multiple levels of the issue that exemplify the difficulties of the situation in which indigenous women operated during this time. According to Snider, 90%-100% of women suffered from some form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Snider, 2004, p. 396) and withstood their own trauma related specifically to sexual violence that was present both within the terrorist groups and their own supposedly protective police force. They additionally suffered abuses that were linked to their ethnicity and racism, evident by the mockery of

their doctors (Boesten, 2007, p. 14). Another layer of the exploitation issues lies within the combination of their cultural norms and understanding with the addition of sexual abuse and rape. The names of children carry specific significance to indigenous populations in Peru – and as children were born out of rape, this practice presets numerous problems for indigenous women. The naming of a child derives from the name of both the father and mother. If the father is unknown, the name of the child carries the living history of the violence and shame associated with rape. Additionally, Theidon covers that the terminology used adds another layer of social out-casting to children born out of wartime violence. “In Peru,” she writes, “among other names, children are referred to as “los regalos de los soldados” (the soldier’s gifts), “hijo de nadie” (nobody’s child), “fulano” (what’s his name), and “chatarra” (stray cat).” (Theidon, 2015, p. 193). For Quechua-speaking communities, names in general imply social hierarchies – those left with names that derive from a violent past of rape force children and their mothers outside of community acceptance (Theidon, 2015, p. 194). The psychological effects of this are astronomical. An anecdotal account from a woman in Peru states that she felt as though she carried a monster in her womb – a general sentiment that is described in multiple ways with women who had children conceived of wartime rape (Theidon, 2015, p. 195). If these mothers, communities, and children born considered these types of pregnancies with the harshness of terminology described, how might it have affected the wider Peruvian culture? When President Fujimori stepped in to forcibly sterilize the same group of women subjected to systematic rape, how much of his decision was based off wanting to be rid of these “monsters” with no name? President Fujimori was known for eradicating the terrorism of groups like the Shining Path – was the effort to also greatly slow or halt the birth rate of the indigenous women an inadvertent attempt to simply erase any trace of the Shining Path members through their children? In her research, Theidon concludes with thoughts that explore the phenomenon of an “ab-

sent presence” of children born out of wartime rape (2015, p. 199). She considers them “hidden in plain sight” within the local communities and modern Peruvian history. If these children who were born are absent, how much more are the children that would have been born if not for the forced sterilization? These issues leave women in an impossible situation where choice is denied to them in both situations. Forced pregnancies and inhibiting their ability to ever have children again. Both scenarios leaked down from a patriarchal system that endeavored to subdue them.

Fathers within indigenous households also add a complexity to the situation. A woman who desires a use of a contraceptive is frequently accused of wanting to be with another man (Boesten, 2007, p. 11). A woman who has undergone rape or sexual violence from outside her marriage will find it additionally difficult to engage in any sexual activity even within a consensual context. 95% of surveyed victims of violence in Peru had intense emotional avoidance of any activity that reminded them of the past (Snider, 2004, p. 396). Men who suffered from PTSD were prone to turn to alcoholism and women frequently turned to isolation (Snider, 2004, p. 395). In 1999, a survey in Quechua-speaking indigenous communities provided insight to women’s status. With a pool of five thousand men and women, 4% of women responded that they speak up with they did not agree with their husband on domestic issues. Only 15% of women claimed to have a say in decisions relating to sexual relations, contraception, and number of children. Even more worrying, 28% of women believed that they should not be beaten by their husband under any circumstances (Bant, 2008, pp. 249-250). Such a harsh perspective on even their own roles in relation to their husbands is cause for concern.

Anne Larme⁸ conducted research in the late 1990s that considered rural areas of Peru, specifically focusing on vulnerability, gender,

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and the view on women's bodies. Considering the timing of her research and the sterilization programs that were still in effect (though far from public as of yet) her viewpoint in her academic work is valuable to consider. Female labor is considered less valuable, and thus men are generally more preferred both as adults and as a child born into a family household (Larme, 1998, p. 1008). From the Andean belief system, certain groups of people are considered weaker and more vulnerable than others. "The very young, the old, anyone who has suffered a serious loss of blood or body fluids through injury or childbirth, and individuals who have worked many consecutive years in the lowlands, are all thought to be more vulnerable to illness." (Larme, 1998, p. 1010). The result of such beliefs leaves women in a state of becoming gradually weaker in the eyes of their communities. From their menstrual cycles, to any increase of children they have, the more blood loss, and thus the weaker they supposedly become (Larme, 1998, p. 1010). Women in the Cuyo Cuyo region (at least) are seen as permanently chronically ill in which childbirth is ultimately blamed and the fluctuations of negative emotions tied to their menstrual cycle are considered proof of this inferiority of health and ultimately, community status (Larme, 1998, 1011).

As I move to consider the second portion of this paper and current events and contexts, I continue to draw information provided in this portion to cast a new light onto other studies and research. With the grounding belief of inferiority within the Andean culture, the combined effects of racism and sexism passed down through colonialism, and the continued trauma of explicit sexual violence followed by Fujimori's subtle and hidden violence in sterilization programs, we can better understand the current phenomenon's happening in modern-day Peru and especially comprehend its complexities.

Part Two: Current Cultural Implications

Within my time as a student in Cusco, Peru, two buzzwords I'd hear shouted from protests that blocked bus routes and filled Plaza de Armas, marching down Avenida del Sol: *la corrupción* (corruption) and *la verdad* (truth). Political corruption in Peru has been an issue for nearly its entire history of independence, and a new desire and demand for the truth in the midst of corruption may possibly be the upmost of importance to those at least in Cusco, if not elsewhere. In both in-country experiences in an indigenous-heavy population and my continuing research, Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission is perhaps one of the most notable sources and clearest link in understanding Peru's complicated history congruent with today's movements.

Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Westernized Impact and Pressures

Under increasing international pressure (specifically from the United States) the TRC arose from the 1980s and 1990s, spurred by the increasingly apparent human rights violations committed by terrorist regimes, the political corruption of President Fujimori's presidency, and various political scandals that occurred at the turn of the century (Heilman, 2018).

The "final report" from Peru's TRC was published in 2003 – though much has surfaced since its publication. Even within the report in the early 2000s, there is a lack of information and a vague mention of critical circumstances to that time. Pertaining to indigenous women specifically, there are only nine references to women within the 14,000+ word document, and only two of these mentions of women are references to abuses against them (Peru Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2003). The TRC came from both pressure

within the country as well as internationally. The United States Agency for International Development (better known as USAID) provided funding for the TRC, namely, \$1.5 million in support for its operational costs, though it additionally added support for localized Peruvian programming related to the TRC, known as “complementary support” and amounting to nearly \$1 million (United States Agency for International Development Office of Democratic Initiatives, 2002). Many of the latter portion of funding supported local workshops (many in the Ayacucho, Huancavelica, and Cusco regions) that vary from training programs for police forces, counseling for victims, arts related festivals, educational and information-focused campaigns, and various media programs with included indigenous languages (United States Agency for International Development Office of Democratic Initiatives, 2002). The TRC itself cost Peru’s economy an estimated \$25 billion dollars (Peru: Truth commission will not bring reconciliation, 2003).

Unfortunately, the TRC, even though widely supported while it was underway, has been met with heavy criticism ever since its publication. While investigations undergone by the Truth Commission has exposed ability to link names and places of births via rape to their perpetrators and groups involved, the Ministry of Defense denies any access to records that expose any kind of sexual violence against women, and specifically indigenous women (Boesten, 2012, p. 369). As observed by Bant and is evident in the TRC report, “international declarations and agreements about indigenous health continue to neglect the issue of sexual rights, even though it is so vital to indigenous women.” (2008, p. 248).

While sexual violations against indigenous women go underrepresented and information about human rights violations go undeclared, the representation that does exist has polarizing effects. This adds yet another layer of complications onto the intersection of identity in indigenous communities with a perpetuation of sexism, racism,

and issues with socioeconomic prejudices. In the TRC and related truth projects, the use of individual narratives to summarize the conflict that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s sometimes do more damage than good. As Martha-Cecilia Dietrich⁹ notes in her research relating to historic memory in Peru as they relate to indigenous communities, “Dominant narratives of victims and perpetrators effectively silence more ambiguous complicated memories.” (Dietrich, 2019, p. 59). According to her, while the aftermath of the violence in the latter two decades of the 1990s spurred initiatives to tell the stories of those “unheard” peoples, the “act of ‘giving a voice’” to people reinforces an unequal relationship of power between the voice givers (found in international attention and projects like the TRC) and the indigenous communities in need of a “voice.” (Dietrich, 2019, p. 62). She additionally remarks that “after almost two decades of transitional justice, memory activism and human rights movements, today’s public debates about terrorism still seem more concerned with fabricating images of inherently evil perpetrators rather than trying to understand the roots of politically motivated violence.” (Dietrich, 2019, p. 60).

This issue is a call back related to subaltern voices explored by Gayatri Spivak and whether or not it is actually ever possible to obtain them. Once spoken, and especially once spoken through the figurative microphone of a dominant group, the authenticity of a subaltern voice is lost. Spivak specifically points out in her work that the woman as a subaltern group is particularly vulnerable and unable to speak (Spivak, 1988, p. 104). The dangers of the TRC specifically, is that in their very name they claim to represent the entire truth of what occurred in the 1980s and 1990s in order to put an end to the inquiries and satisfy both the Peruvian people and international interest. With some truths omitted or not fairly and fully covered, they have left out crucial areas of concern which have heavily fallen upon

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indigenous women. An immediate response after the publication of the TRC concluded that the “report will be a source of major controversy as individual responsibilities are highlighted, and it is unlikely to lead to reconciliation.” (Peru: Truth commission will not bring reconciliation, 2003). Dietrich echoes this sentiment in her work, “In the Peruvian case, categories of victims and perpetrators could not clearly and exclusively be allocated to a specific group. In this sense, making and taking sides has been particularly challenging for those concerned with establishing truth and justice in a way that serves what the TRC has called a “national reconciliation.” (2019, p. 67).

The narration that exists on terrorist and victim is not as clear as the TRC would like us to believe. Portraying specific and stereotyped pictures of a “victim” and a “terrorist” causes outliers to adapt radical positions either left or right politically, without any understanding of the intricate complexities of both in their links to the violence in Peru and where the real violence actually arose from (Dietrich, 2019, p. 67, 78). “Common enemies are so easily created and mystified...Radical extremists are painted as seemingly isolated groups...Memory narratives create heroes and villains, victims and perpetrators, good and evil. In Peru these binary divisions are not as clear as they might be in other contexts.” (Dietrich, 2019, pp. 78-79). If the nuances between groups aren't at least presented to exist in and of themselves, violence will likely only repeat itself without the ability to learn from the past if presented far too pluralistically. A misunderstood and under-narrated history of systematic uses of exploitation of indigenous women within the late 1900s led to catastrophic consequences that have been ongoing ever since.

Despite Spivak's pessimistic perspective on an inability to capture a true subaltern voice, the stories of the victims still must be heard as best as we are able to gain a full picture. An indigenous woman once confessed to Dietrich that “el silencio nos enferma” (the silence sickens us)” (2019, pp. 78-79). Dietrich's work pursued storytelling

to break the silence but also discovered its frustrating limitations. The memory of the victims she came in contact with, while valuable, “is also a toxic in that it may impact the body and mind destructively” (2019, p. 80). One of her interviewees provided the perspective that many did not want to tell their stories because they couldn’t see any benefit of having them told. They could only see the potential danger of becoming social outcasts or gaining attention from local government authorities. In his perspective, nobody but the westerner or the dominant social group could at all benefit from hearing and collecting these stories (2019, p. 79). In her concluding thoughts, Dietrich summarizes this constant conflict:

“While I have found that dichotomies such as victim/perpetrator, justice/injustice and guilt/innocence may be analytically misleading, they are still important to those who make use of them in order to exist in a world-after-war. These terms accomplish an important task in that they create a certain order amidst the chaos of disrupted lives...Creating more nuanced images of actors in former conflicts scrutinizes simplistic dichotomies of good and evil, while—and this is vital—avoiding any relativization or legitimization of the crimes committed. But without identifying the nuances that blur established boundaries, we run the risk of creating new myths.” (2019, pp. 81-82)

Western influences and pressures had manifest itself beyond the encouragement of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the research that developed since. We might also consider western influences one of those areas of “nuances” that Dietrich highlights above. One of the most decisively new developments in Peru for the indigenous and rural areas is that of tourism. In my educational experience abroad, Professor Alberto Chara claimed that it was due to

the presence of the American and general western-tourist that Peru was learning to value their indigenous heritage again. From Spanish colonialism to the present, Peru has struggled with racism in their preference for lighter-skinned peoples. Anyone who spoke Quechua and lived in rural and indigenous communities were (and still are) considered as intellectually inferior. With the boom in tourism due mostly to sites like Machu Picchu, westerners have flocked to the country to learn about these ancient Incan people and had a desire to connect with indigenous people. With their newly gained attention, the indigenous population has earned back a pride in their ethnicity – as well as a new industry to work within. Indigenous ethnicity, food, music, culture, and language have all become the primary marketable features of Peru as a country.

The validity of this information presented to me under USIL's education in Peru is backed by the work of Dr. Annelou Ypeij¹⁰, an anthropologist who has conducted extensive research in Peru focusing on economy structures relating to gender and ethnicity for indigenous women. Considering the impacts that come with tourism (a twofold experience tied with western presence and the new industry) is important in any further analysis of the situation of indigenous women in Peru.

Because of the western arrival and desire to see the “authentic” indigenous communities, Quechua-speaking indigenous communities became more visible and desirable to have in Cusco and surrounding areas as tourists made their way through the trails and communities to reach Machu-Picchu. The advantage for indigenous women (generally speaking) is that due to the tourist desire to contact the “authentic” (a controversial statement that will be elaborated later) woman leaves more control for that women to sell her products or services and have an aspect of control over her finances (Ypeij, 2012, p. 18). While there are certainly underlying concerns about the west-

10. Annelou Ypeij Biography

ern presence and influence, there is undoubtedly a positive spin on the impacts of tourism on the indigenous women. Ypeij summarizes her work with this consideration:

“The sexual division of labor changes as women weavers become important income generators who may even earn more than men and the men have increasingly involved in household chores and child care...some women use these earnings for higher education, while others have become wealthy...this might be the beginning of a trend toward social mobility for indigenous women. ...their economic success challenges the linkage between ethnicity and class and the related association between femininity, indigenoussness, and poverty...the structures of the tourism industry improve the economic position of their households, the structures of the tourism industry produce new gender, ethnic, and class inequalities.” (2012, p. 31)

With both the flood of tourists within the country providing a chance of upward mobility and undoubtedly an additional influx of new idea and perspectives on women, indigenous women certainly have stumbled upon different types of opportunities. At the same time, any western input of how they believe women ought to pursue their own rights should be pursued with extreme caution.

Current Reports on Women's Rights Issues

Along with the new role in life that many indigenous women find themselves in with the rise of the tourist industry, there are additional studies and attempts to expose the injustices they face currently. These injustices are more quickly and easily exposed under both different leadership and more international attention that began, coinciden-

tally, around the same time as the tourist industry and the fall of President Fujimori. A variety of academic sources have outlined some of the primary current issues and research done.

Boesten provides some general information with sexual violence against women in Peru. “Peru [is] very high on the world ranking of registered cases of sexual violence... Experts estimate that only 16 percent of victims of sexual violence report this to the appropriate institutions; hence, the numbers represent only a tip of the iceberg.” (2012, p. 362). Many of these cases of sexual violence occur in the domestic sphere, and with the previous information about the percentage of women who appear to believe that violence and abuse from their spouses is normal and/or acceptable (Bant reports that only 28% of women believed that they should not be beaten by their husband under any circumstances, leaving 72% who presumably believe there are circumstances in which being abused by their husband is allowable (2008, pp. 249-250). Though I have generally focused on numbers unassociated with the metropolis of Peru, statistics from Lima suggest that even within that city 51% of women have been sexually and physically abused by an intimate partner, generally in lower-income areas. These are all strongly linked to gender-role stigmas, racism, and systematic violence (Durfee, 2012, p. 649). Because women are seen as inferior and “dirty” in society and are strongly reliant on often minimum wage jobs to support their children, they frequently stay in abusive relationships without showing any intention of leaving (Durfee, 2012, pp. 649-650). Some of the difficulty in even providing statistics and conducting research in these areas and specifically with indigenous communities, is that gender roles and the resulting stigma makes it nearly impossible for women to discuss sex within their communities and their very bodies are considered the sexual property of their husbands. They are pressured to use their sexuality in order to gain advantages socially, economically, and financially and once again, there are clear links to this disadvantage with

poverty and ethnicity, making the gender roles increasingly oppressive to indigenous women (Durfee, 2012, pp. 650-651). While Durfee's research is more recent, federal news report from the United States published a summary of an internationally represented committee on Peru's women's rights issues in 2007 with similar information, demonstrating that there has been very little change over the years for women in Peru. "49 per cent of women in Lima had reported physical violence by a partner. In Lima and Cuzco, 1 in 4 women had reported having been injured more than five times, and 50 per cent of pregnant women in Lima had experienced physical violence during at least one pregnancy." (U.S. Fed. News Service, 2007, p. 1) The committee also made an observation that agrees with Durfee's research that "in many cases victims did not report violence" and specifically, "In indigenous and rural areas, the situation was more difficult." (U.S. Fed. News Service, 2007, p. 8). What is perhaps the most discouraging, is that according to the report, "Peru had made significant progress on gender issues" as far as legislation was concerned, "but violence against Peruvian women remained high." (U.S. Fed. News Service, 2007, p. 1).

Why is this? Peru has made steps to eradicate violence against their women and specifically the indigenous population, but the statistics on violence occurring has made no significant change over the past couple decades. And, as Boesten observed, the information we do have about the abuses against women are "only a tip of the iceberg" (2012, p. 362). When you consider the past actions of government forces in Peru, namely the police and military, we can see that they did little to halt sexual violence against indigenous women in the Andes region, and rather, they used sexual exploitation measures systematically to control communities. Boesten's research draws the connection that Peru was actually one of the first regions to develop legislation and policies that addressed the issue of violence against women in the early 1990s (2012, p. 362). This is disconcerting as we

now know that this did not happen at all, and the opposite occurred. “[The] impact of those early interventions showed that policy and legislation designed to curb violence against women lacked a clear legal framework, did not address institutional discrimination based on class, race, and gender, and lacked funding to improve or run social services for women...” (Boesten, 2012, p. 362). The U.S. Department of State released a Human Rights Report in 2015 about Peru making similar connections as did Boesten. The report states that “The legal framework governing women’s rights and protections is comprehensive and well defined. Application and enforcement of the law, however, were severely lacking...experts maintained that rape was significantly underreported due to stigma and a fear of retribution, including further violence.” (U.S. Department of State, 2016, p. 476). The U.S. Department of State restates multiple times that the issue of violence against indigenous women remains one of the highest areas of concern for human rights concerns in Peru:

“Violence against women and girls—including rape, spousal abuse, and sexual, physical, and mental abuse—remained serious national problems... Indigenous communities continued to be politically, economically, and socially marginalized. The constitution and law stipulate that all citizens have the right to use their own language before any authority through an interpreter and to speak their native language...Nevertheless, insufficient resources resulted in language barriers that impeded the full participation of indigenous persons in the political process. Indigenous women, especially from poor and rural areas, were particularly marginalized.” (2016, pp. 477-478)

Further, it criticizes the Peruvian government for poor enforcement that lacked any effectivity and for “no available statistics on sexual harassers prosecuted, convicted, or punished” (U.S. Department of State, 2016, p. 478).

In response to this apparent problem, Boesten turns her initial research question on its head. “Instead of asking what the state does to curb violence against women,” she writes, “I ask how it perpetuates such violence.” (2012, p. 363). She goes on to claim that the Peruvian state itself is the “main perpetrator of violence against women” and, as the statistics of intimate partner violence demonstrates, it actually works to normalize violence even while Peru is not in any active violent conflict as they were in the 1980s and 1990s (2012, p. 369). As sexual violence against women has become tangled up as part of the “cultural norm” of the indigenous population, the state has become passive on how they address any issues relating to it, claiming that to go after such problems threatens the family structure and the ideological agenda of the communities (Boesten, 2012, p. 376). This is further problematic in that as these indigenous communities themselves accept sexual violence as normal, the ethnicity and culture in the communities become tangled in these violent actions, placing indigenous communities to be perceived to the outside world as inferior due to the rampant sexual violence. This assumption would neglect to acknowledge the inactivity of the state and policy enforcements, as well as the spike in sexual violence that occurred in the late 1990s and remained afterward. While the terrorist regimes and Fujimori’s “programs” are perhaps no longer in place logistically, the actions and effects are ongoing to this day.

To expound on Boesten’s question of perpetuating violence, as the attempted resolution from the national government manifested itself from international pressures and funding (via the form of the TRC), I must also ask: is the country actually capable of resolving these problems in and of itself? In other words, was the TRC too much of a creation of international values of women’s rights that do not yet authentically exist within the Peruvian culture? Until these values truly do exist within the culture, true reconciliation may be impossible.

Current Voices and Advocacy

Multiple advocacy groups work for the sake of women's rights in Peru, and many that specifically prioritize indigenous women. Advocacy groups range from healthcare issues, indigenous cultural authenticity and preservation, human trafficking, and sexual violence. Awareness appears to be the first step for many of these groups and webpages will frequently feature anecdotal stories from indigenous women – many of them focused on the sterilization program under President Fujimori. However, the motives and the methods of these advocacy groups need to be carefully examined.

One notable group (The Quipu Project) seems to primarily give a way for women to speak and be heard about their experiences pertaining to the sterilization program. “Women appreciate hearing the responses recorded by listeners,” explained Rosemarie Lerner, a co-director and executive producer of the project. “They were finally being heard and recognized in other countries...they know it's important in the fight for justice...they really value that and think it's good support for them.” (Ford, 2016, n.p.). The Quipu project states that their goal “is to shine a light on the sterilisations, creating a collective memory archive of this case...Our intention is that these stories are never forgotten, that these abuses will never be repeated.” (The Quipu Project, 2020, n.p.) Their webpage is designed simply and would be easy for both a contributor and listener to interact with the collected stories of these women. Women have only to call a number provided by the Quipu project and record their story. The testimonies of these women vary from Spanish to Quechua, and English translations in textual overlays are provided. As the website does state, the primary advantage to this is simply for women to be heard, to have a collection of stories, and understand some of the variety of situations that arose during this time. One woman tells of how she had gone for the sake of obtaining contraception and was willing to cooperate on that level – but as the clinic didn't have any in supply, they forced her to be

sterilized instead¹¹. Another woman tells of her forced sterilization and goes into detail about the reoccurring health problems she's had in her life ever since and has been unable to help on the farm. She additionally states that the husbands in her community don't treat the women well, issues a demand for justice, and cries out to the government to do something to assist them.¹²

Simultaneously both advantages and disadvantages are noted in advocacy attempts such as the Quipu Project. The advantage is simply the collection of stories for researchers, and women's ability to speak up. Bant points out the problem in that the dominance of male leadership fails to recognize women-specific health concerns. "Women's demand for control over their sexuality are often considered to be urban, middle-class priorities, and not representative of the needs of rural and indigenous women..." and additionally, there is an assumption that all indigenous and rural people share the same interests" (Bant, 2008, pp. 247, 249). Simply having indigenous opinions and priorities in leadership is not enough. There are numerous male leaders who have indigenous heritage currently, but a lack of female representation and voice concerning their priorities and concerns. Groups like the Quipu Project may present significant value in a collection of demands from indigenous women – serving much like a petition.

The disadvantages with this, is that a women's ability to access a phone to call and record their testimony with the Quipu project would be undoubtedly limited. Thus, even the recordings that exist on the website are likely still somewhat filtered to a certain class or group of indigenous women and cannot reach every woman. Even if a woman does have access, the likelihood of her calling may additionally be slim, as research has previously demonstrated how any discussion of sexuality among women is taboo. Many women do con-

11. Quipu Project: Testimony #1

12. Quipu Project: Testimony #2

sider themselves the sexual property of their husbands, and thus calling independently to give the media a story of their bodies and sexual harms would be a difficult step to make on multiple accounts. For a woman to record her testimony and allow it to be published and accessible to anyone, she would first have to gain some levels of education on the benefit it may bring her, understand the Quipu project's attempt to protect her privacy, and even consider that she may possess more rights as a woman than she believes to hold. In other words, both practical and cultural boundaries would be to be overcome.

Another potential criticism of advocacy groups and their attempts at bringing these stories and women's rights issues to a national level, is that there is still doubt it would work. Even if more legislation were passed in their favor, an extreme re-shaping of the execution of legislation would need to take place since it obviously has not occurred in the past. Additionally, some research would suggest that real change for these women need to take place on a community-level, not on national legislation. Each community has suffered different levels of trauma in the past and the needs that have arisen will vary based on the community and what levels of trauma, violence, and sexual exploitation continue (Snider, 2004, pp. 399). Many of these groups appeal to international involvement (e.g. the Quipu Project is partnered with Amnesty International¹³.) but such appeals could add more layers of ineffective action as those (particularly in the Western world) lack real understanding the intricacies and complexities of Peru's indigenous past. They frequently fall into what Snider calls "category fallacy" which is essentially a misdiagnosed problem and cause of that problem – which Peru itself already struggles with (Snider, 2004, p. 390). While some international involvement we can see as beneficial in that it does provide accountability to the Peruvian government, relying on international problem-solving on a localized level in Peru would likely prove damaging. Dietrich's work has pre-

13. Quipu Project: About the Project weblink

viously explained some of the harm done by polarizing too much the different groups and creating an “us versus them” mentality in these issues. If contraception on the whole, linked closely to sterilization, is linked to being the villain (along with any form of government, healthcare, etc.) any good that these things may bring could very well be nearly impossible to see. The narrative created by the recorded stories of these women in the Quipu Project could create unhelpful narratives that outline a false line designating what is good and evil, who are the heroes and who are the villains. Peru’s history is clear that these are not at all easy distinctions, and if the end result is that the Quipu Project creates that way of viewing the situation, they may accidentally create a new problem.

Discussion

The presidency of Alberto Fujimori was severely complicated. In claiming to represent the interest of indigenous women, his own political and ideological agenda was clearly at play. By targeting indigenous communities (with or without malicious intentions) and encouraging abusive methods to submit women to forced sterilization, we can see the supposed good of such a program was not accomplished at all, and likely added more layers of trauma to indigenous women. Not only did the Shining Path use rape, even the military utilized sexual exploitation and rape as a justifiable means of controlling communities. This further complicated women’s lives in their cultural context and importance of knowing the father for the sake of naming children. Men in the terrorist groups as well as Peru’s military would frequently force women they had impregnated to carry out abortions and if that failed, they stole the born child after the fact. With all of these illegitimate births occurring as well as the trauma inflicted into the sexual lives of the women, we can more clearly see the awful effects of the forced sterilizations that were simultaneously oc-

curing. The indigenous women's body was attacked on multiple fronts: first through terrorist groups, then through the military, then through the supposed government assistance to family planning. All of this added by the cultural strain that their sexuality belonged to their husbands.

Perhaps because of international pressure, the TRC too quickly attempted to oversimplify the issues of the 1980s and 1990s. What is not stated in the TRC is just as valuable to recognize as what is discussed. As time went on, however, it became more apparent that in claiming to present the truth and the whole truth, it caused damage by not achieving even that goal. It also contained very little information about the abuses committed against women, specifically the indigenous population. The tourist industry also plays a role in the more modern development of Peru along with international attention. It provides some insight to some positives of international presence in the country to counter what is frequently shown as a negative. This is a clear example of what Dietrich and Ypiej uncover in the nuances between positive and negative impacts and the "actors" of good and evil. Bringing the tourist industry into the discussion is also important as it shapes the imagery of which international groups and peoples consider Peruvian indigenous communities. Peru has shaped their current marketable representation around the indigenous women. With this, we should be asking: How might this effect the future?

Finally, the current research and reports on the human rights issues for indigenous women provide a clear picture to understand that very little has changed. While legislation might be in place to hypothetically protect women, little has been done to act on those new policies. This is crucial in understanding how Peru should move forward in the future. Additionally, looking at an example of a current advocacy organization demonstrates the ways in which others are attempting to bring some sort of acknowledgement of abuses against indigenous women, though the effectiveness of such groups is unknown.

Conclusion

Peru presents perhaps one of the clearest cases of the problems that arise out of intersecting identities. Indigenous communities already face problems in regards to representation, healthcare, and equality. Women specifically have another layer of problems that arise out of defined and clear issues of sexism both from within and without their own specific culture. They were the targeted population of both the terrorist regimes and the military initiatives to fight off terrorism. Already sexually exploited and abused by scattered violent groups, the government that claimed to have their best interest in mind only added another layer of abuse atop what already existed. The execution of justice within Peru we know is not effective, and thus additional legislation would likely prove fruitless. Drawing specifically from the work of Boesten, Snider, Bant, Dietrich, and Theidon we are mostly able to see what has not been working effectively. Legislation appears to have no effect, how the story of the past connected with the present has not been told well or accurately, the damages done in the late 1990s continue to have unacknowledged and serious harms today, and indigenous women are the primary suffering group in Peru, specifically subject to sexual exploitation on all fronts.

With so little existing research about what would actually work to resolve the issues of historical memory, trauma, healthcare, and current sexual exploitation, there are a few efforts that need to be made to gain a better picture at what could be done.

Snider's work would suggest that attempts at measures of justice and advocacy should be done at the local level, community-by-community, and building systems of accountability and representation. Boesten's work interacting with indigenous people in Peru shows that there is a general unwillingness for response to interviews or researchers within communities because they cannot see a way in which it would benefit them. If work was done on the local, community level,

empowering members of the community to shape it the way they desired rather than appealing to national and international intervention may garner more active participation in community reform for the benefit of indigenous women. Building a community and localized historic memory may also prove beneficial for indigenous women as Dietrich studies. It may enable them to process their own trauma as specific to their area and rejecting the inaccuracies of nationalized narratives such as the publication of the TRC.

While a national-focused initiative to protect indigenous women against sexual exploitation may prove beneficial, it cannot be the only goal of advocacy groups or international interference. With sexual exploitation becoming normal across the nation, international input and national policy will do little to sway the individualized call to action as the exploitation has become embedded within their very culture and mindset.

The next step for researchers may be to develop a localized model for a specific community group, providing opportunities for dialogue to inform their historical memory, connecting the past violence to the current abuses, giving both men and women a voice, and prioritizing empowering community members to re-shape their own community to begin to seek accountability independent of the ineffective national government. The idea of top-down change occurring for the well-being of indigenous women has not worked for the past forty years. The next logical attempt should be made at another angle entirely – starting with the voice, experiences, and abuses of the individual indigenous woman in her own community.

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