ANXIOUS CITIZENSHIP:
INSECURITY, APOCALYPSE AND WAR MEMORIES IN PERU'S ANDES

by

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Charles Piot

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Cultural Anthropology in the Graduate School of Duke University 2007
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ABSTRACT

The war between the Peruvian state and the Maoist Shining Path rebels began in the Department of Ayacucho, an area with a majority of indigenous Quechua-speaking peasant villages. After twenty years of violence (1980-2000), this region of South America’s Andes began a critical period of demilitarization, refugee resettlement, and reconciliation. In this transition, the rebuilding of villages devastated by the war raises critical questions about indigenous autonomy, citizenship, and the role of international human rights initiatives in local reconciliation.

I examine the tensions between interventions by national and transnational organizations, and the insecurities that continue to define everyday life in villages like Wiracocha - a newly resurrected community that was in the heart of the war zone. Based on eighteen months of fieldwork in this village and ten months of comparative fieldwork in villages across the Ayacucho region and in the city of Huamanga, my research shows that villagers were often at odds with the aid and interventions offered to them from the outside. I focus on the complicated nature of village war history, paying attention to the initial sympathy with Shining Path and the village's later decision to join the counterinsurgency. In Ayacucho, memory has itself become a site of struggle that reveals as much about present-day conflict, ambivalences, and insecurities of neoliberal Peru as it does about the actual history.

1 Wiracocha is a pseudonym that I am using in order to maintain subject confidentiality.
of the war. Villagers sometimes oppose official memory projects and humanitarian initiatives - including Peru's Truth Commission - that they see at odds with their own visions and agendas. Finally, I examine the less predictable ways that villagers have redefined what it means to be Andean, including: the maintenance of village militarization, a return to hard-handed customary justice and the adoption of born-again Christianity as a new form of moral order and social solidarity.
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became a comadre. This dissertation is dedicated to them and to the memories of two deceased mentors: the late anthropologist and performance studies professor Dwight Conquergood, whose ethnographic research on Hmong shamanism and Chicago’s Latin Kings inspired Northwestern University undergraduates like myself. Finally I dedicate this study to my grandfather, Robert H. West, who passed away on April 28th, 2007.
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INTRODUCTION

As I searched for somewhere on my jeans to wipe my sweaty palms, it occurred to me that I should have first written down my speech, and then read it to the villagers who were gathered around the flagpole in the plaza. I needed only to communicate a few lines of my introduction in Quechua – the language of the Incas that is still spoken by an estimated ten million people in the Andes. It was the freezing dawn in the high mountains, and I had stage fright during the weekly formación - a community meeting in a place called Wiracocha - a village of about 500 indigenous peasants located in the Ayacucho Department in Peru's south central Andes. ¹

I had come to Ayacucho from Durham, North Carolina to begin my doctoral fieldwork on the post-conflict reconciliation, memory and village life.² In 1980 Ayacucho become the epicenter of a dirty war fought between the Maoist rebels known as the "Shining Path" and the state. In this conflict peasant villages like Wiracocha suffered the brunt of political violence, becoming the targets of both rebel and state forces. When I began my village fieldwork in 2000, the war had just ended, and only a little was known about what had happened in the far-flung villages of Ayacucho. Until the late 1990s a sporadic pattern of rebel and state

¹ Wiracocha is a pseudonym that I am using in order to maintain subject confidentiality.
² Like states in the US, Peru is divided up into departamentos - departments and those are further divided into provinces, then districts.
military violence in the rural highlands discouraged any extended research in the former _zona roja_, or red zone, as the area of intense rebel presence was called.³ Rural research was impossible during the most active war years, especially during the mid 1980s and early 1990s when whole villages had either disappeared due to mass killing or mass exodus. Some villagers decided not to return to their homes, preferring to pursue livelihoods in the urban informal sector as street vendors, day laborers, market women or, increasingly, as private security guards. In 1990s Peru, insecurity had become a normal condition of life, with its origins in the arbitrary violence of the war. Yet insecurity continued into Peru's "post conflict" era, through the violence of impoverishment and economic crisis of the harsh structural-adjustment policies of the neoliberal Peruvian state. In a tautological pattern common to many Latin American countries, as the poor in Ayacucho and the urban capitol of Lima struggled to survive dwindling social welfare funding and state protectionism, Peru's elite businesses and upper classes required their own private security from rising crime rates associated with harsh liberalization of the market and the state. In the city, the same rural migrants that fled the war zones of Ayacucho might be hired as the "watchi-man" - a new category of security guard hired to guard the entrance to a house, neighborhood or business against increasingly desperate citizens.

³ Ayacucho ethnohistorian Ponciano del Pino as well as a very few NGOs, and many local journalists continued to work in the countryside despite this danger.
In 1998 in the midst of these reforms, then-president Alberto Fujimori triumphantly called a state victory over Shining Path, marking an official end to the conflict. Shining Path had been weakened and defeated by civilian peasant patrol groups – called *rondas campesinas*, yet small bands of rebel hold-outs in the rebel splinter group *Proseguir* - onward - regrouped in the remote jungle. For some refugees, however, Ayacucho's abandoned villages held a brighter future than life in Peru's urban "young towns" - *pueblos jóvenes* - the shantytowns where villagers lived a precarious hand-to-mouth existence of unregulated day wages in the informal sectors. With few options, some of Peru’s 600,000 internally displaced began to return to Ayacucho in order to resettle their villages and rebuild their farms and livestock.

The return of thousands of internally displaced people in a bid to re-peasantize Ayacucho brought up crucial questions about the nature of community solidarity after the war, as well as the history and memory of the war itself. After so many years away, how did people rebuild their villages economically and socially? How did they deal with the legacies of past violence and wartime factionalism among families and neighbors, and how did their relationship to rebels and the military play out during the war? Was it possible for villagers to establish their own forms of security and reconciliation after a “dirty war” that relied on covertsness, unpredictable violence and deceit?

These questions in mind, and a crash course in Quechua under my belt, I headed off to Ayacucho to begin my research in November 1999. My choice of
field site was determined by personal and professional concerns. I wish I could say that I found ways to network myself into a village, or that there was some scientific process of elimination by which I found my area. Instead, I chose to work in Wiracocha first because unlike villages nearer to city centers, none of the social scientists at Ayacucho's University of Huamanga had done research there, and no one knew the war history of the area. It was far enough away from the city that the place satisfied my anthropological desire to get the perspective of an out-of-the-way place (Tsing 1993), but it had just enough infrastructure - a road and a solar powered satellite pay phone - to feel connected to the US, and to the luxuries of Spanish-speaking friends in the city, running water and electricity in Huamanga, Ayacucho's capital.

Before the formación, I had visited Wiracocha with a journalist colleague who was familiar with the area, in order to talk to the community leaders about the possibility of my doing a research project in the area. I explained to Faustino, the village vice president that I was a student from the US, and that I wanted to stay in the village to do research. Faustino seemed to listen to me and understand my request. In response, he gave me a general war history – an edited account that I would later recognize as the "official story" of the war - in which the community was besieged by Shining Path, then fought back courageously, saving their country from imminent rebel takeover. Warming up to the idea of my project, he advised me to do my research in Wiracocha "because nobody knows what happened here
and we suffered the most [in the war]." Faustino said that he and the other leaders would consider my request, but that ultimately that those kinds of decisions were made in a community vote at the weekly village formación. We agreed that I would come back in the first week of July to put forth my request to the assembled village vote. There being no hotels or pensions in the smaller villages of the Andes, and only one form of transport daily (or less), Faustino gave me vague assurances that I would have a place to stay the night when I returned.

A month later, I was crammed along with fifteen other people on the only public transport to Wiracocha from Huamanga: the 2 am combi. Peruvians and foreigners alike fear the combi - a rickety, death trap of a mini-van with cramped, improvised seating and balding tires that is the de-facto transport on the dirt roads in Peru's highlands.\(^4\) Besides a full load of passengers on its inside, the combi going to Wiracocha was weighed down with a goat, chickens, a bicycle and what appeared to be a hundred pounds of potatoes on the roof. The top-heavy load made the van sway like a fish as it ascended up and around the tight switchbacks of dirt road to

\(^4\)The unregulated nature of backcountry roads and unsafe vehicles reflects the relatively low value attributed to highland peasant deaths compared to the highly valued lives of elites, especially around tourist centers where the paved and guard-railed roads abound. Anthropologist Ellen Moodie has written more extensively on the rise in "accidental" deaths in liberalizing states like El Salvador. There the everyday violent deaths of microbus crashes have exceeded those if the war, but because they are "non-political" deaths such statistics do not appear on the radar of international watchdog groups (Moodie 2006). Combis are especially dangerous because the vehicles were not made to withstand the rugged terrain of the potholed dirt roads of the Andes. Most combis in Peru led past lives as city vans in Japan or Korea – many retain Japanese kanji on the side of the van.
the villages of the altiplano. By the time we arrived in Wiracocha, I was so stiff from contorting myself to fit inside that I had to unfold myself from the cramped cab and drop down with my backpack and sleeping bag into the village square.

Although I was grateful not to be doubled up in the van anymore, it was hard to watch the *combi* drive up out of the village – all the more so because I could not find Faustino. As it turned out, my host had forgotten my arrangement to meet him for that week’s community meeting, and had gone to the city. (Faustino would later explain that he had decided that I was a crazy *tourista* bent on adventure and would not return to the village.) I had not made arrangements to stay with anyone else, and did not see any familiar faces from my last visit. With no transport, no Faustino and no other contacts, I wondered where I could stay the night. It was the dead of winter in South America in July; I know by evening the night would drop to thirty degrees Fahrenheit. A dozen adults and children were in the plaza as well; most curious were three toddlers that sat in the dust a few ten feet away from me where they had frozen mid-play. When I smiled at them their eyes widened and after a beat they let out one collective terrified scream, thinking the huge gringa was going to take them away. I fought the urge to burst into tears myself.

Finally, a few of the older children and some adults approached, asking me curious and disjointed questions whose significance I would not understand until later: "What organization do you come from?" "How do you say my name in English?" "Do you know where Israel is?" "Is it true that you gringos only eat food from cans?" and "What are houses made of in the US?" As a crowd formed around

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me, and the questions turned into shouts and laughter, the village president, Raúl, the village president came by to investigate. He was a serious younger man in his early thirties dressed in a Ford Motors cap, hand-knit sweater, jeans and canvas sneakers. He did not look pleased to find this an unannounced foreigner suddenly in his care. Seeing that I was not going to go back to the city, he took me to stay at his cousin's house, where, that evening, I was ungraciously assigned a spot on the dirt floor in front of an open doorway to put my sleeping bag. While I shivered through the wintry night, I thought about how much I preferred Faustino to Raúl, cursed my naïve overconfidence about fieldwork, and remembered all the previous warnings I had not heeded.

The warnings included those from Peruvian anthropologist and social-worker colleagues in the city took exception when I told them I was going to go to conduct research in the Andean countryside. They told me it was too soon, that people were too sospechoso. “Go in there saying you want to hear about the past and they will send you on your way on a burro!” one friend advised. My landlady, a middle class Peruvian whose apartment I rented from when I stayed in Huamanga, the Ayacucho capital, warned me that no peasant could be trusted because "all those campesinos are terrorists!" she explained. Old hand aid workers gave similar advice: “The comuneros are not friendly anymore after the violence. Before they would welcome strangers to their villages, give you a bed and food; throw rose petals at them in welcome! Now, you are lucky if you get a floor to sleep on or a bowl of potatoes.” Others complained of the new atmosphere of entitlement to the
“hand outs” generated by the flood of NGO aid, informing me that, “In the villages they just have learned to put their hand out, expecting beans, fertilizer, micro credit.” According to people in the city, suspicion and greed seemed to be an unfortunate result of the war.

Frozen, humbled and tired, the next morning I had remembered enough of these prejudices and warnings to make me want to flee to the city of Huamanga, get a shower and rethink what began to seem like a ridiculously archaic ideal of researching a village. But, the next day was the communal assembly and the president of the village, Raúl, put me in front of the a few dozen men and women who stood silently listening to announcements, and I waited my turn to speak. The women sitting around the perimeter of the men in the meeting wore their hair and clothes in a more traditional Andean style – two long braids down their back, frilly white blouses, and either straight or bell-like skirts ornamented with bright borders of day-glo embroidered llamas and flowers. The men - who made up the majority of village leaders - were dressed like their president, in jeans, in the brown or black wool felt fedoras popular throughout the Andes, or in trucker caps. In the unhurried, formal speaking style favored in the highlands, Raúl explained the different aid applications that he and other leaders had prepared to apply to government and international agencies. These applications included requests for fertilizer and seeds from the World Vision Relief Fund - an international Christian NGO, and the Repatriation Aid Program, the state agency for communities displaced by the war. The president’s report was followed by an update from the
local justice of the peace who reported on the latest minor offences including border
dights between neighbors and some escaped goats.

I came after the goats. “Wawhikuna, panikuna” – brothers and sisters –
“Nyoqa estudianim, estadusunidusmanta. Kaypi kachkani wiracochapi; historiata,
libreta, llaqtaykimanta qilqayta munani.” – I am a student from the US. I’m here in
Wiracocha because I want to write a book about your history. I paused and realized
I have not said that right - villagers looked at me blankly. I tried another approach:
“Anchata kusikuchani!” - I’m very happy! Several women sitting against an adobe
wall looked up, smiling; one woman covered her mouth with her hand as she
giggled. “Qamkunawan yachayta cumunidadpi munani, varius killakunapaq.
Historiata quilqachkani. Manchaytimpumanta. Qamkunamanta kaytimpumanta.”
I want to live with you in your village, for some months: to write your history, about
the violent time and about you all now.”

Despite the seriousness of my request, there was good deal of laughter at my
then beginner’s Quechua. Perhaps more amusing was the oddity of my proposal to
install myself as the resident gringa. With so many Peruvians trying to get to the
US for work, I seemed to have it backwards, moving from my country to the
highlands. I could tell that people did not believe that I would stay long. In fact,
some stared at me like I was crazy, and all the more so because, with my pale skin
and height - a full foot taller than most village women - I looked shockingly out of
place. Later, after I had begun my fieldwork I would accept my role as the rural
freak show, and grow accustomed to the fact that children under the age of six
would sob when they saw me for the first time. To them, I looked all too much like a *pishtaco* – a tall, white Andean boogeyman said to eat the fat off of highlanders (Weismantel 2001). The president nevertheless put my proposal to a vote yay or nay and, to my surprise, it was accepted.

For all my nervousness, my request turned out not to cause quite the outcry I had feared, nor, after a difficult first few nights, were villagers as unwelcoming as my city contacts believed. After all, the war was over by then; state forces, with the help of the village defense patrols had defeated the Shining Path. Formerly under martial law, almost all of the Ayacucho highlands had been demilitarized by the time I made my visit at the end of 2000. Remnants of rebels still held out in the remote jungles, yet there had not been an incursion by Shining Path in the Wiracocha region for almost ten years. In this time villagers who had been displaced by the violence had returned, reinstating village offices, replanting their fields, and achieving a level of peace and stability on their own. Strangers were met with suspicion in the village, but they were not an unfamiliar sight. State officials and workers from a whole panoply international aid organizations had been coming to the area with more and more frequency after the war with their clipboards, “development surveys,” and plans both wanted and not. Villagers were already accustomed to being asked general questions about their wartime past. And, in fact, like the vice president Faustino, they already had their own "official" stories of what had happened during the years of political violence that they wanted to share with anyone who would listen.
Even so, suspicion of strangers was high. Like many North American anthropologists working abroad, I became, as anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker once described it, both a “stranger and a friend” (1966). At different times villagers suspected I might be a CIA agent, a drug dealer, a DEA agent, and a member of Shining Path. Despite these suspicions, I also became a comadre - a godmother - with several families. I am sure that for many villagers these suspicions will always surround my presence in the area, yet, by the time I left "the field" in 2003, I could count several people in Wiracocha as close friends.

It may have been precisely because I was such an object of suspicion myself that I would come to understand the importance of such conspiracy theories and rumors to village life. This dissertation explores how war memory has itself become a site of struggle that reveals as much about present-day conflict, ambivalences, and insecurities as it does about the actual history of the war. I examine how villagers have established ways of remembering and forgetting the war that at times clashed, and sometimes resonated with the agendas of national and international human rights organizations as well as local and foreign aid organizations. In Wiracocha, the compromised nature of the war, as well as the failed of promises of modernist narratives have created an atmosphere of betrayal and insecurity in the village today. These failed promises included, first, the promise of education, professionalization and capitalist development for indigenous highlanders by the state, and second, the promise of socialist revolution offered by Shining Path. The betrayal of these promises - as well as continuation of political
violence in the war on drugs - have made villagers skeptical of recent state and international human rights initiatives. That skepticism extended to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (formed by the Peruvian government to investigate war crimes) that have recently tried to work in the village.

While official overtures of reconciliation and promises of human rights have been met with indifference and even rejection by villagers, other universalizing narratives have become part of the way that people attempt to deal with the past. These include villagers’ sense of patriotism and national belonging in their wartime service in the military and the counterinsurgency peasant patrols, and their belief in a newly adopted moral code of born-again Christianity. In this dissertation I explain how village rumors, especially rumors of the Apocalypse, sometimes worked against Truth Commission efforts. Instead of the secular humanism of human rights organizations, it was a Gospel prophecy of conspiracy, revelation and final judgment that shaped villagers’ recounting of the war, and, I argue, testified to an alternate, subaltern accounting of peasant suffering.

My fieldwork in Wiracocha follows in the footsteps of a North American interest in Andean studies. The study of the Andes flourished in the US in the 1970s and 80s, inspiring a generation of structurally and symbolically minded ethnographers. This was the era of symbolic and structural theorists such as Levi-Strauss and Victor Turner and others drew attention to the ways that village rituals and symbols functioned to maintain communal cohesion and reinforce the status
quo. In the new field of Andean studies, Tom Zuidema, John Murra, and their students Billie Jean Isbell and Catherine Allen, among others, applied these theoretical insights to understanding the dual structure of Andean communities, and the spiritual meaning and symbolism of coca rituals (Isbell 1978; Zuidema 1964; Allen 1988; Murra 1972; Murra, Wachtel, and Revel 1986). These cultural anthropologists also worked alongside ethnohistorians and archeologists to stress the relationship between current Andean society and Inca, Wari and other pre-Colombian cultures of the past in places like southern Ayacucho and Cusco, where these rituals were the strongest (Isbell 1978; Zuidema 1964; Allen 1988). Many of these studies focused on the structural continuity with the past, especially the maintenance of tradition in the face of wider social marginalization by a dominant mestizo society, or on the defense of spiritual "tradition" or local beliefs and practices. Fieldworkers like Catherine Allen were especially committed to producing politically engaged ethnographies that re-valued indigenous peoples and their societies in the context of a wider racism and economic exploitation that cast Andean peasants as obstacles to modernization and development (ibid).

This emphasis on structure and conservation, as Starn observed, made for some blind spots in other areas of social scientific study, such as villagers interaction with economic globalization and the flow of universalizing ideologies (Starn 1991). The late 1960s and 70s, generations of young professionals, teachers and peasant leaders in Peru were inspired by revolutions in Cuba and China. In a country whose majority was, at the time, engaged in peasant production, Maoism
was especially resonant, and was picked up by university students and faculty throughout Peru. As Starn points out, one of the trade-offs of North American Andeanists' focus on conservation of local tradition and resistance to global pressures to modernize was that researchers paid less attention to the ways that villagers were accepting, appropriating and interacting with changes from outside their traditions and villages, including the growing Maoist revolution of the Shining Path (ibid, see also Angell 1982). The structural and symbolic gaze of the time did not lend itself to understanding the role of change, collaboration, and adaptation of global ideologies such as Maoism into village life. In this dissertation I explore this other side of local-global interaction, especially the adoption or refashioning of foreign, universalizing narratives, such as human rights, or evangelical Christianity, in Andean village life.

This study responds to current anthropological analyses that re-imagine the classic village study in order to - to paraphrase Gupta and Ferguson, go "beyond culture" - to link local-global interactions in innovative ways. Since the early 1990s social theorists have deterritorialized the concept of culture to better account for processes such as globalization and transnationalism (Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Marcus 1998; Appadurai 1996, 2006). No longer can we assume that culture is isomorphic with place (if indeed we ever could). Working against the idea that transnational flows and economic globalization lead to cultural homogenization, or a capitalist monoculture, ethnographers working in villages now focus on the interactions between, and blurriness of the local and the global, or of tradition and
modernity. Anthropologist Charles Piot, for example, explores the ways that globalization can increase the production of so-called “traditional” cultural beliefs and practices in rural Togo (Piot 1999). Similarly, Anna Tsing has called for those of us working in out-of-the-way places to focus on what she calls "friction" - the way that ideas and social movements rub up against each such that "local" culture is always co-produced, through "awkward encounters" across geographical distance and difference (Tsing 2005).

Although this dissertation centers on a small Andean village, the problems facing Wiracocha are similar to those faced by other globally marginalized communities whose "expectations of modernity" have gone unfulfilled (Ferguson 1999). Faced with the task of doing ethnography in these marginalized places, anthropologist James Ferguson has suggested anthropologists may be forced to write "ethnographies of decline." Such an ethnography would look at how, for many people in the "developing" world, recent history has not turned out as expected, "as a process of moving forward or joining with up with the world but as a process that has pushed them out of the world that they once occupied" (ibid, 236) or, the world they were once promised. This narrative of decline in the face of utopian promises is key to understanding the ways that village history informs post war life in Wiracocha, where the certainty of modernist narratives of progress has been radically called into question.

This research adds to an increasing anthropological interest in the study of the unevenness of globalization and transnationalism, the nature of human rights
and peacekeeping and a growing scholarship on the globalization of fundamentalist Christianity, especially in Latin America. Critical development studies have begun to investigate what kinds of cultures are left over after for those who are left dazed and confused after the storm of flexible capital has passed over them, their cities and farms. Both theories of modernization and of Marxist revolution once predicted the demise of the peasantry and the family farm with the expansion of capitalism and a rise of an urban proletariat. Yet, peasants remain very much a part of the postcolonial landscape not only in Peru, but the countryside of Africa and India. Where globalization and modernization once heralded homogeneity around the world, now late capitalism allows for “brown zones” and pockets of different modes of production, such as peasantries when the "expectations of modernity" that were supposed to modernize or urbanize rural citizens have not been met (Ferguson 1999).

Finally, this study draws on the relatively recent interest in human rights, and born-again Christianity as topics of ethnographic research. Anthropological studies of human rights have investigated the politics behind the seemingly neutral discourse of humanitarianism, as well as the universal applicability of Western enlightenment and medical models of victimization, trauma, personhood and accountability in non-Western contexts (Speed 2005; Redfield 2005, 2006; Ross 2003). Studies of truth commissions in particular criticize their underlying Judeo-Christian narratives of reconciliation, seen as an imposed Western moral discourse that clashes with local forms of punitive or retributive justice (Wilson 2001), that
assume a modern subjectivity and legal status based on injury (Colvin 2004; Shaw 2005). In a different vein, current scholarship on global Christianity resists reducing popular forms of Christian fundamentalism in Latin America to cultural imperialism; rather, studies find that fundamentalism can be a malleable rhetoric that may resonate with local perceptions of personhood and community in new and unpredictable ways (Harding 2000; Stoll 1990; Bornstein 2003; Robbins 2004; Burdick 1998; Meyer 1999; Meyer and Pels 2003). My work puts these critiques in dialogue. I show that instead of destroying local beliefs, villagers re-deployed born again Christianity: both to serve internal village reconciliation and also as a political, anti-state discourse that opposed national calls to unity. These theoretical orientations reflect my research and teaching interests in the ways that transnational flows of justice and cultural beliefs are resisted or refashioned in local contexts

Wiracocha and Peru's Dirty War

Ayacucho's highlands range from the greenness of Huanta - known as the "Emerald of the Andes" - where avocados, palms and oranges grow in almost tropical warmth, to the bare mountain peaks, precipitous slopes and windy, frozen plateaus of the puna where villages perch as high as a dizzying 13,000 feet above sea level. Wiracocha lies in the high mountain zone at 11,000 feet; this temperate region is relatively low enough in altitude to grow crops of beans and corn in its lowest reaches (known to geographers as the quechua zone) but still within the high
area designated by Andeanists as the most "indigenous" part of the Andes that includes the puna (high plain or altiplano) altitudes. Aid workers in the nearest city shake their heads when they talk about the Wiracocha region, describing terrain as triste (sad), olvidado (forgotten) and "muy accidental"- which in Spanish means a disorderly and precipitous landscape. "Accidental" most accurately describes the haphazard but dramatic arrangement of crags and jutting, rocky mountains that make up the high altitude village. With the exception of the leveled plaza at the village center, and the school's soccer field, the whole village lives at a thirty-degree angled mountain slope that drops into a deep river gorge. Above the gorge and on the horizon, jutting mountain peaks overlap as far as the eye can see.

When the Peruvian army occupied the area in order to fight Shining Path guerrillas, it forced villagers to leave their isolated, far-flung farmhouses to live in concentrated settlements the main plaza, both for security reasons as well as for easier surveillance by the state. The geography of Wiracocha still reflects the Peruvian state’s anxious self-preservation as it intervened in the countryside where Shining Path had made inroads. Village houses now radiate out from the plaza in an archetypal modernist grid; yet despite this orderliness the whole settlement seems to be haphazardly suspended, as if the small adobe houses were clinging to the mountainside, facing the giant, Tolkieneseque mountains beyond the river.

Like the rest of the eastern Andean slopes, this area has a high desert climate during the dry season (June to October), when the landscape becomes dusty and dun-colored, the air is dry and thin, the daytime sun is mercilessly strong, and the
nights are freezing. With no heat or electricity villagers solve the problem of keeping warm by living in small, adobe houses with thatched, tiled or zinc roofs. In Wiracocha families live together in two or three rooms, often sleeping several people- mother, father, grandparents, children and sometimes cousins- on a few pallets of sheepskin or straw or even a store-bought mattress in one room.

In Wiracocha the kitchen is the busy center of the household, where villagers socialize with family and neighbors. Every kitchen floor is filled with cuy - guinea pigs - that villagers raise on the scraps of food that fall to the floor. Families and guests eat breakfast and dinners together by the kitchen's open wood fire, always accompanied by the soft squeaks of cuy in the background and the static reception of their short-wave battery radios. During the rest of the year, the wet season, changes the countryside drastically from a dusty earthy grey to bright green crops of corn, alfalfa, yellow wild flowers and red and deep purple dahlias planted around houses that have small gardens.

Despite the relative peacefulness of the countryside, the ruins of torched houses and crumbling watchtowers dot the Ayacucho landscape, testifying to the ferocity of the war which that left at least fifty villagers dead and several more disappeared in Wiracocha alone. Almost all villagers abandoned Wiracocha once in 1983 and again in 1988, after being attacked first by counterinsurgency patrols and then by rebels. Those who left sought refuge in nearby caves or in Peru’s

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5 Peru's highlands have two seasons, the dry season, which is the coldest, and in which precipitation is infrequent and the wet season, which is rainy and warmer.
shantytowns. The few who remained formed *rondas campesinas*, the civil defense patrols that were partially controlled by the state. These groups organized against the insurgency, ultimately contributing to the defeat of Shining Path and paving the way for the area’s resettlement in the early 1990s.

*The Village and Shining Path*

Other villages throughout Ayacucho share this broadly sketched local history. Yet, it tells us little about the more compromised, localized nature of Peru's war, which included an early pattern of sympathy and support for Shining Path during war’s first years (1980-83). Due to the danger of conducting extensive fieldwork in Ayacucho even in the mid 1990s, and the curious silence of the Shining Path about its aims and ideology at the start of its revolution, most studies of Peru's dirty war focused on the ideology and leadership of the rebels. Research included analysis of Shining Path party documents, and biographical information about Abimael Guzmán, a philosophy professor and the group's charismatic leader.

The focus on Shining Path's leaders and ideology has left important questions unasked and unanswered. For example, we still know little of the nature of the early relationship between Shining Path and Ayacucho villagers, especially about how rebels lost support in a revolution, which was supposed to be fought in the name of the peasantry. While scholars agree that the first wave of rebels into much of Ayacucho's highlands found some purchase, especially among peasants in lower altitude communities (Coronel 1996) and ethnographies of village life under
Shining Path are slowly being published (Coxshall 2004; Theidon 2002; Theidon 2003) we have few testimonies about rebels’ personal relationships with villagers. Though he was certainly a popular and charismatic leader among city high school and university students, Abimael Guzmán - a white urban intellectual who could not speak Quechua – had relatively little cultural familiarity or preexisting links to highland villages that surrounded Ayacucho’s towns. With the exception of a few studies - such as Berg's and Del Pino's research - both conducted during the war - the details of village support for Shining Path are still very murky (Del Pino 1998; Berg 1984). One key insight – and one very relevant to Wiracocha and other villages in the region -- emerged from the research of Peruvian anthropologist Carlos Iván Degregori (a colleague of Guzmán's before the war) and French historian Henri Favre (Degregori 1990; Favre 1984). These two scholars focused on the students that were recruited by Shining Path into the intermediary ranks of the rebels. They argued that these city-based youth of Ayacucho, especially those from the newly "de-peasantized" migrant families, played a key role in bridging the gap between the intellectuals of Ayacucho's university and the indigenous, proletarian and rural sectors of the department.

In Chapter One, I build upon these initial revelations about the nature of Shining Path’s sympathizers through the local history in Wiracocha. In the late 1970s Shining Path militants – most of them students from Huamanga -- managed to gain rural sympathy for their revolution, at least first. This chapter connects the events that led to support among students for the Shining Path in Huamanga, such as
the struggles for the right to formal education, to the upheavals in the countryside, such as the ambitious land reform of the early 1970s. I show how two of these Shining Path intermediaries found a place for themselves in the new village high school, where they volunteered to teach students. Rather than explain the connection between these early rebels and villagers as either repressive or exploitative (likely it was both), I focus on the affective connections that rebels built with villagers by living in close proximity to them and sharing work duties – a sense of close, human ties that was obscured by simply labeling the Shining Path as “terrorists” and “subversives,” as violent as the group did indeed prove to be. My study of these affective but unequal relationships is influenced by a recent interest in the "tense and tender ties" of intimacy between colonizers and subjects (Stoler 1995, 2002). I describe how these affective and intimate relationships between the early Shining Path teachers and villagers became a pivotal, if often ignored, reason for the conflicted sympathies that would structure the war.

**Human Rights in the Highlands**

The Shining Path’s violence and eventual defeat would later make the fact of early village sympathies a sensitive question that many Wiracochanos would prefer to forget. These uncomfortable memory politics made the 2002 visit of investigators from Peru's state-led Truth and Reconciliation Commission into an especially charged, revealing event. Modeled on the earlier Commissions of South Africa, Chile and other countries seeking to reckon with the aftermath of political
violence, the commission wanted to collect information about war violence, to advise the state on prosecuting perpetrators, as well as giving reparations to victims. Some villages, like Wiracocha, received special teams of investigators, most of them city-born students and aid workers, searching for testimonies of state and guerrilla atrocities suffered by villagers during the war.

The central assumption of truth commissions is that people have not found their own ways to move beyond histories of violence. In Wiracocha, however, people had already begun to rebuild their communities using a newly imported moral code of born-again Christianity. In Chapter Two I show how conversion to this religion helped many rural exiles during the war years, and how, despite predictions that Protestantism’s initial appeal would die out, villagers continue to find meaning in evangelical worship. Key to the continued appeal of this religion, I argue, is the centrality of an apocalyptic narrative and perspective on history. A Gospel prophecy of conspiracy, revelation and final judgment fit with villagers’ experience of violence and decline instead of modernizing progress. An “end of history” perspective has also shaped villagers’ recounting of the war, one that villagers frame at the intersection of Andean experience, global asymmetries and universalizing born-again Christian doctrine.

As in many villages in Ayacucho, the human toll of political violence in Wiracocha had been high. Shining Path had turned increasingly to violence to try to maintain its hold on the countryside after its initial, more peaceful arrival to villages like Wiracocha. Rebels ultimately were responsible over half of the killings in
Ayacucho. And yet, Peruvian armed forces also committed abuses, ranging from robbery and illegal detention to torture. One might have thought that villagers would welcome recent national interest expressed by Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as a chance to tell their stories of suffering, death, and forced flight from their mountain homes. But villagers proved resistant to giving their testimonies. In fact, the commission was plagued by rumors and conspiracy theories.

In Chapter Three, I explain why the imported, transnational model of justice and healing offered by the Truth Commission did not always resonate with the villagers’ sense of sickness and health, local forms of reconciliation, or the current state of emergency that characterized village life in the age of the war on drugs. Western medical models of psychological trauma and confessional talk therapy conflicted with local understandings of healing; they also failed to take into account the mechanisms, however imperfect, of reconciliation and "forgetting" that villagers had already developed to cope with their violent past. Instead of understanding rumors about and resistance to the Truth Commission as obstacles in the road to peace and democracy, I argue that they should be understood as a critical part of the transparency process.

Rondas, militarization and post-war identity

Village militarization was another legacy of the dirty war at odds with the humanitarian interventions offered by the Truth Commission and other aid projects.
Civil defense patrols, or rondas, had originally formed out of the war’s desperation. Many observers feared the military habits and influence would tear rural society further apart. Unlike peasant patrols in other “dirty wars” such as in Colombia and Guatemala, most Ayacucho rondas were organized as much from villagers’ own initiatives as they were “from above” by the armed forces. During the war, ronderos provided leadership in many villages, often taking charge of communal projects and enforcing village regulations. Some scholars claim that the experience of defeating the guerrillas may have strengthened the feeling of village solidarity and peasant pride.

The rondas and other kinds of militarization have changed the way that villagers in Ayacucho commemorate the war and imagine their citizenship and rights within the nation. I describe the history of the peasant patrols in Wiracocha, detailing the ways they started as an autonomous counterinsurgency and then were partially controlled by the state. In Chapter Four I explore why, despite a program of military reform and withdrawal of troops from the Ayacucho countryside, male villagers continue to maintain symbolic rituals of masculinized militarization in the

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6 Peru’s patrollers differ in their relation with the military and their level of war abuses from the Guatemala case. In Guatemala patrols were controlled much less by peasants themselves and more often by a military commander. See America’s Watch, Civil Patrols in Guatemala, America’s Watch Report, August. New York: America’s Watch, 1996; O. Starn writes about the interplay of military and local control of the Ayacucho rondas and their comparison with those of the northern Andes in Nightwatch: The Politics of Protest in the Andes. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

village. I show how these militarized rituals - which I call “military drag” - express a nostalgia for the discipline of the rondas as well as a performance of citizenship crosscut by ethnicity and gender. While village women experience the weakening of military presence with indifference, village men see it as a destabilizing force that undermines village sovereignty.

Reparations and the Drug war

In the beginning of the dry season, when Wiracocha's villagers have finished harvesting the last of their crops, male family members and, sometimes whole families migrate east into the Amazon basin. There they work in the coca fields of the ceja de selva - literally, the "jungle's eyebrow" - the name for the high jungle located a few days' walk away from Wiracocha on the lowest eastern slopes of the Andes. Some villagers find work as day laborers, picking coca in fields owned by others, while some who own small parcels of land grow their own coca and sell it to drug traffickers. Although Peru allows some coca to be grown for traditional use in the Andes or for sale abroad for legal uses, an estimated 80% of the crop is transformed into pasta básica - basic cocaine paste - destined for foreign consumption.

At the end of 2002, responding to rumors of a militarized state campaign to eradicate coca crops in the highland jungle, thousands of coca growers - or cocaleros - from the coca growing valleys around Ayacucho began days of protests and hunger strikes. The protests were the largest organized demonstrations of civil
unrest in the region since Shining Path's devastating "popular strikes" of the 1980s. Like those strikes, the cocaleros shut down commerce in the city of Huamanga by blocking streets and commerce, and occupied the main plaza.

The cocalero protests took place at a particularly emotional time for the nation, when the Truth Commission was broadcasting victim testimonies on national television and radio stations. This context informed the language and terms of the protests for the legalization and commercialization of coca leaf. Chapter Five examines how cocaleros used a sophisticated combination of strategies that drew on Truth Commission's discourse of rights and reparations to fight for the right to grow coca legally. The cocalero protests combined this awareness of post conflict justice with a new language of cultural and collective rights and indigeneity, one that took its format from the neighboring indigenous movements of Ecuador and Bolivia.

In public speeches, cocaleros invoked the Truth Commission's own calls for reparations - not as war victims, but as patrollers and patriotic servants whose repayments for wartime sacrifices were long overdue. But they also raised their banner as Andeans, invoking descent from pre-Columbian civilizations in a way that shifted coca leaf production from the illicit economy to the realm of indigenous cultural rights. Whereas the demands for reparations by former civil defense patrollers and war victims sought the sympathy of fellow citizens, the cocaleros use of culture was an effective means for cocaleros to promote their solidarity on the global stage. I show how framing claims in terms of culture projected a ready-made, if essentialist, image of “indigenous rights” - a point of solidarity more user-friendly
to international advocacy groups than "coca growers". This self-conscious use of indigenous identity in such a wide-scaled protest is novel in Peru, where indigenous highlanders have long defined themselves as *campesinos* - peasants - and not in terms of their ethnic or cultural identity.

**Methodology**

This research is based on eighteen months of fieldwork in Wiracocha, which was spread over a period of almost years, between 2000 and 2003. My time in the village was divided up into one and two month segments of living continuously in the village, with periodic stays in the city of Huamanga and Lima in between. In Wiracocha I interviewed village members and participated in meetings, religious ceremonies and other daily aspects of community life. These activities included: village assemblies, ronda meetings, church services and *club de madres* (mothers’ clubs) meetings. This was my primary research method in the village and among five households, where villagers "adopted" me into their families through the Latin American tradition of becoming "compadres". I also completed a village survey of 20 households and in conducted formal interviews with NGO workers, state aid project supervisors, and with members of the Truth Commission in Huamanga, and had conducted done five months of comparative predissertation fieldwork visiting villages throughout the Ayacucho region. Finally I have collected historical materials from the books of minutes that are kept at village and ronda meetings and
the records of village land and judicial conflicts in Ayacucho archives. These sources provide crucial insight into how local authority, political participation and conflict resolution have developed before, during, and after the war.

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8 The Archivo de Titulación de Tierras, Ministerio de Agricultura and the Ayacucho Archivo Regional de Ayacucho contain, respectively: the communal land documents for the Wiracocha region, the records of civil court judgments and land conflict decisions.
Chapter 1. Children of the Deceived: Teachers and Shining Path

Intermediaries in Rural Ayacucho

In the mid 1980s a dozen men dressed in army fatigues marched into the main plaza of Wiracocha, a small village in the Ayacucho highlands. The war between Shining Path and the state had begun a few years before, and rebels had begun selective assassinations of landowners as well as four village leaders. In turn, the marines and the army began to enter the village, now looked upon as a "red zone." Soldiers broke down doors and threatened villagers and village leaders with disappearance if they so much as gave food to the rebels. When they saw the soldiers arrive that day many villagers fled; but others obeyed the officer's commands to halt and assemble in front of the Catholic Church. “Why are you running? Are you terrucos (terrorists)?” the soldiers demanded. Realizing that they could be assumed guilty for escaping from military, villagers obeyed the soldiers’ orders to regroup in front of the church. The commanding officer grilled them on their counterinsurgency methods: “Tell us, have the terrucos been here?” How do you fight them?” “Yes, they have been here, Capitán, they came in, they killed Manuela Quispe and Tayta Huamán, they terrorized us” was the reply.

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1 I take my title from Carlos Iván Degregori’s phrase, “hijos de los engañados” (Degregori 1991).
2 Huamán and Quispe were two of the first assassinations in Wiracocha, Huamán was killed because he was a protestant and village leader who cautioned villagers against the suspicious intentions of the rebels; see Chapter 2 for more on Huamán.
Less than an hour later, some sixty men and women dressed in civilian peasant clothes and carrying semiautomatic rifles came from over the mountain and surrounded the crowd of soldiers and villagers. These new visitors stood beside the soldiers and pointed their arms at the villagers, gradually herding the crowd into the church doorway. People began to cry. Rumors about several burned villages had reached Wiracocha. It was said that the army or rebels would burn people alive inside of buildings, barring the doors to block escape. As several soldiers brought out their bombs from their packs, a few of the cornered villagers noticed that the grenades were homemade from tin cans, not military issue. A village man, drunk still from a celebration, rumbled his thoughts aloud about the strange weapons and incomplete uniforms of the visitors. As the tension rose among the cornered villagers, an angry, petite young woman who seemed to be in her mid-twenties stepped from behind the throng of visitors, in front of the guns. She had the dark straight hair, short stature and brown skin wore the highland peasant style of brightly embroidered wool skirts and manta - a multicolored shawl worn by villagers; she looked every part the peasant in all but her hair, which was cut short into a bob like the young profesionales in the city. Villagers recognized her as Comrade Ramona. Pointing at the crowed, the comarada yelled angrily “So this is how you treat us! You are traitors and will pay the penalty.”

Mama Angélica, an elderly widow, and her daughter Juana, told me about this rebel incursion. It was one of several invasions by Shining Path and state forces that relied on costume and deceit - guerrillas dressed in military uniforms or as
peasants – as a test to determine the political affiliation of the village. This and other stories of disguise and deceit illustrated many villagers' explanations for the ways that “Sendero nos ha engañado” – how “the Shining Path deceived us.” On my trips to other areas hard hit by the war I had heard of similar costumed incursions meant to trick villagers. These dramas were performed in the theater of war by either side: sometimes it was the military who would dress and act like rebels to find out which villagers were "red" - or, as in the case of Wiracocha, the rebels would pose as the army in order to measure the level of state support. They represent one of the fundamental ways villagers experienced the war, as a trampa - trap. As villagers described it, people were “confused” by false intentions, messages and identities like those that occurred during the incursion.

Comrade Ramona, the leader of the incursion who threatened the villagers with retribution, had lived in the village before. She was one of the many university and high school students from the city who had arrived before the armed insurgency in order to gather support for the revolution. "Ramona was angry, because we had betrayed her" Mama Angel, an elderly widow, who had survived the worst of the violence explained to me,

When the people saw her, everyone fell silent…they suddenly realized they were complaining to the wrong people! If Ramona had not saved us, they would have killed everyone right there. She knew almost everyone [in the village]. The mamitas (older peasant women) saw her and they began to cry, 'Ramona, please save us, you know us'. Then Ramona’s heart changed, and they didn’t kill us. She saved everyone’s life.
Mama Angel's accounting of this close shave with death at the hands of Shining Path confounded my sense of war history and village sympathies. I was unprepared to hear the levels of emotional attachments that villagers expressed towards rebel leaders. One reason for my surprise was that the official story of the war - the one told by most state aid agencies and humanitarian groups, had, in some ways, already been written before my fieldwork began. In that history, the peasants of Ayacucho were caught entre dos fuegos - "between two fires" - meaning Shining Path and the state.

For the most part, my interviews with villagers fit into this official narrative. Yet there were also some memories of these early Shining Path cadre, as well as contradictory feelings of guilt for "betraying" the rebels, as exemplified by Mama Angel's confusing testimony. These affective components of early sympathy and guilt did not fit the content of the “between two fires” narrative. Nor did villagers’ affect fit with the rest of the war history they recounted with bitterness, such as their fury with the ruthlessly bloody ways rebels attacked civilians. Faced with the story of Ramona's "clemency" I wondered how Mama Angel and others reconciled respecting this rebel commando and crediting Ramona with saving her life, if it was the same Ramona who was about to take it away. Moreover, I wondered how Ramona - a rebel commando in charge of a column of Shining Path - came to know villagers with such intimacy. How could Mama Angel and the other village women corralled into the church doorway call upon their relationship with Ramona, and in that moment of danger, so that they could successfully engage Ramona’s own
feelings of mercy? And, most importantly, what did Ramona mean to villagers so that she would still be remembered with some tenderness, even after the Shining Path ended up killing almost sixty people in this small village of 200 adults and 300 children?

I begin this chapter with comarada Ramona’s story not just because she is a compelling figure of sympathy and fear, but also because she expresses an aspect of Peru's dirty war that we know little about. Until the end of the Fujimori government in 2000, it was difficult if not impossible for rural villagers to speak of their involvement in the rebellion without inviting the possibility of military retribution. Many analysts also veered away from telling the story of early for rebels as long as Ayacucho remained under a state of emergency (until 1998). In the context of marital law, researchers did not want to add to the state and military's negative stereotypes of Ayacucho peasants especially as the military often thought of them as terrorists in sheep's clothing. Such stereotypes gave rise to the brutal actions of the state against indigenous villagers during the war. This history made it important for analysts of the insurgency to stress the neutral position of peasants as "between two fires."³

³ An opposing, but not contradictory, perspective to the one I propose is anthropologist David Stoll's research on Guatemala's dirty war. Stoll argues for the "between two armies" model of Guatemala's war as a corrective to what he calls the "solidarity perspective" - the assumption that Guerrilla Army of the Poor directly represented the desires of rural people in Ixia, Guatemala. He argues that much of villager support for the guerrillas was a result of popular frustration expressed as revolution, and more due to the violent repression of the state forces. Guerrillas, in this case, were the lesser of two evils.
While the "two fires" model allows us to understand the unequal extent to which rural indigenous people in Peru bore the brunt of the violence, it does not tell us much about what happened to villages internally. Nor does it explain the dynamics of those first few years in which Shining Path enjoyed some peasant support (1979-1982). Too often this model falls into earlier essentialist models of peasants, as either noble defenders of disappearing traditions or as rational actors whose are only motivated to take advantage of clientalist relationships despite cultural morals and beliefs (Popkin 1979). The emphasis on villagers' victim status may also reinforce an Orientalist (or Andeanist) view of the peasantry, which tended to classify highlanders as reactionary and incapable of understanding modern revolutionary ideology (Starn 1991; Scott 1985; Said 1979).

Recent studies have gone beyond the two fires model of the war, investigating instead the dynamics of compromise and internal conflict, with an eye to understanding patterns of villagers' agency. Anthropologist Kimberly Theidon, who conducted fieldwork in several Ayacucho villages, argues that the "between two fires" model makes it too easy for us to pass over the tragic consequences of the way war sympathies were fought entre prójimos - between close neighbors and kin - within the village itself (Theidon 2003). Meanwhile, scholars researching peasant organizing against rebels have worked towards a better understanding of the balance of options available to peasants, and the decision of many to form counterinsurgency patrols - rondas campesinas - that often operated under partial (Stoll 1993).

In this chapter I explore the nature and extent of support for Shining Path. I first summarize the rise of Shining Path in Huamanga, the capital city of Ayacucho, where it began as a Maoist movement in the local San Cristóbal University (Universidad San Cristóbal de Huamanga or UNSCH). Next I show how the first wave of rebels - Ramona and her partner Lorenzo - arrived in the village by way of the local high school. I build on the insights of Peruvian anthropologist Carlos Iván Degregori, who argued that a desire for education and professionalization was Shining Path's strongest appeal to urban youth and to peasants. I describe the ways that the struggle for the right to education and the linguistic capital it ensures was a shared goal of Wiracocha's village leaders, and of early Shining Path. Key to this relationship was villagers' belief that peasants had long been deceived by landowners, and other powerful mestizos, and that the only way to surpass this history was access to higher education, literacy and learning Spanish. These dreams of social advancement and a better life mixed well with Shining Path’s fatal promise of modernity, progress, and socialist utopia that drew villagers to the revolution, if only at the start of the war.

**Before the War: Education and Land Reform in Ayacucho**

In the 1960s the wealthiest five percent of Peruvians accounted for almost half of the national earnings while the lowest twenty percent earned only 2.5 percent
This polarization of wealth followed regional and geographic patterns – a concentration of wealth and industrialization in the urbanized coast and highland city centers, and impoverishment in the rural highlands. In many parts of the Andes, haciendas encroached on the communal lands making it difficult for peasant farmers to earn enough to escape their indentured situation.

Overcoming this inequality in the countryside became the goal of various Peruvian leftist political and guerilla movements of the 1960s and 70s. In the countryside, these movements aimed for land reform. Already in the 1920s the famous Peruvian Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui reframed the colonial "Indian problem" into an issue of economic inequality. "The problem of the Indian" he wrote, "is ultimately a problem of land" – placing issues of class and control of resources and production over those of ethnicity and culture. Mariátegui imagined a more equitable distribution of land as the key to a socialist Peru. The early 1960s were characterized by massive land occupations by peasants, such as the one in La Convención led by Trotskyite Hugo Blanco, followed by short-lived armed revolutionary groups. Peasant federations, nevertheless, proliferated across the country. In Ayacucho the first all-peasant congresses were held in the early 1960s. These included not just peasant leaders, but networks of lawyers, students and trade unions that added expertise to rural demands for land. These groups concentrated

4These included Movement of the Revolutionary Left (Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria--MIR), led by Luis de la Puente Uceda in Cusco, Guillermo Lobatón's Túpac Amaru in Junin and the National Liberation Army (Ejército de la Liberación Nacional--ELN) in Ayacucho.
on recovering peasant lands that had been usurped by hacienda families long ago. But it was the military junta led by General Velasco that finally imposed a land reform to resolve the problems of tenancy in the provinces.

Unlike the right-wing juntas of Pinochet in Chile or Videla in Argentina, Velasco styled himself as a champion of the poor and oppressed. His reform was part of his “Revolutionary Government,” a blend of modernization theory, nostalgia for an Incan past and a public relations campaign to re-value small peasant farmers. In a series of policy reforms and rhetorical moves, the government sought to include indigenous peasants into a nation that had largely excluded them. Velasco hoped to make citizenship in the nation more inclusive for the marginalized highlanders by replacing ethnic differences with region and class – effectively mapping ethnicity onto these categories. In his televised speech on June 24, 1969, the Day of the Peasant, General Velasco proclaimed the change in ownership of land estates, from the hacendado landowners to the former serfs and employees of the estate: "Land should be for the peasant, for the small and medium-sized landowner; for the man who sinks his hands into it, creating wealth for all…”^5 Larger industrialized estates were turned into cooperatives run by peasants and smaller or less industrial ones were turned into communal land for the surrounding villages whose members were the former serfs.

Although socialist and revolutionary in spirit, the Velasco government also worked to keep social movements and land struggles in check. The government

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answered peasant protests with a sweepingly ambitious land reform, as well as an educational reform. The latter put state run schools and teachers in the remote countryside villages where none had ever existed, and included a program of bilingual education, among other progressive policies. Bilingual policy meant that monolingual Quechua speaking children would be taught in their native language as well as Spanish, and that Spanish-speaking children in the city would also be taught some basic Quechua. These educational policies were meant to breach the divisions between the racial hierarchies that were legacies of Spanish colonialism: the república de indios and república de españoles. Under the Spanish system, the "Spanish Republic" was the paternalistic guardian of the supposedly less rational Indians. Indios were barred from symbols of power, riding or owning horses, wearing European dress, joining the clergy or entering university.

These changes were meant to improve Peruvian society, but also to co-opt the rise of new social movements in the countryside. The government was particularly suspicious of teachers and student organizations on college campuses, and blamed the public universities for being "subversive" and for allegedly supporting several guerrilla movements that sprang up in the mid-1960s (CVR 2003). The military government suspected complicity of faculty and administrators in these very first guerrilla movements, and in its first years in power made it a priority to control and weaken university political organizations, cut public education funds and undermine administrative authority. This policy backfired by promoting, rather than discouraging, the rise of the Maoist party Red Flag - a
precursor to Shining Path - and the solidarity of radical university groups beyond
the university community and into Huamanga.⁶

For hacienda employees and tenants, Velasco's reform was a mixed success.
Least successful were reforms of the larger estates that were turned into public
cooperatives. The majority of these cooperatives were hobbled by corrupt
bureaucrats and became a symbol of the failure of Velasco's revolutionary reform.
Ayacucho contained few large estates compared to other highland departments.
They were too small to be collectivized, especially in the north where haciendas
surrounded villages like patches of a quilt. In theory these smaller estates were to
be divided into communal village lands; but in practice, less affluent haciendas
evaded Velasco's decree by dividing and selling off their lands to mestizo
townspeople or to middle class peasants before the representatives of the reform
arrived. Such was the case in the region of Wiracocha, where the landowning
classes were already considerably dissipated before the reform. Hacienda owners
decided to keep only a small part of their lands and sell to the better-off workers, or
in the case of one landowner, give away the rest. Nevertheless, land ownership was
much more equally distributed after the reform than it was before, and the
cooperative measures it emphasized led to the dominance of family farming in

⁶ When the state moved to cut university funds to weaken political groups, a non-
university coalition of Huamanga neighborhood organizations mobilized to protest
the cuts. When the state expelled University administrators from their
democratically elected posts in a bid to control university administration, the
resulting shuffle ironically put Bandera Roja faculty like Guzmán into powerful
positions (Guzmán became the head of Personnel and Student Welfare). See the
villages like Wiracocha. The reform effectively ended the hold of strong willed hacendados -- called gamonales or, big men - on rural life.

**Indigenous and peasant communities**

Besides these material changes Velasco's reform tried to combat the racism and exclusion embodied in the term “indio” (in Peru a term of disrespect) by substituting “campesino” (peasant) in state and legal documents and decrees. Since colonial times the highland indigenous were displaced and separated politically and legally from Spanish and criollos. Most were displaced into vast resettlements that became pueblos indios - "Indian towns" (Spalding 1974). These pueblos and the village annexes that surrounded them were controlled by the Spanish and Creole landowning elites under a dual system of Spanish and Indian rule that facilitated the exploitation of Indian labor. The legacy of separate spheres of governance was felt after independence when the country became two republics, one for "Indians" and the other for creoles (Thurner 1997). Under Velasco these towns and villages were given official legal status as comunidades campesinos - peasant communities - with membership and rights to land determined by kinship, farming and herding practices, or as one reform phrase put it, “land for those who work it.” The communities were also allowed some autonomy to self-govern, although what this would consist of was very vague (referred to as the “usos y costumbres”). Villages had long governed themselves according to customary law, but final decisions had
always rested in the hands of the *gamonales* that often monopolized the village offices of *juez de paz* – village magistrate (Poole 2004).  

Though criticized by some anthropologists as assimilationist for its emphasis on class rather than cultural difference (Skar 1982), Velasco's government nevertheless emphasized the basis of this new Peruvian equality in a romantic view of Incan history and rural traditions. By emphasizing class rather than ethnicity, Velasco hoped to include marginalized highlanders into national society. Education was also reformed, as Velasco declared Quechua, the indigenous language of the highlands, to be Peru’s official second language. By allowing highland children to be taught in Quechua alongside Spanish, Velasco hoped to banish the legacies of racism that kept highlanders socially marginalized from inclusion in the nation (Starn, Degregori, and Kirk 1995). These material and ideological changes were meant to form a more inclusive state: "this is a government for all Peruvians" Velasco promised in his televised address (ibid 267).

**Wiracocha's School: or, How we beat the district**

As in many parts of Peru, the *hacendados* whose lands bordered the village had long been against formal education, both for the families that worked as tenant farmers and servants on their lands, and for neighboring peasant communities. Formal education could lead to demands for social justice, and possibly enough know-how to navigate the local justice system to pursue their land claims. Because
of these potential problems many hacendados banned schools on their lands, or fought hard to keep neighboring villages from organizing schools themselves.

Wiracocha's villagers formed a sizeable work force for these neighboring haciendas when landowners needed to hire cheap labor for the harvest season. But by the late 1970s the agrarian reform had done away with the monopoly of social control by landowners in Wiracocha. This period saw the spread of school openings throughout the remote countryside, and Wiracocha’s leaders hoped to draw state teachers and funding for a school in their village. They had already established a full primary school with state teachers; this was an unusual achievement in a village of Wiracocha's medium size and remote location. (The village consisted of roughly two hundred adults and three hundred children, and was not accessible by car until the late 1990s when the first road was built by the military and neighboring villagers, in 1998.)

If establishing a full primary school was an great stride for a small highland community like Wiracocha, then a secondary school must have seemed fantastic. Yet, with the primary school full, the community decided they needed a high school. As it was anyone who wished to study had to send their children away to live in the district capital or the city, where room, board and uniforms were too expensive for most peasant budgets. The result of this was that few villagers had a high school education. Girls received even less education than boys, and few had passed beyond the second grade. Villagers' ambition was to give their children more options to professionalize - to become nurses, teachers and business people in the
city. But besides this the high school was just as much a political goal, a blow to the regional district capitol, located just a day's walk away from the village.

Wiracocha's "José Carlos Mariategui High School" was, according to villagers, the first high school in the region – “even before the district” villagers liked to brag. Their pride was not unwarranted; in 1978, when the planning and construction for the school began, its existence must have been something like a miracle.

But the remnants of the hacienda-owning families that lived in the district saw Wiracocha's move to open its own high school as hubris. The most powerful families, the gente decente, the “decent” folk, had homes in the district, and for a village annex to have a high school would mean that they would have to send their children to the “Alturas” – highlands – for their education. “Chutus de mierda” – shitty hicks – was the term that some district families used for highlanders. To locate a place of higher learning in a highland village before the valley district was a clear inversion of the hierarchy of discrimination – valley towns were the domain of large landowning families, merchants and ex hacendados, and the plan caused rancor from the district leaders.

Villagers remember their struggle to build a high school in 1978 as the time "we beat the district capital". “In those days” said Rudolfo, a thirty-year old villager, “[The district] had to listen to us. We were the kings.” Building the high school not only meant the potential for cultural capital and professional career
options for children, but the possibility of taking away the district capital seat from the ex-hacendados, and installing it in Wiracocha.

Illiteracy was very high at this time; few villagers could read and write; village men who were children in the 50s averaged three years of formal primary education, and women had less or none. Even today many of that generation still sign public documents with an inked fingerprint, the legal equivalent of a signature in highland Ayacucho. Illiterate villagers were also not allowed to vote until 1980. The lack of formal education was not due to disinterest, but to the long neglect by the state in expanding schools into the highlands, and to the resistance of landowners in the region to allow education beyond the fourth grade on or near their lands.

More than literacy, the ability to speak fluent Spanish, and to eliminate Quechua grammar and accents from one’s spoken Spanish was and is still one of the most detectable markers of formal education the Ayacucho countryside. This distinction between educated and non-educated Peruvians, especially figured through language, marks the most fundamental ethnic, class and regional differences and hierarchies. Although many peasants and Peruvians in general take a patriotic pride in Quechua as part of an ancient Inca heritage, monolingualism marks a lack of formal education and was a source of shame to many villagers, especially when they went to the city.\(^8\) Monolingualism for example, bars rural people from urban

\(^8\) Unlike Ecuador and Bolivia, many non-indigenous Peruvians have a patriotic pride in their pre-colombian heritage, including Quechua and certain Andean cultural
service sector jobs – known as “trabajos profesionales.” These jobs were monopolized by “gente decente” or “instruidos” – euphemisms for whiter looking, formally educated people (De la Cadena 1997, 2000).

The scarcity of formal education among both the peasants of Wiracocha and the hacienda tenants led to a dependant, patron-client relationship between literate hacendados (the patrons) and illiterate peasants (clients). These landlords were often the only people in the area who could read and do advanced mathematics. Because of their skills, hacendados often served as intermediaries between villagers and the city, or the state, often in exploitative ways. Don Gutierrez, a mestizo from the provincial capital whose lands bordered on those of Wiracocha, was one such hacendado who took advantage. He happened to be a teacher in the city, but married into ownership of lands near the village. Don Gutierrez was shamelessly used peasants' illiteracy to fool villagers into signing over their lands, turning free villagers with private land into his serfs. He used his own close relationships with lawyers and judges in the city helped him to push through his own claims, until the interception of land reform. Hacendados like Gutierrez also discouraged or resisted the building of a school, or outright forbade it, in order to maintain the patron-client

traditions; and some of the most elite misti landowning families of the provinces have a regional identity tied up in their ability to speak Quechua. Yet, while Quechua itself is respected, Spanish spoken with a Quechua accent is not. This accent is almost exclusively spoken by people of peasant origin has less cultural capital. In US terms, the Quechua accent is much like a Southern rural accent transplanted to the urban North: it identifies the speaker as a 'hick' or 'redneck'.
relationship that consolidated landowners' power over tenants and villagers and guaranteed them labor.

The Children of the Deceived, The UNSCH and the Rise of Shining Path in Huamanga

Peruvian anthropologist Carlos Ivan Degregori argues that the combination of peasants' desire for Spanish and literacy that only a formal education could bestow, was, the factor that allowed the university and city-based Shining Path to connect with villagers. This history of exploitation and abuse by those gamonales who could read and write fueled villager's desires to create their own high school. Degregori argues that the desire for formal education in the Ayacucho countryside was so strong as to make it a primary goal for many campesino families in the 1960s - perhaps stronger than the struggle for land (Degregori 1990). Degregori called the first followers of Shining Path in the University as well as in city high schools "los hijos de los engañados" – the children of the deceived - referring to this sector's shared experience of being the very first in their families to become literate (Degregori 1989). Formal education, the way to Spanish and literacy, became the primary "instrument of domination" that subaltern Andeans sought to appropriate: "to take away from the mistis their monopoly on Spanish, on reading and writing, is

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9 Degregori argues that deception is central to provincial identity and Peruvian history, beginning with the Spanish deceptions of the Incan emperor during the conquest, in which they used Indians ignorance of Christianity to justify the Conquest.
equivalent to Prometheus' feat of taking fire from the gods." (Degregori 1994 59-60)

It was the struggle for education that bridged the gaps among urban-based university intellectuals, poor high school students, and rural peasants.

The "children of the deceived" were those who would become university students, and the first followers of the Shining Path, as well as the intermediaries that would go on to villages like Wiracocha. First opened as a Catholic seminary school in 1677, the University of Huamanga (or “Unsch”, as it is known locally) was shut down for 80 years after Peru's disastrous defeat by Chile in the War of the Pacific. In 1959, the university was reopened as part of a plan for national modernization under then-President Manuel Prado. The reopened UNSCH was to provide learning applicable to the "development" goals of the time. It was to specialize in those studies that would lead directly to health and technology advances in this department - one of the poorest in the country. It would specialize in social services, such as education, social work and nursing - subjects popular with women undergraduates - and applied sciences such as agronomy, engineering and social science, which were more popular with male students.

Besides modernizing Ayacucho, the university changed the landscape of Ayacucho politics: new organizations arose in opposition to the strict social hierarchy maintained by the Catholic Church and landowning classes (CVR 2003).10

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10 CVR “Historias representativas: La Universidad Nacional San Cristóbal de Huamanga, p 1, 2003. The CVR adds the Aprista Party as the other hegemonic force in Ayacucho, which, alongside the Catholic Church, opposed by new politica groups.
Just two years after its reopening, the university students (then some 400) formed a Revolutionary Student Front (FER), connecting Ayacucho students to those in other state universities, and to the Peruvian Communist Youth Party. The organization had enough power to have weight in selecting the new rector of the university, a left leaning folklorist and anthropology professor from a wealthy landowning family named Efrain Morote Best - whose son would become second in command of Shining Path. Morote recruited young professors from around the country to fill faculty positions, including Abimael Guzmán, a dour, but charismatic, philosophy professor from Arequipa.

**Student teachers and Shining Path intermediaries**

On his arrival at the UNSCH, Guzmán became very involved in the FER and the many Maoist organizations that made up the university community at that time. Guzmán and his colleagues, who were from the richest landowning families in the area, formed various splinter groups that eventually became the Peruvian Communist Party-Shining Path. In the early 70s Guzmán's group began a campaign to change the university curriculum to a focus on Marxism. The struggle centered on the curriculum of the “Basic Cycle” (Cículo Básico), an academic year of standardized general studies taken by all incoming freshmen before choosing a major. When he became director of the Basic Cycle, Guzmán put pressure on faculty to teach a curriculum that stressed the teachings of Marx and Lenin (CVR 2003). In the 1970s manuals produced by the Soviet Union's Academy of Sciences,
as well as the Foreign Language editions produced in Peking were being incorporated into classes across the country. These curriculum changes coincided with the formation of the National Teachers' Union (Sutep, 1972). These books came through the university to the high school students. (Degregori 1990)

Pati was one of the most constant Catholics I knew in Huamanga, attending mass almost every evening, but she remembered when she was a university freshman, and when she lost her faith was that freshman year: "everything we read in the Basic Cycle was Mao's theses, Marx's Capital, also Lenin and Trotsky, all theories of revolution. And everything materialist." Pati stopped believing in God at this time. Much to her very religiously devoted family's relief, Pati regained her faith in her second year, when she chose biology major - a course of study as far removed from those favored by the Maoists student organizations as possible. Departments were aligned at that time with different parties - biology, engineering and chemistry followed Unidad - Shining Path's rivals. The departments dominated by Shining Path included education and anthropology, social work, agronomy and nursing.

Pati never joined Shining Path but she told me how her girlfriends in anthropology and nursing did. Guzmán and his followers used to have parties at their homes, and invite their students, urging them to bring along others who would be interested in their political organization. "Most of my girlfriends of my cohort were Senderistas." Pati told me, using the common name for Shining Path in Peru. "They used to talk about it and how great it was, and they invited me to join and
come to meetings, but I never could do anything after classes because I had to help
my mother in the restaurant."

Pati was different than her high-school girlfriends, who were *criollo* – of
white skin, and with more Spanish than indigenous heritage. Pati was *morena*,
dark-skinned, of short stature and was therefore seen as more “Indian” or more
*chola* than her classmates. Her family was also different: unlike the mothers of her
classmates, who owned haciendas, manufacturing plants or upscale stores, and
shopped for clothes in Lima, Pati’s mother maintained Quechua as the language of
the family, and she always wore traditional clothing, dressing in large long peasant
skirts, flouncy blouses and tall straw hats with a large black ribbon.

Part of the waves of rural to urban migration in the 1940s-onwards, Pati's
family moved from the neighboring department of Andahuaylas to Huamanga City
in search of work and a better life. Key to that life was access to medical clinics and
higher education for their children. In Huamanga Pati’s grandparents began a small
restaurant, which earned them enough money to send Pati to the private Catholic
schools of the upper middle classes who were, on the whole, more *criollo* than Pati,
and later to university.

Ethnic and class differences played out in the early recruitment of students
into Shining Path. In university it was Pati's *criollo* girlfriends who were recruited
directly into Shining Path:

Pati - My girlfriends would be asked to find girls to bring to the Senderista
meetings, which were held in houses, to accompany the men there." [CY - You
mean, for Guzmán and his friends?]
Pati - No to reel in (jalar) new people to Sendero. The leaders of Sendero - Guzmán and his colleagues - used to pick their members and those that they wanted to go and do community work from the (university) students. They picked all the "modelas" - I mean the most handsome, the most beautiful, the whitest and tallest - the '80-60-80 centimeters' as they say! [CY - why?]

Pati - They always did that; they were psychological, they knew how people think, so they chose the people who were the most physically attractive, the ones that could go out and reel in the girls and boys, those in high school. That is the way they got their membership.

In the end, Pati never had to chose whether or not to join shining path. She married while still a student and dropped out of the university to have children. Some of her friends stayed in Shining Path after the armed insurrection began, in 1980.

**Struggle for Education in Huanta**

The consolidation of popular groups with university students and Maoist groups reached its high point in 1969 when the government imposed the infamous "Supreme Decree 006" which took away public funds for free education for the poor. The resulting public protests for the right to education were unprecedented in the region, and were the greatest outcry in the country. The coordination between UNSCH faculty, students, high schools and neighborhood organizations also testified to the unusual levels of solidarity and personal ties between the university and the citizens of Ayacucho. The rector of the UNSCH, Efrain Morote Best organized neighborhood organizations such as the Defense Front of Ayacucho and the Neighborhood Federation to work directly with the Student Revolutionary Front. The demonstrations lasted three days, taking over the cities of Huamanga and in
Huanta, an hour's drive away from the capitol. They ended in violence when the government sent the armed forces in to forcibly put down the protest, showing an extreme use of force against citizens. Many were injured, some student leaders killed, and others arrested, including Guzmán (who was soon set free). D.S. 600 was repealed a month after the protest which quickly became the stuff of local lore, including a song describing the bravery of the students against the violent state. Written by the Huantino teacher Ricardo Dolorier, *Flor de retama* compared the martyrdom and blood of the Huanta students to the bright yellow broom flower bushes that dot the highlands in the rainy season. The last chorus, sung in the sad melody of the Andean *huayno*, promised retribution for the state's violence, and presaged the importance of blood sacrifice and symbolism Shining Path's ideology: "the blood of the people has a rich perfume, it smells of jasmine, violets and dynamite, *carajo*, dynamite." Ten years later the song would become the anthem of the Shining Path, and its performance banned by the state.

The protest was also important, as the Huanta uprising included not just city people, high-school teachers and students, but also some of the surrounding peasantry. According to Carlos Iván Degregori, the "*lucha contra 006*" as it is still

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11 Estimates on the number of dead vary widely. Interviewees in Ayacucho and Huanta claim from one or eighteen protesters and innocent bystanders were killed in the confrontation.

12 The *huayno* is a kind of music popular throughout the Andes, based on pre-Columbian traditions; it can be an upbeat dance music, or tragic ballad. Ayacucho *huaynos* have a reputation for being the latter.

13 But I will attempt to translate; In local terms, it might be as if the U.S. government pulled its Title VI language study funding from institutions with radical
remembered locally, was the "trial by fire" that would prove to Guzmán and the rest of the intellectuals that would head Shining Path that the Maoist university groups could make connections far outside the ivory tower, with the strategically essential peasants and proletariat in the countryside and urban neighborhood (Degregori 1990).

When he became director of personnel and headed the education department, Guzmán and other faculty pushed for the creation of a practice school for education majors. They created the Guzmán Poma de Ayala Application Groups – a student teaching school where university education majors earned credits through practical classroom experience.¹⁴ Much of the education department was affiliated with Guzmán's Shining Path group, and they used the classroom to recruit high-school students for the revolution. Some of these university and high school students were then sent by Shining Path into the countryside as early as 1978 to win support for the rebellion.

Volunteer teachers and the Popular School

Between 1975 and 1979 the faculty and students affiliated with Shining Path gradually disappeared from Huamanga to begin preparations for an armed "People's War." Guzmán and several other Shining Path central committee leaders had visited

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¹⁴ Planteles de Aplicación Guamán Poma de Ayala

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China during the Cultural Revolution years before, where they learned the basics of Mao's military strategy of beginning the revolution from the countryside first. Little is known about this time between the departure of Shining Path from the university and the beginning of the armed war in 1980, other than that Guzmán and other Shining Path members created "Popular Schools" and "Military Schools" in the countryside, to train members and prepare them for military action (from 1975-1979).

It was precisely at this time, between 1978 and 1979, that first Lorenzo, and a year later, Ramona, arrived in Wiracocha. The high school was just under construction and all the relevant papers had been submitted to the Education Department in Huamanga. Lorenzo, arriving first, told villagers he had heard of their application to be recognized as a public school and offered his services as a teacher until official teachers were sent by the state. In return, he would receive only room and board, just enough to allow him to stay in the countryside.

Wiracocha was in the middle of a power struggle with the district because the villagers built their school themselves. There was no road in those days, so the cement had to be brought by mules, at great expense. But the leaders in the district blocked the arrival of the teachers, arguing to the Center of Education in Huanta, that there were not enough students to justify sending teachers to the area. Wiracocha’s leaders were not deterred, however; they decided to have every person in the village enroll in the school, no matter what their age, in order to win the battle. Eduarda, now a 43 year old villager was then 18 years old, married and with
her first child when the mayor told her to matriculate: "the Department of Education
was going to come any day to check that there were students. So I went to the high
school with my notebooks and my first child strapped to my back." Eduarda
remembered wistfully, “That was when the teachers and leaders were better, more
progressive [in the sense of more development-oriented]. They cared about the
development of the villages where they worked.” Many villagers expressed this
same nostalgia for earlier generations of rural teachers who were seen as caring
more about social justice while new teachers "care only about making money."

In 1980 the school year had started, but while the fight with the district
waged on, there were no teachers to teach high school. But there were people living
in the village who were capable of teaching. Lorenzo Gamboa was a young
engineer from the city who, as villagers report it, had just shown up one day to live
in Wiracocha as a member of the community. Villagers remember that he worked
hard in the fields and was "poorer than the poorest peasant." Lorenzo seemed to
own only one tattered shirt and pants and wore most battered felt hat in the village.
Máximo, a 45-year-old villager who was a village president in the 80s, remembered
that he had to lend him a shirt himself so that he would have something to change
into. Lorenzo used to take part in village assemblies and was the first to arrive and

15 In interviews some villagers would add to these descriptions of Ramona and
Leóncio, "like you". This interpretation revealed the a strange convergence between
my position in the village and early Sendero. I, too, came to live in the village "as a
member," accompanied people during communal work, asked lots of questions
about fellow villagers and even lived in the building that was once the high school.
Surely these overlaps led many people to distrust me, but they were equally
countered by other suspicions that I was CIA or DEA.
the last to leave at communal work parties. "He worked harder than all of us, and he was from the city" marveled my compadre when he remembered how Lorenzo helped to build the school. When Lorenzo offered to teach math to first year high school students it seemed a blessing. Soon a young woman from Huanta joined him; villagers knew her only as her nom de guerre, Ramona. In exchange for teaching at the school villagers gave Ramona and Lorenzo room and board.

**Sendero and Village Traditions**

Analysts of Shining Path generally agree that the rebels lost what little support they had in the highlands by going against long-held cultural traditions (Coronel 1996; Degregori 1991). According to this understanding, the revolution was stopped cold in communities that held the "strongest" Andean rituals. In Wiracocha this history was more complex. At worst, Shining Path had an ambivalent relationship to local village traditions. On the one hand, Sendero respected traditional labor practices and other customs. Lorenzo, for example, earned praise from villagers like my compadre for his work on communal fields and on building the high school, where "he worked harder than any of us comuneros". For her part, Ramona cooked with the women in their homes and accompanied them on their chores.

Village women also remembered the clothes the couple wore as particularly "campesino". Lorenzo is remembered as a “waqcha” – poor – wearing the most threadbare clothes of the poorest peasants. Ramona wore an impressively
embroidered skirt in the florid neon colors and patterns popular in the region and
carried her books (written by Mao) in a bright traditional manta she folded across
her back. In these aspects Ramona and Lorenzo did not just take on the traditional
identity of the village - they occupied it in a hyper realistic or exaggerated way,
throwing themselves wholeheartedly into this campesino identification.

It was unusual for city-born youth to show such respect for campesino lifestyle and customs. Given the widespread stigmatization of all things Quechua in the eyes of professional and urban Peru, children of campesinos like Ramona and Lorenzo were quick to forget their country origins, either out of pride or simply in order to forge a professional career path for themselves in the city. But, as French historian Henri Favre pointed out early in the revolution, those same youth from the city, who were more likely to reflect on village ways with shame and condescension as “atrasados” – backwards – were the ones changed by Shining Path.¹⁶ The Maoist and Mariategui emphasis on land and pride in a supposedly unalienated subsistence lifestyle permitted a revaluation of the peasantry that was at once respectful of custom as it was modern.

In this way Maoism gave these children of campesinos a way of expressing their own hybrid identities as modern and provincial, an a new way to feel pride in their rural origins. The young rebels succeeded in gaining intimacy with villagers

¹⁶ This respect for rural traditions among rebel youth was first made by Favre, but other accounts argued that Shining Path was only against village customs (see Starn 1995, Degregori 1994 and Coronel 1996). Likely this discrepancy was due to the difference between the early Shining Path intermediaries, who I describe here, and later reinforcements who were more authoritarian comrades.
because they earned respect by engaging in, and thereby estimating, everyday village life. Ramona especially used this intimacy to ask questions of the women. Mama Angélica told me that Ramona always wanted to know who was the richest villager was, who treated others badly, and who was selfish. Mama Angélica was under no illusions about why Ramona wanted to know the answers to those questions in particular; hindsight showed her that it was to later punish or assassinate those who had a bit more than other villagers. Yet, even despite this hindsight, it was clear from the women I spoke to that she was well loved by those who knew her. "Oh she was really a good person” Juana reminisced.

**Shining Path and Andean "Traditions"

French historian Henri Favre observed that rebel appreciation for some of Andean country life was one of the key reasons these youth were able to gain some sympathy and friendship at the beginning of the revolution. He wrote that, for many villagers:

> these youth of both sexes, so dedicated to the community, so respectful of customs and traditions, seemed very different from those who had run away to the city, abandoning family and friends, and who, on the occasion of their very rare visits, used to show a rather condescending superiority.¹⁷

Since the 1940s villagers in Wiracocha had migrated to the city, only to return with less respect for their villages of origin. Many migrants who lived in the city still

insisted on keeping their rural lands even though they could not fulfill the obligations of the community, like those of the *faenas* - the harvesting of communal fields. Migrants who did return came back with more money or better clothes than their neighbors, and many mimicked the kinds of disrespect towards village life and campesinos that they themselves had received in the city.

While they threw themselves wholeheartedly into some of the communal traditions, the Senderista couple distanced themselves from others such as religious practices of the community. The yearly procession of the Virgin on the patron saint day of Santa Rosa of Lima was condemned by the Senderistas, as were other pre-catholic rituals such as the worship and offerings to *huamani* – the mountain gods and spirits that were believed to inhabit the mountains and rock formations around the village. Sendero’s disrespect for the Virgin and *huamani* did not seem to bother the younger villagers, many of whom had begun to embrace the Protestant evangelical religions that were spreading throughout migrant areas of the cities. To this day most Protestant sects practiced in the Andes condemn the continuation of worship related to Catholic Saints or to mountain spirits as blasphemy. But older villagers, like Mama Juana, still remember Sendero’s sanctions against saint days with bitterness. “The Senderistas were just like the Evangelicals; they both abandoned la *Mamacha* (the Andean name for the Virgin Mary in her syncretic form as the Andean *Pachamama*, or, "Earth mother").” During later incursions Sendero sacked the Catholic Church, stealing the saint images that had been there
for hundreds of years, and selling the silver that had decorated the interior of the building.

**The School, the Armed Struggle and Loss of Support**

Peru's schools of the 1960s and 70s were important for the ways in which they carried ideologies of nationhood and citizenship into the frontiers of the state (Wilson 2000). Teachers led rituals of state formation such as the raising and lowering of the national flag at the beginning and ending of the school day, the singing of the national anthem and militaristic lining up of students to salute the flag every morning, and the student marches that accompanied national state holidays. They were also in charge of communicating the ideologies of progress and solidarity that were essential to the workings of the nation. As part of a disciplinary society the school held an important role in creating not just citizens, but a certain kind of citizen (Foucault 1979). "La letra con sangre entra" - the letter enters with blood - was a saying that expressed the importance of corporal punishment in frontier schools that emphasized enseñanza de fierro - iron education - for rural students. Such an education prepared villagers for their ultimate national service in the military. The leva - illegal villages raids by military to forcibly recruit men into military service - was one way that the unequal burden of military service was forced upon highlanders instead of their urban mestizo counterparts.

The very importance of the rural school as a powerful representative and citizenship factory/producer was exactly what made it so useful for Shining Path.
Wilson notes that in Tarma, Shining Path symbols were exchanged for those of the nation on a one for one basis: the national flag was replaced with the hammer and sickle, the hymn with those to President Gonzalo and the calendar of national celebrations was replaced with those of the Peruvian Communist Party (Wilson 2000). Not only were these replaced but also bans were placed on the symbols of the old state, and most importantly, on the old curriculum, which was "bourgeois".

Many of the older students were intrigued by the new teachers and their powerful ideologies. Thirty years later, students still remember the "little red book" that had sayings that valorized the military potential of the peasantry. Don Manuel recalled how much he liked reading Mao in school, and how sad he was one day when Lorenzo couldn’t bring the book in any more, for fear of being caught. In Manuel's words, "in those days the teachers were more interested in the villages they worked in. They were more progressive, and they cared about the progress of the people here." In other villages as well, students who were Shining Path found their most receptive rural audience among village youth with primary or secondary school educations. These younger villagers were prone to support the rebellion because of their own desires for social mobility and power. Degregori argues that these "youth in search of an identity, their parents ‘traditional’ identity seemed remote after exposure to the ‘myth of progress’"(Degregori 1986, 1998)- a popular narrative of modernization that included the image of the school as the ultimate force of modernity, that could remake people from traditional and backwards to powerful and modern. Degregori describes the seductive power of the Shining Path
coming to a village with their guns and boots, calling the other village youth “compañero.” “Power appeared in all of its fearful splendor, and gained the adherence of most youth in Rumi, whom it promised to invest with the same attributes. The young people were intoxicated with this power” (Degregori 1998:130).

Yet it was these teachings that began the loss of peasant support for Sendero in Wiracocha. The reason for then end of Lorenzo and Ramona's popularity was not ideological, although that may have been a part of it. As villagers told it to me, the most important thing was that teachers were teaching "la politica" at the expense of learning the national curriculum of science, language and math. Despite the thrill that reading about the revolution might have given students, parents did not like it that instead of studying Spanish, students read Mao's little red book. Students also learned jumping jacks and push-ups, cleaned shotguns and learned how to burn a hammer and sickle pattern into a hillside with a match and a bottle of kerosene. Parents were incensed that the high school they struggled so long for was not going to advance their children into the urban service sector positions. They were the first to complain to the village president that the new teachers had to go.

The reaction of parents in Wiracocha has resonance in other parts of Peru, where urban advocacy groups have misjudged the desires of their subjects. Peasant struggles over bilingual education in the highlands of Cusco often clashed with well-meaning leftist aid organizations that promoted teaching in Quechua. Villagers, on the contrary, insisted that their children be immersed in Spanish.
Quechua was learned at home, they insisted, what their children needed to get ahead was a knowledge of proper Spanish. They pointed out that the very leftists who advocated Quechua language classes sent their children to Lima's private schools to learn English (García 2005).

**Village Divisions and a more authoritarian rebellion**

With the retreat of Sendero from the school, the village became divided. Some continued to support the rebels, while others tried to remain neutral - an option that was growing impossible with the increasing authoritarianism of Shining Path and of state abuse. Although Sendero left the school, they did not leave the region, but governed it from afar, holding clandestine meetings in the evening, showing up unexpectedly in village assemblies. They began "juicios populares" - popular trials of the remaining *minifundistas* - small landowners. These received some support from villagers, whose condemnation of *gamonalismo* incurred after years of struggle between the community and expanding haciendas in the region, was a common goal. Villagers themselves complained about small landowners, and sought rebel help in avenging them. In the 1980s, Sendero organized several raids on the livestock and harvests of the less popular landowners, and finally killed two brothers who had been much despised by the village. These assassinations came about as the result of villagers’ own complaints to the rebels, in which they themselves asked for a trial. “But we didn’t understand, we didn’t know that they were going to be killed” one man told me who had voted against the brothers at their
trial. Sendero’s economic justice was popular among many villagers, but many were shocked and alienated by their increasingly extreme form of violence.

After they left the school, villagers never knew when Shining Path would show up. One former village leader recalled,

In one moment, it was really all Sendero, all controlled by them, it was their law and nothing else. So, if you went to the city, they said you were *chismoso* [a gossip] and would kill you. Or, if your animals ventured into the fields of another person, or if you spoke badly of one of them.

Those who did not come to the meetings were marginalized. Besides "gossips" they were called *soplones* - whistle blowers or *yana-umas* - black heads - Sendero's insult to the military and civil defense patrollers who wore black balaclavas. Just calling someone these names was often enough to ensure that their names would be entered in Sendero's lists of assassination targets. As rebels began to tighten their hold on those villages still within their area of control, they changed.

**Conclusion**

By examining the context of early Shining Path rebels in Wiracocha we can begin to understand the intimate ties that ran through Peru's war. Ramona and Lorenzo were from the city, but as others have shown, these early foot soldiers of Shining Path were not that different from villagers themselves. Villagers and rebels shared a common belief in the power of education to improve their lives and reform the long-term structures of racism and inequality that characterized Ayacucho's highlands. Unlike most village youth who could not escape from the countryside
soon enough, Lorenzo and Ramona were educated city folk who respected peasant life and even, for the most part, Andean traditions. As the war wore on it would become clear that these intermediaries did not represent the intentions of all Shining Path members. But for a short moment in time there was a convergence between these student teachers and the village. Thinner descriptions of Shining Path might interpret his respect for villagers as a manipulative bid to brainwash or otherwise trick villagers into supporting rebels. But villagers did not remember them in that way. Instead, Ramona, Lorenzo and the socialist utopias promised by Shining Path are now remembered with strange mixture of fondness and dread:

Ramona was good, cariñoso - caring. But then she changed. She would come to the communal assembly with armed guards. She would yell her words. She threatened us, saying, 'I have eyes and ears everywhere. If someone talks against the party, I am going to know whom. No one is going to go against us.' From then on, little by little, people would run away when they came. Ramona herself changed, she turned totally bad, evil.

These intimate ties between villager and rebel made the latter's betrayal all the more keenly felt by those who had previously trusted them. Villagers carried this knowledge of deceit and betrayal into the present. In the next two chapters I show how this history found resonance in an apocalyptic narrative of the present, and how it came to partially inform villagers' reception of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
Chapter 2. From Revolution to Revelation:

Evangelical Christianity in the Andes

A story circulates among US missionaries in Peru of a spontaneous and surprising conversion that happened during the political violence. Several North American evangelical pastors were traveling along the dirt roads of the highlands with videos of the signs of Christ's imminent return. The movies were born-again favorites, the kind shown across the US in church basements and tent revivals. They enumerated the signs of end of the world, of the coming of the Antichrist and of the wars of Armageddon that would take place at the end of the world in Jerusalem. On their way to a revival meeting, this group of pastors was assaulted by several Shining Path guerrillas. The pastors were set free, but the rebels took the videos along with the missionaries’ cash and supplies. Years later one of the pastors received a phone call from a man who confessed that he had been one of the Shining Path guerrillas involved in the attack. He related how one night after the assault he and some of his comrades had watched the videos They had been convinced by its moral narrative, or so the man said, and had subsequently accepted Jesus as their personal savior.

1 Films and videos have long been an essential part of evangelical missionization, especially in regions like rural Latin America and Africa, where illiteracy rates are high (Meyer 2003). These films are created to motivate people to convert, often using the terror of Tribulation to motivate people into accepting Jesus. For example, the producers of the "Jesus Film" report that over 5,000,000,000 people have seen, and almost 200,000,000 have converted - after seeing the film (see www.jesusfilm.com).
Whether reality or a missionary fantasy, the story shows us that Shining Path was not the only force seeking the hearts and minds of rural peasants in the late twentieth century. This was also the time of the growth of evangelical churches in the traditionally Catholic Andes, and Latin America as a whole. In Ayacucho conversion to Protestant religions such as Presbyterianism and the Pentecostal Assembly of God followed similar patterns as Shining Path’s revolution, spreading among the margins of Ayacucho – in the poor barrios of the city and later, in the mountain villages themselves. These new forms of Christianity - referred to broadly as evangelismo - especially found acceptance among those excluded from the traditional hierarchy of the Catholic Church. In Huamanga the Catholic Church had its base, priests were based in such cities, then the towns, and sometimes the districts, but not in remote communities like Wiracocha. Shining Path and evangelical Christianity also shared some fundamental similarities that opposed Catholic doctrine and practice: both espoused a millenarian view of world history that embraced rupture, radical change and utopian future. Both also struggled to recruit from the marginalized sectors of Ayacucho, and both aimed for a total ideological conversion in their members. Yet despite both similar conversion patterns and a millenarian view of the world as destined for radical change, the Shining Path and the new Protestant churches were radically opposed in other ways, the faith in worldly revolution juxtaposed about the belief in the coming of a sacred Apocalypse and Judgment day. The role of evangelical Christianity was to become one more important strand in the history of the war and its aftermath. As village
support for Abimael Guzmán’s Maoist plan for revolution was lost, *evangelismo* proved the more enduring force.

In this chapter I describe the rise of Protestant conversion in Wiracocha, and its role in village life today. I argue that *evangelismo* holds a significance for Peruvian villagers that was incubated in war’s desperation, and yet, has also proved more enduring because of the multilayered appeal of its discourses of a world in moral crisis and of larger, invisible forces pulling history’s strings. In post-conflict Wiracocha the language of born again Christianity - particularly the narrative of apocalypse - has become a new political idiom, one that expresses dissatisfaction with the state and global forces that appear to destroy the world with sickness and war. Much like other forms of magic - including "traditional" witchcraft and rumors of fantastic occult creatures - that have increased of what the Comaroffs call “millennial capitalism” – apocalyptic rumors and narratives also resonate with an economy that drives peasants further into poverty while the rest of the world seems to grow richer (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999).

**Village Evangelization and Shining Path**

The first Pentecostal “templo” or church was built in Wiracocha only a few years before Shining Path rebels first arrived. At that time evangelicals were still a minority, but evangelical leaders were becoming an important village presence. In 1980 the president of the village was Máximo Huamán, also the local pastor, and one of the most dynamic village leaders. Don Máximo’s memory is so revered that
his persona has become something of a pioneering legend in the village, among evangelicals and Catholics alike. Máximo had a gift for getting funds from the state, and for organizing and cajoling villagers into acting together. He represented a segment of the village that had managed to achieve a level of education that gave him Spanish fluency and literacy and awareness of city ways through temporary labor migrations between the countryside and the city. As a highly educated villager comfortable with urban life, Don Máximo was one of the increasingly "depeasantized" sectors of Ayacucho that Shining Path had hoped to count on for support in the People's War.

Don Máximo had headed the high school building and planning committee that brought the first members of Shining Path into the village (see Chapter 1). He had worked hard to petition the state for school teachers, and had welcomed Lorenzo and Estila in as volunteers, and perhaps more than anyone was angered by the way that the school had turned into a political platform for the Senderistas. He began preaching to the congregation against “la política” that they taught. It was not right, he explained in the rapid fire Quechua he spoke from the pulpit, to teach politics in the school. Don Máximo stressed the Evangelical doctrine that held that the Bible itself forbade mixing in the worldly arena of politics. In his sermons and in communal assemblies he urged villagers to turn the teachers into the police for participating in subversión against the state.

One night, a few months later, the Pentecostal congregation sat on the rough tree trunks that served as pews in the Assembly of God templo. A few candles at
the front of the room illuminated Don Máximo ’s face as he gave his sermon and cast the rest of the cavernous adobe room in darkness. Villagers remember with some pride that Máximo refused to come with the guerrillas until he finished the entire service. After he preached, the rebels shot him in the doorway of the church and dragged him to the plaza. The rebels dropped dynamite on his body up and a note on his remains, “This is how whistle‑blowing dogs die.” Previously, some villagers had supported or at least stood by when Shining Path cadres tried and executed the gamonales - regional strongmen or landowners or punished criminals. The assassination of Don Máximo, however, alienated both evangelicals and Catholics alike, distancing villagers even more from the Shining Path.²

The preacher's death did not just mark the beginning of the end of peasant support for the rebellion, but a transformation in the religious identity of the village. In the years following Don Máximo 's assassination and the later village massacre, more villagers converted to evangelismo. Twenty years later most of the Shining Path and military are gone but, the overwhelming majority of villagers maintain their faith in evangelical Christianity. Where before villagers worshipped mountain spirits and Catholic saints, they now meet several times a week to listen to interpretations of the end of the world, and to receive the holy spirit by speaking in

² Village presidents and others holding non‑Shining Path office were often seen as antagonistic to rebels who favored their assassination. In Wiracocha, however, Don Maximo was targeted by rebels a year after he had stepped down from office. Shining Path did not kill the president at the time, so Don Maximo’s crime was less that he held a governing position and more about his preaching against the rebellion in church.
tongues. A magnificent but silent and crumbling colonial-era Catholic church on Wiracocha’s marks Catholicism’s decline. Meanwhile, two new evangelical templos - one Presbyterian and the other the Pentecostal sect Assembly of God – are where villagers hold own services several times per week.

**Protestant Conversion in Peru and Latin America**

We still tend to think of Latin America as a bastion of Catholicism in opposition to more Protestant North America. But Wiracocha’s changing religious allegiances reflect the larger global trend in the “non-Western world” to the rapid growth of all manner of Protestant sects. These range from Seventh Day Adventists to Pentecostalism (Stoll 1990; Burdick 1998). Wiracocha’s history of Protestant conversion follows that of similar villages throughout Ayacucho. Missionary presence dated back until the 1940s, in Ayacucho, but it was in the capital of Huamanga that the Summer Institute for Linguistics, one of the largest and most ambitious Protestant missionization projects in Latin America, set up a headquarters and teacher training institute for its Andean program. Ostensibly a linguistics and bilingual educational program run thorough the University of Oklahoma, the SIL’s goal was actually missionary: to make the message of the gospel accessible to everyone in the world by translating the New Testament into every spoken language (Stoll 1982). Like most Cold War evangelical missionaries the North American staff of the SIL Ayacucho office were virulently anti-communist, mirroring the dominant ideology of its country of origin. SIL envisioned an Andean Program,
begun in Huamanga city, that would spread throughout the Andes and into Bolivia, bring a Quechua Gospel with it. Like the rebels, SIL targeted similar sectors of the highland populations. They recruited teachers from among the students at the University of Huamanga and sent them to remote areas to missionize. Both SIL and Protestantism were unevenly accepted in Ayacucho, however. Under pressure from Catholic Huamanguinos, SIL was eventually forced out of the area. Protestant seed churches did, however, take root in parts of the Ayacucho countryside, especially in the northern highlands and provincial capitals, and in the eastern lowland jungle towns.

The first gatherings of Evangelicos began in Wiracocha in 1950 when one family who had converted to Pentecostalism in a provincial capital of Ayacucho returned to the village to live. These villagers first held in-home evening prayer meetings. But the converts were few and not welcomed by the majority of villagers who were suspicious of the new religion. Catholic villagers referred to the newly converted village members as satanas - "satans." They especially looked down on evangelical bans against drinking alcohol, which was a key part of traditional spirit worship rituals and their corresponding Catholic feast and saint days. Intolerant of the Evangelicals’ own intolerance, Catholics blamed Evangelicals for droughts and floods that damaged harvests believed to be protected by mountain spirits and Catholic saints. These spirits were angered, Catholics argued, by the interruption in rituals brought by the new religion.
Despite this initial negative reaction, conversion rates were already rising before the beginning of the war. Missionaries from as far away as the US and Denmark visited the Protestant base churches in Huanta to preach to the growing number of congregants. Some missionaries even ventured as far as Wiracocha. Two older converts still remember the day the towering gringo Pastor Paul from Virginia baptized them - with a bucket of water in the freezing highland air. Later, when villagers displaced by the violence sought refuge in the jungle and in the shantytowns of Huancayo, Huanta and Huamanga, many began to attend the Protestant churches active in those towns. The coca growing jungle towns where a majority of village refugees made their home during the worst war years were strong bases of born again Christianity. Evangelical belief was so strong in the jungles that, during the war, evangelized civil defense patrollers envisioned their parts in the counterinsurgency as a holy war, one akin to Bible stories of wars waged against the Philistines or against the Roman Empire (Del Pino 1991). When Wiracocha began to repopulate after 1992, displaced people brought this religion back from the coca growing jungle. A household survey taken over the course of my fieldwork showed that roughly eighty percent of villagers were now members of either Assembly of God or Presbyterian churches.³

³ This information is based on a survey I conducted of 20 village households in 2001.
**Conversion Stories**

Studies of conversion to evangelical religion in Latin America often focus on the role of exterior stresses such as personal trauma, psychological or physical pain, social and economic hardship, as reasons for conversion. According to this point of view, Protestant conversion happens because of the breakdown of traditional religion during times of violence and repression, or because of social trauma a new explanation of suffering is needed. Peruvian historian Jefrey Gamarra for example, has argued that Evangelical conversion in Ayacucho is neither a desirable choice nor a permanent state of affairs for highlanders. Rather for victims of the dirty war conversion is an adaptation strategy, “short-term answer” to “economic crises, political violence, discrimination, ethnic and social exclusion, and the world’s globalization process.” allowing access to economic and political resources (Gamarra 2000: 273).

High levels of external stress and low resources may in fact be a common condition of some converts to evangelismo in Latin America, especially in regions hard hit by political violence (Burdick 1998; Gill 1994). In Ayacucho one consequence of the war has been a sharp increase in alcoholism, a serious health concern in the Andes, more so in those communities hard hit by the war, where studies show that addiction has reached epidemic proportions (Theidon 1999). For some, evangelismo's ban of drinking alcohol and going to parties, as well as its stress on becoming "born again" allows for some relief from a painful war histories where no other aid is available. This relief can be especially valuable for women,
insofar as drinking is often accompanied by domestic violence. For others, evangelical churches serve as social networks among rural migrants and sometimes provide essential economic resource in cases of emergency, offering solidarity and support among new city migrants who had few social ties. In Ayacucho, Evangelical Protestantism became an important addition to the migrant tool kit; whose contents included use of sneakers instead of tire sandals, baseball caps instead of wool felt sombreros and nylon windbreakers instead of hand woven wool ponchos.

Many Wiracocha men traced their conversion to external stress and personal crisis. For Don Julio, a church elder, conversion came as a result of a fire from a neighbor's house which set his own house aflame and burned all of his belongings. Listening to the other villagers who witnessed the gospel to him, he told me, he realized that the loss of his house was a sign that “something was wrong” with his life; he began to go to church and never stopped. Others came to the religion because they wanted to be done with heavy drinking and its social and physical costs. Eulogio, for example, told me that he became evangelical shortly after alcohol poisoning. He had been a musician playing at fiestas, and one night drank himself into such a stupor that he ended up in a coma on the street. He woke up several days later and was converted by fellow villagers who spoke the gospel to him.

Women explained their conversions differently than did men. Some dated their conversion to Evangelism because of personal tragedy, but more often women
told me they converted at the request of a male family member that had become evangelical, or because of the alcoholism of their husbands (Brusco 1995; Green 1999). Almost every woman I spoke with praised evangelical religion's ban on drinking because it led to a reduction in household expenses and curbed men's abusive behavior. Alcohol and 'fiestas' - both the domain of Catholicism - were to blame, women said, for domestic abuse and adultery. However, this "reformation of machismo" - as Elizabeth Brusco called the effects of conversion - could not account for some of the most active women in the church: single mothers and widows (Brusco 1995). These women were, on the whole, almost all evangelical, and yet they were each head of their own households, and not subject to a husband's authority or drinking. And, although women converted because of men, and although men invariably acted as ancianos and preachers, women were the most active church members. Women were more constant about attending services than men; women also made up three quarters of the congregations in evening services.

These shared structural aspects of economic desperation and years of violence meant that many in Wiracocha shared similar reasons to be more accepting of the messages and functions of Evangelism. But this functionality does not explain, in itself, the ways that villagers spoke about their personal belief in Jesus and their conviction that the Bible held a fundamental truth about the world. When I asked people who offered these very instrumental reasons for conversion if that was the only reason they went to church the answer, more often than not, was a very offended retort, "No! I believe in Jesus." Don Martin, a village leader who had gone
back to Catholicism after being Evangelical for years - in order to stop drinking
explained this complete conversion to best: "Really when you change, you pass
through the change hard. It happened to me… You feel different, in your own
flesh.” While poverty, marginalization and alcoholism informed villager's
conversion, their belief in evangelical Christianity could not be reduced to these
functionalist terms.

**Born Again in the Andes: Village Church Services and the Fiesta Espiritual**

Evangelical services in Wiracocha were not led by a professional preacher
but by a member of the community called an *anciano* or elder who was elected by
church members into office. This democratic church structure was one of the
reasons villagers gave for preferring evangelismo to Catholicism, an echo in this
case of Martin Luther and John Calvin’s original Protestant Reformation as an
antidote to corrupt brahmanic Vatican power. Unlike the oligarchical vertical
hierarchy of the Catholic Church, evangelical churches were run by villagers
themselves, without having to answer to a higher authority. Evangelicals distrusted
Catholic priests to intervene in salvation; many felt betrayed by the collusion
between the Catholic Church and the *hacendados* who exploited peasant labor for
generations. “*Tayta kura llulla*” – the Father priest lies – was a common refrain in
village evangelical services.

Evangelical serves were held in the evenings in the cavernous *templo*, which
was an adobe structure the size of several small family sized houses. Unlike the dull
brown of the village buildings the walls of the *templo* have been gessoed with layers of brilliant white. There are no panes in the windows, which had to wait until the next years budget, so that the wind and rain blow in onto the bare heads of the congregation who have taken off their wool sombreros for the service. The experience of sitting through the service at night is of slowly freezing. "You wouldn’t notice the cold if you truly believed" a parishioner told me, when I asked him how the elderly villagers could stand the cold night air and the uncomfortable, backless, spit tree-trunk benches for hours. (I eventually learned that parishioners brought folded blankets to sit on in order to survive the cold and the hard bench.)

Women and men sit on separate sides of the church, occupying the rows of benches made of rough split tree trunks. According to the strict interpretation of Bible warnings against worshipping false images, no pictures of saints or angels, commonly found in Catholic churches, are allowed. There is a pulpit, but it is decorated only with flowers and a white cloth ornately embroidered with doves and the words "Christ is coming soon - prepare yourself."

Service begins when enough congregants arrive, and then the band - villagers who have learned the rudiments of an accordion and violin, a guitar and sometimes a cowbell or drum - opens with a hymn. These are sung in Quechua, and are often set to the traditional melodies of *huaynos*. Next one of the *ancianos* begins with some announcements and a sermon based on part of the New Testament in Quechua. Elders choose verses that exemplify moral problems in the community. The increased problem of petty crime or battles over land, of family, adultery and
fornication and the importance of personal struggle and sacrifice are all favorites. The sermon takes up the bulk of the service, but it is punctuated by singing led by women. Teenage girls especially enjoy the singing, often competing with each other to sing loudest, highest, or with the best tambourine accompaniment. The singing and sermon are followed by prayer. In the Pentecostal services this prayer sometimes leads to speaking in tongues, when congregants receive the Holy Spirit, and speak in a language understandable only to them and God.\textsuperscript{4} To a non-believer like myself, this language is incomprehensible, but villagers believe that speaking in tongues involves an actual foreign language that a congregant is miraculously given the ability to speak. I was often asked to listen for English being spoken when I attended these Pentecostal services, but if a word was uttered I could not hear it as the experience is so loud it is impossible to concentrate on one voice. The ability to recognize and translate a foreign language is a desirable skill because it is believed that when church members speak in tongues they are foretelling prophecy.

At times of crisis, a special service is held for collective prayer for help. These prayer sessions may last all night and occur to ask for specific miracles: the improved health of someone deathly ill, the release from drought, that plantings destroyed by hailstorms may yield harvests. But more usually the prayer consists of increasingly loud sighing, crying and pleading, all at once, in a din of voices. "We

\textsuperscript{4} For reasons that I was not able to fully understand, Wiracocha has two evangelical churches - Presbyterian and Pentecostal (Assembly of God). There main differences between the two was that, the "gifts of the spirit" were more unassuming in the former. For example, Presbyterians in Wiracocha did not speak in tongues or shake with the spirit as was the case in the Assembly of God church.
cry so God will hear us" one congregant once told me, when I wondered why people got so emotional and loud during these sessions.

Although the themes that are preached are the stuff of the everyday, the biblical parallels are far from mundane. The recent disappearance from the village of a young man and two of his urban friends along with several Swiss bulls donated by an NGO, for example, was not simply an violation of the laws of private and communal property, but a sign of the slow but inevitable corruption of village life by the amoral hoodlums from the city that is a key part of the coming Tribulation. Just as Lima threatens Wiracocha, Babylon once threatened the God fearing Israelites of the Gospel. Just as more and more village families are threatened by adultery, and the village threatens to become another Sodom and Gomorrah.

These biblical parallels become more pronounced in the twice yearly fiesta espirituales - spiritual festivals - that are equivalent to the tent revivals in the United States. These are the occasions when the most gifted and entertaining preachers come from Lima to give three or four days of sermon in Wiracocha. In a land without electronic media other than two short-wave radio stations, the revival is a big deal, like a traveling circus or Broadway production come to a small town.

The fiestas are scheduled to fall on the most important day of the Andean religious and agrarian calendar - the last days of July and the beginning of August after the work of harvesting and right before the planting season begin again. As the few Catholics in the village bitterly observed, these dates fall on the festival of the Andean new year and Santiago - holidays which have been marked for centuries by
copious drinking, dancing, praise and sacrifices to the mountain spirits. It also marks the national Independence day, the most alcoholic of all of state celebrations. That the evangelical fiestas fall on these holidays is no coincidence; they are considered the days upon which the most sin happens, and when the most evangelicals can potentially caer al mundo - fall into the world (in the US a common term is "backslide"). By superimposing the evangelical holidays onto these "worldly" ones, evangelicals in Wiracocha exert social control over village life, a fact which comes at the cost of Catholic traditions. During the fiestas it is even common for members who have sinned by drinking or dancing in Catholic fiestas to confessing their sins and publicly committing themselves to Jesus once again in the next evangelical service.

**The End of the World at the End of the World**

Brothers and sisters, look at the Bible what does it say? War. From the First and Second World war, the war of six days of the Jews, the Russians with the Chechan Republic, Israel against Palestine, Ecuador with Peru, Columbia, the military and guerrillas continue even now, the Persian Golf, like the Third World war between the US and Afghanistan for the Twin Towers attack in which 5000 people died. In the war with Afghanistan the international organizations are intervening, the European Market, the UN. In whatever moment WWIII could begin. We are talking about the Bible, the eschatological [study of the end times] Bible, *it tells and sings what is certain*. In what time are we? In the time of eating, of getting rich? We are preparing ourselves for the encounter with Lord Jesus.

- Visiting Lima Pastor at Fiesta Espiritual, Wiracocha 2002
In Wiracocha's *fiestas espirituales* the sermon is the center of the service and lasts for hours each day. Unlike the do-it-yourself, restrained sermons of the local elders, the sermon is given by a professional pastor who has trained directly with North American or Europe missionaries. The pastor's sermon is a practiced speech, filled with details from the Bible, physical humor and jokes as well as fire and brimstone.

As in the everyday church sessions, one of the overriding themes of the professional sermon was the corruptive power of the city and the good will of the village. I attended *a fiesta espiritual* in 2002 when the preacher used the tale of Lot escaping Sodom and Gomorrah as a tale of urban depravity. Although the subject was a serious one for the preacher – a warning not to have faith as weak as that of Lot’s wife, and against urban homosexuality and fornication – the preacher performed the biblical tale in a wildly funny way. He played both Lot and Lot’s wife to the laughing congregation; Lot’s character was an obsessive compulsive Woody Allen type who jumped every time God spoke to him, while Lot’s wife was obsessed with her collection of china plates that her husband forced her to leave back home in Sodom as they fled the city’s destruction. In the preacher’s clownish dramatization, Lot’s wife sighed so much about her china, that the reason for her turning into the infamous pillar of salt was because she was peering back toward Sodom to see if her plates were still there.\(^5\)

\(^5\) Unfortunately, a strong homophobia accompanied most of the Lima preacher’s rhetoric. This included the preacher’s strange insistence that “gay people are
The preacher’s well-rehearsed and comedic tale kept people glued to the pulpit, and the *templo* full for the four days of the festival. This tale of urban decline was the key device over four days during which the pastor inventoried the signs of the immanent Apocalypse with current national and international events. The combination of the preacher's knowledge of the Bible tale with those of current events mesmerized the congregation as the preacher inventoried what he called the "signs that we are living in dangerous times" including: homosexuality, rise in technology and surveillance (UPC codes), rise in fornication (divorce rates), in natural disasters (earthquakes, storms), famine (in Africa), plagues (cancer, AIDS), and the formation of a one world government and economy (the United Nations, the European Union), the political violence in Israel and other wars (the US war with Iraq, Afghanistan and Peru's dirty war). These things, taken together, the preacher urged, prophesized a coming Tribulation and Armageddon in which only the saved would survive.

While my mind fought against the conservative politics that spilled forth in the sermon (homophobia was never the subject of local village services), I was dazzled by the preacher's theatricality and the seemingly arbitrary array of signs he

hippies that come from the US. A gay person is a man who wants a vagina; the US is giving out plastic vaginas and operations free to gay men”. I could tell that the villagers were as surprised as I was by this news (though not for the same reasons); when my compadre heard me make a straining sound in my throat upon hearing the preachers “news” he asked me “is it true Carolina? Do men do that in your town?” I never heard homosexuality discussed in Wiracocha’s do it yourself services, however; it seemed to me at the time that homophobia was more common in the city than in the countryside, where the category “gay” did not seem to exist.
had chosen to offer as an index of the Apocalypse. What had UPC codes to do with the European Union? Israel and AIDS? More importantly, what experience did villagers have with these things? I had heard very little of this kind of prophecy in the everyday church sessions which had focused more on local issues. However what he preached was extremely common among the various rumors that villagers told and seemed to resonate with some of the questions they asked me. One of the most puzzling questions, for example, had been villager's interest in Israel. Where was it, they wanted to know, had I ever been there and was it easy to get to, was it true that there was a war there?

Seen in the context of global evangelical Christianity, Israel's importance to places like Wiracocha is understandable. Like their US counterparts, villagers emphasized a literal interpretation of the Bible that divides history into pre-millennial dispensations. This doctrine proposes that the time we live in now is just before Christ’s return and his thousand-year reign. Begun over 200 years ago, dispensationalism reached its apex during the Cold War. Perhaps the era's best-known tract was Hal Lindsey's bestselling book *The Late Great Planet Earth*, (a precursor to the immensely popular thriller fiction of LaHaye and Jenkins's *Left Behind*). Lindsey's book read post WWII events such as the formation of the state of Israel, the return of the Jews to that land, and the battling empires of the Cold

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6 Premillenial dispensationalism originated among the Plymouth Brethren in England in the 1830s, by the founder of the group John Nelson Darby.
War in terms prophesized by the Bible. Evangelicals in Wiracocha believed that Christ's return was imminent, and that it would either be announced or accompanied by seven years of war and plagues, known as the Tribulation. The only way of avoiding the worst of the Tribulation was to become saved so that one could be raptured away to heaven before the destruction got underway. In order to be ready, however, one needed to keep a close eye on the affairs of the world for signs of the end. For people in Wiracocha, the most important signs were two things alluded to in Revelations: first, the rise of an Antichrist who by all appearances came in peace, but really smuggled in evil and destruction; second, a progressive deterioration of the quality of life throughout the world. During my fieldwork I heard these rumors about every week. Rumors saw the Antichrist as an external, conspiratorial figure lurking behind many global events, especially those that were linked to communism, large governmental bureaucracy or global hegemony.

One way to understand villagers belief in the apocalypse, and the doctrine of evangelical Christianity in the village as a symptom of North American imperialism. Before I came to Wiracocha, I saw evangelical missionization as right wing US ideologies that could only serve my country’s imperialist relation to its southern neighbors. Following the work of Weber who long ago proposed a link between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, evangelical Christianity seemed to be the vehicle for capitalist development of the peasantry. I also wondered about Pentecostalism because of its relation to deadly right wing militaries in Latin
America. These included the Pentecostal General Rios Montt, who directed much of the genocidal actions of Guatemala’s dirty war.

Unlike Guatemala, however, Ayacucho’s Catholic Church was the staunchest supporter of Peru’s armed forces. No liberation theology-style Oscar Robero, Ayacucho’s bishop coldly defended the state’s massacres of thousands of highland peasants as a “painful but necessary” sacrifice for the nation, while calling human rights groups “terrorists in disguise.” In contrast, Evangelical Christians in Ayacucho were targeted by the armed forces. Like Shining Path, Evangelicals held their services at night, often in private homes. The military assumed that such secretive behavior meant that they Evangelicals were actually rebels plotting attacks. In the context of Peru’s dirty war, then, the Catholic Church, rather than Evangelicals were right wing military supporters.

**Conclusion**

One explanation for the extraordinary mass conversion of villagers to born again Christianity was that this conversion was a response to the economic, physical and emotional hardship of the war and everyday village life. The loss of family, home and livestock during the violence and the epidemic of alcoholism and domestic violence also led many villagers to consider converting to evangelism. The social welfare and communal support of evangelical churches in the urban areas where displace villagers sought refuge was also a motivating factor to consider conversion.
But as Susan Harding has pointed out in her work on Baptist conversion in the US, it would be wrong to attribute the appeal of born again Christianity to external stress alone. Reducing belief to external stresses assumes that those who convert "are somehow susceptible, vulnerable, in need" – or, “just crazy” to believe this stuff (Harding 168). It also underestimates the rhetoric of born again belief itself. Harding insists that hardship does not in and of itself explain conversion, but merely increases the likelihood that a person might "listen" to the persuasive rhetoric of the gospel (ibid.).

For evangelical villagers in Wiracocha who "listened" to the gospel, Apocalyptic explanations of the past and present offered not just a compelling rhetoric, but a believable narrative of their experiences of war and structural violence. In the next chapter I show how Apocalypticism especially fit the context of Peru’s dirty war, where terror worked through the continual veiling of power and intent. In the village this rhetoric of an ever-worsening world inhabited by Antichrists who were powerful, disguised super-agents was a compelling way for villagers to interpret the past and present struggles.

For all their denial of religion as the “opiate of the masses” Shining Path promoted a similar kind of millennial belief. The rebellion's Marxism espoused a secular prophesy of state betrayal, historical design, the end of imperialism, a world-making revolution and imminent socialist utopia. These were messages that villagers in their 30s and 40s still remembered with some nostalgia. Finally, the interpretative power of Evangelism coincided with the explanation that Edilberto, a
thirty-year-old villager who often led the congregation, had told me: “People became Evangelical because they finally realized something. Before the war the Evangelicals would preach, 'blood will run, everyone will fall.' And then, they saw what happened, then they believed. They realized, because God doesn’t tell lies in the Bible.” Evangelical belief was, then, a reasonable rhetoric, less determined by external material and emotional stress than by its interpretive power to explain social inequalities in the present and past, and to posit outcomes in the future.
Chapter 3. Truth, Rumor and Trauma: Understanding Villagers Opposition to the Truth Commission in “Post-conflict” Peru

I first heard rumors and conspiracy theories about Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission one morning in 2002 when I was eating breakfast in Dona Elia's adobe house. Domitilia, Elia's sulky and verbally sharp teenage daughter, was teaching me some practical but harsh Quechua insults, several of which could cast doubt on a woman's fidelity or a man's virility. Elia was preparing the usual family breakfast: a meager crop of locally grown potatoes, foreign rice donated by the United Nations relief fund, and store bought spaghetti noodles that the family had grown accustomed to eating in the city. The meal spoke of the intense urban and transnational migrations of people and commodities that characterized the most remote communities in Ayacucho. Elia's family was one of an estimated half million internally displaced people -over half of them from Ayacucho - forced to flee their homes during the war. For years villagers like Elia and her family had sought refuge in the far away capital of Lima, or in the closer highland jungle towns, where they survived by doing laundry or by picking coca leaves for landowners. In the late 90s, at the end of the war, Elia and other refugees returned to Wiracocha to rebuild their lives.

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1 Elsewhere I explain the connections between highland villages in Ayacucho and the lower highland jungle areas where coca leaf, the raw material for cocaine, is grown and processed into paste (pasta básica de cocaína) (see Yezer 2005). Peruvian law allows for a certain amount of coca to be grown legally for personal or
In the middle of this meal several men entered Elia’s house and introduced themselves as investigators from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Peru's president appointed the Commission in 2001, and modeled it on the earlier Commissions of South Africa, Chile and other countries seeking to reckon with the aftermath of political violence. The commission’s goal was to research and document both state and rebel war crimes. Teams of investigators, most of them city-born students and aid workers, headed out into the countryside to collect the testimonies of state and guerrilla atrocities suffered by villagers during the war. The investigators arrived in Wiracocha in a double-cabined pick up truck a few days before, and were hoping to buy breakfast from Elia. They were having a bad day. They compared notes – two days and only two interviews collected from villagers. Seeing me as a fellow researcher who could share their data-gathering frustration, they wondered aloud where all the war widows were, the ones who should have been pouring out personal testimonies. The head delegate, an anthropologist and NGO worker named José, told me the bad situation was due to nothing other than a rural lack of “education.” “We didn’t get our message across to the people; they don’t understand that the war is over” José explained to me, “their trauma makes them afraid.” José resolved to attend the next village assembly where he would repeat his appeals to villagers to give testimony. After the delegates left I asked Elia if she was going to give her testimony. She turned away angrily, busied herself with “traditional” use on the domestic market. The rest of the coca crops - approximately 80% according to local NGOs - are sold to drug traders.
the fire, and said “Imapaq?” - “Why should I?” she said, “Chay timputa yachani ya!” - "I already know what happened then."

Figure 1. Villager holding photo of disappeared son, Ayacucho 2002

I was puzzled by Elia's outburst, and her professed indifference to the Truth Commission. The war between Shining Path and the state had been over for almost ten years, after all, and analysts agreed that Peru was on a new path to democracy. Yet despite these assurances, daily life in Wiracocha was suffused with suspicious rumors that predicted troubled times ahead. Rumors had it that the commission was part of a greater power intending to do peasants in, that it signaled an imminent and
disastrous deception by the state. Much like the born again apocalyptic rumors that tapped into a similar feeling of insecurity and suspicion (see Chapter 2), rumors about the Truth Commission took on the sinister glow of devilish intent, and triggered prophetic rumors of destruction.

How are we to understand this reaction to the Truth Commission? Was villager indifference, as the Commission investigators explained me, a symptom of war wounds? Or a failure of proper public relation campaigns to break through Peru’s traumatic past? Certainly people in the most remote areas of Peru knew about the Commission, which had been broadcasting public information campaigns to explain its purpose, as well as some of the public testimonies of war victims on short wave Quechua speaking radio stations every morning and night. In fact the Institute for Transnational Justice in New York classified the Peruvian Commission's outreach information program as one of the best of its kind.²

One explanation for the suspicion surrounding the Truth Commission is that it was, as José suggested, a symptom of war trauma. In fact, this was the explanation echoed by other urban aid workers and investigators I spoke with in Huamanga, Ayacucho's capital city. Many people believed that the most plausible reason for victims' resistance to the Commission was a collective post-traumatic stress disorder, one in which villagers were caught in a time loop, reenacting their lives as if they were still under a state of emergency.

Traumatic memory disorders are serious afflictions for some war survivors, both in Ayacucho and beyond. But as I proceeded in my fieldwork I was dismayed by the extent to which this explanation was used, and by how it too easily encoded a kind of self-deception and false-consciousness onto indigenous citizens. Treating victims of the war as self-deceived patients recalled a deeper pattern in Latin America of managing indigenous peoples paternalistically. In Peru, the Spanish crown and the Republican state both saw indigenous peoples as child-like half citizens incapable of offering their own, rational critiques of the world. Besides repeating these prejudices against Andean citizens, the traumatic model also blocks investigation into the present context of villager’s silence towards the Commission—a silence that, as I explain below, may be warranted by to inhospitable atmosphere of state abuse and covert violence in Ayacucho today. I argue, however, that it is precisely these kinds of silences and resistances that need to be explored, from below, if we are to address the problem of creating more democratic and participatory forms of transitional justice that include the needs of indigenous peoples and other marginalized sectors in the future.

My aim here is not to argue against the noble intention to set the record straight about covert war crimes; nor do I wish to underemphasize the courage and selflessness of the investigators who researched testimonies and other data of war atrocities, sometimes at great personal risk. Instead, I hope to open up official reconciliation projects to include the unexpected responses of war survivors in places like Wiracocha, even when those responses reject overtures to include them.
To do this involves taking villagers’ suspicions and Dona Elia’s frustration seriously, as a politically meaningful, if also complex testimony that exists alongside the national truth-telling project. Without romanticizing rumor as an innocent space of critique, or more authentic knowledge than the Truth Commission, I believe that village conspiracies express a complementary truth about Peru’s social realities. In particular, they testify to the persistence of hierarchies of race and power that have consigned poor, brown-skinned villagers to the very bottom of Peru’s social strata, and made them susceptible to newer, more hidden, forms of repression. Outside of a public sphere that celebrates peace, transparency and democratic transition in Peru, village rumors protested the exclusion of village control over the format and presentation of official war history, and testified to legacies of wartime insecurity and state sanctioned violence that continues in the Andes today.

**Village War History and the Commission: Sympathies and Betrayals**

A few months before the Commission arrived in Wiracocha, Doña Elia and others indicated that they were not only positive about the idea of a commission coming to Wiracocha, but insistent that their village should be chosen for such a visit. The commission must come, they argued, so that they should be allowed to clear their names, and finally get the chance to show how they had been tricked and betrayed by both rebels and the state.
As I explained in Chapter 1, Wiracocha’s reputation as an area of rebel sympathies went back to the first year of villager support for rebels, a support which was solidified by the presence of rebel teachers at the area’s first secondary school. Some younger villagers were so attracted by the promise of revolution that they went off to join the Shining Path. But when rebels began to become more authoritarian in their methods, villagers quickly became disillusioned. Like so many peasants in Ayacucho, they began to learn firsthand the authoritarian, violent and top-down nature of Shining Path's brand of Marxism, which some have compared to that of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge (Degregori 1990, Poole and Renique 1992, Starn 1995). In Wiracocha the situation reached a breaking point when rebels began to assassinate anyone not in complete agreement with their cause in so-called "popular trials".

Unlike other Latin American dirty wars - such as those of Guatemala, Argentina and Chile, in which the state was responsible for the overwhelming majority of war crimes and assassinations, in Peru it was Shining Path, and not the state forces, that authored over half the killing in Ayacucho and in the nation (see Figures 2). Due to their propensity to target the civilians, Shining Path eventually had to secure support by force, by kidnapping child-soldiers and by threatening civilians.
Figure 2. 40% of National Death Toll Were in Ayacucho. Pie chart of ratio of Ayacucho killings, as authored by Shining Path, State and Civil Patrols, 1980-2000 (Source: CVR 2003)

Even as rebels themselves turned against Wiracocha and assassinated individual village leaders, the stigmatization of the region as an area of rebel sympathy stuck. Atrocities and disappearances authored by state forces occurred with immunity. Finally, when Wiracocha officially joined the counterinsurgency by forming civil defense patrol under army command, the whole village incurred the wrath of Shining Path. On two occasions, rebels entered the village disguised as a military patrol; villagers did not suspect them, as it was common for soldiers to pass through the area. The first such incursion guerrillas left villagers with a warning not to form patrols; on the second incursion a column of guerrillas arrived again, wearing stolen uniforms. That time they shouted for patrollers to gather, run through their drills and to explain exactly how they fought the terrucos (terrorists). Villagers were fooled by this guise and answered with descriptions of how they fought rebels with slings and rocks. While the villagers were doing pushups on the ground, the rebels shouted, “Long live the revolution” and opened fire.
It was this spectacular example of betrayal by those they had trusted that many villagers wanted on the public record when the Truth Commission investigators arrived in Wiracocha. The massacre of twenty-two people represented only a small portion of the death toll. But unlike other, more contentious acts of the war that divided villagers, this tragedy could be clearly mourned and commemorated by everyone. And, unlike the official history that marked Wiracocha as a Red Zone, the massacre was a way for villagers to seize a memory and set the record straight about their war history. The massacre was also significant for the ways it symbolically condensed the illusion and deceit of the war, or, as villagers repeatedly told me, the ways that they had been *engañado* – meaning being both tricked and betrayed -- by rebels and the state. For even after Wiracocha cast their lot with the military - the village was continually raided and harassed by state forces. In the end, both the state and rebels consistently lied about their intentions. These betrayals, so common in Peru's dirty war, recall Elaine Scarry's work on torture and interrogation. Scarry shows that the techniques that most effectively break down the resistance of prisoners in the torture centers are not simply the infliction of pain, but the trickery, betrayal and uncertainty that accompany its application (Scarry 1985). By obscuring identity and meaning in their acts, both rebels and the state created a state of insecurity, in which no one knew who the enemy was or on what grounds the war was being fought.

*The Truth Commission*
Before the commission investigators came, then, villagers told me they wanted to give their testimonies, and had strong ideas of how they would retell this narrative to the rest of the nation. Many wanted to participate directly in the reconciliation process, by speaking in a public hearing. A controversial but widely successful addition to the Truth Commission process, the public hearing was first used in South Africa's commission. The South African hearings included testimonies of perpetrators of war crimes, which they were able to attract with offers of some amnesty. The Peruvian Commission, on the other hand, did not offer amnesty, opting instead to use victim-centered hearings. Peru broadcast its hearings on television, and when possible, in Quechua, on the short wave radio stations that reached to the farthest corners of the country. Through such direct testimony, villagers hoped that they could speak to a sympathetic audience, and also confront the unseen faces of those who orchestrated and ordered war crimes. They wanted to be heard and to demand some recompense for the ways that they were betrayed.\(^3\)

However only a few villages were chosen to testify in this way: Wiracocha was not one of the chosen. Instead, Commission investigators invited villagers to

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\(^3\)Peru’s Truth Commission was not the first in the country, but was preceded by an earlier investigation in 1983 into a massacre of eight journalists by the villagers of Uchuraccay, located in northern Ayacucho (Vargas Llosa, et al, 1983). The findings of this investigation, called the “Vargas Llosa Report,” were highly criticized as essentialist and racist, most notably by anthropologist Enrique Mayer (1991). Although the Report was infamous and despised by urban Ayacuchanos, I never heard people in Wiracocha make reference to the report itself, which was not easily available to rural people. Nevertheless, the failure of this earlier investigation shaped the format of Peru’s 2001 Truth Commission, which hoped to better represent the victims of the violence through public hearings.
give private interviews in the village, guided by survey questions. Among the
questions that were asked were: After such a massacre, did villagers now hate
Shining Path? Was it possible that villagers could ever forgive rebels for the loss of
their family members or friends? And, what would have to happen so that villagers
and rebels could be reconciled?

The majority of Peru’s war victims participated in the Commission through
these kinds of guided interviews. Statistically, they were very effective - in less
than a year the Peruvian commission had collected over 17,000 of these
"testimonies." Yet people in Wiracocha were angry and suspicious at this method.
Not only did the survey take the power of presenting their own carefully constructed
narratives out of villagers' hands, it destroyed the direct, confrontational relationship
that villagers' had hoped to have with their fellow citizens.

Although created to be neutral, the content of the survey questions also
elicited anxiety and suspicion. Some people came to me asking questions about the
Commission, thinking that, as a white outsider I might know something about this
project hatched in the faraway capital of Lima. I was asked: “Why would they want
to know this? How could they even think to ask us such questions? What was the
purpose?”

Others worried about the legal implications of talking, distrusting the state’s
interest in their true history. Betty, a 32 year old, echoed the feelings of many when
she complained, "What is talking going to do for us? Its not going to bring my
father back." Betty had lost her father when resentful neighbors told Shining Path
that he was an abusive landowner. Like many others, she was angry with those
villagers who she called *soplones* - whistleblowers - who informed on her family.
But although she told me that she hoped that someday the informant would meet a
traitor's death, she was less disposed to put the conviction of village members in the
hands of the state. Like Betty, some worried that reopening the past in such a way
might destroy a tenuous peace achieved among villagers, many of whom had
already adopted a “forgive and forget” approach to their complicated past (Shaw
2005).

**A Shared Wound**

The Truth Commission, for its part, used publicity materials that offered
medical and therapeutic explanations as to why people should testify. One of the
most ubiquitous posters for the commission was a photo of Ayacuchano villagers
Celestino Ceente (Figure 3). Taken by a journalist in 1983 after Ceente was beaten,
it shows a wound, partially concealed and poorly bound with dirty gauze. Ceente's
photo was laden with imagery and themes common to truth commissions, in which
the injured body stands in for the body politic. Because the photo was presented
with no contextual information that would tell the viewer if the perpetrator of the
crime were rebel or counterinsurgent, the photo avoids a politicization of the
violence, keeping the crime in the neutral realm of human rights abuse. The lack of
Figure 3. Detail from cover of the Peruvian Truth Commission's Pamphlet with Celestino Ccente’s 1983 (pictured in the upper left), Photo C. Yezer

historical context allows all the nation, both military and rebel supporters, to sympathize for the injured person. Ccente's body in fact can be seen as an everyman, or a body standing in for the entire body politic. The wound itself has also become an icon of truth commissions, in which the need to talk about the past is compared to a medical therapy for a wounded nation. These themes are based
especially on the South African commission, articulated by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Truth telling was needed, Tutu argued, because, much like an individual bodily wound, the wounds of the nation were “fester” (through silence) and needed to be “reopened and cleaned” in order to heal.4

At the conclusion of its mandate, the Peruvian Commission sent booklets in Quechua and Spanish that summarized their statistical findings for villages and others who had participated in the commission. The cover included Ccente’s 1983 photo, but extended his bandages to encompass the entire book: the individual physical wound became the larger national trauma, bandaging the findings of the Commission itself. These nested images of personal wounds within national ones harkened back to the very idea of memory as something that could be wounded, and require professional intervention. Alongside these images Commission used a psychological narrative of memory, in which testifying to the truth of the past was the only path to healing the emotional "heridas" - wounds of the war. Pamphlets, posters, radio spots and television ads continued the clinical metaphors, urging citizens to talk with the reasoning that testimony could be a kind of psychological therapy and a patriotic act.

Images and metaphors also moved bodily wounds to the psychological realm, appealing to villagers to try the model of talk therapy model to relieve their

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4Tutu’s words to the commission were, "however painful the experience, the wounds of the past must not be allowed to fester. They must be opened. They must be cleansed. And balm must be poured on them so they can heal” (Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South African report.)
suffering. This reasoning is most apparent in a graphic comic-book style flyer that the Truth Commission gave to village women. The state and NGOs often use such illustrated books to help make their message easier for illiterate citizens to understand their projects or rights. Titled, “You Peruvian Women, You too Give your Testimony” the book’s narrative persuades the reader that talking about their traumas will liberate them from terror. The narrative begins with a troubled woman plagued by a war memory in which rebels or soldiers raped her (the perpetrators are kept ambiguous). The woman's friend, who already testified and feels good about it, convinces her to give her testimony to a sympathetic Commission worker. Her friend assures her that “you will feel like a weight has been taken off of you.” The woman is decides to go testify, and comes back much happier, explaining that testifying made her feel better, but that she also felt it was a deber– a “duty.”

**Clinical and "folk" understandings of trauma**

In her work on the Sierra Leone Commission Rosalind Shaw has pointed out that these wound metaphors were more acceptable to “Western or Western-influenced audiences” than in other cultural contexts (Shaw 2005: 6). Peru’s example agrees with this: testimonial truth telling was compelling in Peru's coastal towns and larger cities, where a talk-therapy approach to personal histories of abuse and trauma are familiar and accepted (they are so familiar they are part of television talk shows, like Laura Bosso, a Peruvian approximation of Oprah Winfrey). But
these models of the self and psyche are not universally shared, and are certainly little known in the rural Andes.

It is difficult, however, for Western or urban audiences to see the cultural context of trauma memory models. Western concepts of memory have been particularly defined by the discovery of traumatic memory in 19th century Europe, a new concept of memory that could exist unknown, and even denied, by the individual. Traumatic memory defined the concepts of new psychological disorders, such as post-traumatic-stress-disorder (PTSD) - a sickness that "permits the past (memory) to relive itself in the present, in the form of intrusive images and thoughts and in the patient's compulsion to replay old events" (ibid.7). 5 Truth commissions draw on the clinical models of trauma treatment. For example, treatment of PTSD involves "enabling and obliging" patients to confront the content of their painful memories, in order to process the avoided memory and thus to stop its intrusion into the patient's life.

Thirty years ago Foucault ruminated on what he called “confessional practice” - a very strange and peculiarly European ritual drive to testify, confess and reveal one’s innermost secrets that:

5 Kimberly Theidon also found that PTSD models clashed with local understandings of personhood in her Ayacucho fieldwork. Her critique offers another angle from which to see the cultural assumptions in Western clinical models, she focuses on PTSD's emphasis on individuals and disregard for the patient's bodily experience of trauma (Theidon 2002).
had spread its effects far and wide…. Whatever is most difficult to tell we offer up for scrutiny with the greatest precision. We confess in public and in private to parents, educators, doctors, loved ones in pleasure and in pain, things that would be impossible to tell anyone else (1978).

Foucault might not have anticipated, how accurately his prophecy would extend to the present proliferation of confession and talk therapy into all aspects of the public sphere. The rise and popularity of television shows like Dr. Phil, Jerry Springer, and other forms of “reality” TV may be an index of how much we viewers believe in the importance of confessional talk to heal suffering. Given this popularity, we might rarely reflect on the historical emergence and cultural contingency of this form of healing.

Beyond the problem of cultural translation and convincing highlanders of the effectiveness of talk therapy, a greater problem is the hierarchical power relations between professional analyst and the patient. The clinical model of traumatic memory casts any resistance to "talking" about one’s traumatic past to a professional therapist as merely a self-deception and a symptom of the disorder itself. So, for example, Jose-the Commission fieldworker I described earlier in the chapter – explained villagers’ resistance to talking about the war to the commission investigators as an irrational fear from the “trauma” of the war. In this view, resistance to the Commission was only part of the trauma, which can only be a form of self-deception that must be overcome by the confessional approach to the past. This difference in medical beliefs made for blind spots for researchers like myself.
who were too familiar with the conventions of talk therapy to immediately see villagers' refusal to testify as something other than a self-deception.

In my experience, many villagers and even some urban Ayacuchanos did have an understanding of traumatic memory, in terms of a sickness known as *susto*, or fear (in Quechua as *mancharisqa*).\(^6\) *Susto* is a diagnosable condition throughout Latin America. It is like PTSD in that it is a disease "of time", one that took place in the past but bears itself out in the present, afflicting those who experience a very hard physical shock or terrifying emotional upset (Young). The symptoms are also similar, including listlessness and loss of *animo* - enthusiasm, liveliness. Villagers in Wiracocha were treated for *susto* resulting from family lost in the war, but the disorder also affected those who experienced disappointments in affairs of the heart. Belief in *susto* was not limited to rural people, as I found out when Pati, a middle-class friend in Huamanga, took me to a *curandero* to be treated when I was shaken by a near auto accident.

Although susto and PTSD share similar understandings of the cause and symptoms of trauma, they differ radically in diagnosis and treatment; "folk" healing did not resonate with the kind of confessional speech obliged by the Truth Commission. Rather than avoided memories and self-deception, the causes of *susto* are the separation of the patient's spirit or soul from her body that was only instigated by the earlier trauma. The cure for *susto* requires the intervention of a

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\(^6\) *Susto* is in fact a very common sickness in much of Latin America.
curandero (a holy man or shaman) who performs a soul-calling ceremony, llamada del alma, a ritual meant to encourage the spirit back into the body by tempting it with song, smoke, flowers and grains. The curandero calls the soul back into the body by singing in a very high voice in Quechua: ama manchakuychu, kutimuway kutimuway- don’t be afraid, come back, come back. Most significantly, treatment does not require narration of past events by the patient, or confrontation of the cause of the shock. The concept of the patient's subjectivity is also radically different than the Western psychological model. Unlike the psychological "talking cure," treatment of susto does not require the patient to narrate those parts of past experience that would cause them pain, nor oblige them to confront the content or origin of the trauma. Instead treatment focuses on resolving the present soul/body separation.

This treatment of susto, which seeks to resolve sickness by reuniting and reconciling soul and body, without seeking the patient’s deepest secrets, coincides with other village traditions that clashed with the Commission. The talk therapy model's emphasis on individual healing also conflicts with what might be called "restorative" justice of many Andean villages. This form of justice stresses communal cohesion and solidarity above banishment or incarceration of villagers. Some ethnographers have observed this pattern in other rural Andean communities. Ayacuchano ethnohistorian Ponciano del Pino has written that this corporate ethic

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7 The singsong voice of the curandero followed the same rhythm and melody of the harawi, a traditional song that stresses only two notes - one and then skips up a full octave.
operated during the war, and was only abandoned when absolutely necessary, in the heat of the conflict (Del Pino 1998; see also: Starn 1999; Theidon 2003). During the war, for example, justice in Wiracocha operated by reincorporating those who had joined Shining Path. Even though villagers armed themselves against Shining Path, they did their best to reincorporate the *arrepentidos* – the repentant ones – as capitulated rebels (even those who had been abducted by rebels) were increasingly known. In Wiracocha repentant ex rebels were not killed, or turned over to the military as demanded by the state of emergency, but punished physically by villagers themselves and then gradually reintegrated into communal life.

Sociologist Elizabeth Jelin has extended the psychoanalytic model to national memory projects after Argentina's dirty war (Jelin 2003). She notes that national commemoration of war crimes is a "labor of memory" one that, like individual psychoanalysis, involves an often unpleasant and difficult amount of conscious "work," ending in positive, redemptive results. But questions of power and control are suspiciously absent from this model when it is expanded to the level of collective healing. While recounting memories may often be a way of "working through" the process of mourning and loss, we also need to ask who is asked to do the work, and who is the intended audience for this final product? It is important to distinguish between the promises of talk therapy in a doctor's office, in which one gets individual attention from a medical professional and sometimes years of appointments - from the Truth Commission therapy which offers a space to tell of
your trauma to a non-medical public on one occasion only. Villagers were not offered medical help (ironically, it was the commission investigators, who were exposed to many testimonies and sometimes to gruesome open gravesites, who were required to see a psychologist).

Villagers I spoke with in Wiracocha were not swayed by the therapeutic promises of private interviews with the Commission. Villagers suspected, instead, that their testimony was not going to be something for the village, but something extracted for others. They argued that the countryside, and not the city, had borne the brunt of the war and that official demands for the truth was just another way for the urban sectors to ask even more labor of beleaguered peasantry. In fact as the Truth Commission was itself would later show, 75% of the seventy thousand killed in the dirty war spoke Quechua as their maternal language. In Peru this linguistic statistic meant that the overwhelming majority of victims were of indigenous and rural origins. Beyond setting the record straight then, why should villagers care about the concerns of the Commission for national healing? Villagers knew what happened during the war; it was the ciudadrunakuna - the city folk - who did not know.

In fact, the labor of answering the questions of the Truth Commission survey was fraught with difficult and painful reactions among villagers. These questions included: After such a massacre, did villagers now hate Shining Path? Was it possible that villagers could ever forgive rebels for the loss of their family members
or friends? And, What would have to happen so that villagers and rebels could be reconciled?

Neutral in intent, the survey questions nevertheless elicited anxiety and suspicion. Some people came to me asking questions about the commission, thinking perhaps that as a white outsider, I might know something about this project hatched in the faraway capital of Lima: “Why would they want to know this? How could they even think to ask us such questions? What was the purpose?” I was asked. In the meantime, negative rumors circulated about the Truth Commission. So strong were the feelings of state conspiracy that some villagers began to speak instead of the “Cumision llullamanta” – the “Lie Commission.” Like the simulated military uniforms worn by attacking rebels, the whole inquiry was all a ruse, people said, meant to fool villagers into betraying themselves again. Nor did they like it that investigators announced that development aid was contingent on Wiracochans submitting testimony, a quid pro quo that went over poorly in a village proud through it all of its own stubborn independence.  

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8 I do not think this promise of aid would have been received badly, however, if the investigators had been able to pay upfront in exchange for testimonies (something that was not allowed). The use of economic aid might seem mercenary or an "unobjective" way to gather interviews; yet, I would argue that payment for interviews might have made some sense from the village point of view: given the fact that villagers were being asked to do the "labor" of memory, it is understandable they might expect a wage for it.
The Dirty War and the Drug War

Just a few months after the Commission’s survey, while I was away in Ayacucho city, two men who claimed to be development workers from a non-profit organization visited the village. The day of their visit happened to be All-Saints Day, when many villagers who had stayed in the city (both Evangelical and Catholic) were home to commemorate their dead, and especially those fallen in the war. The aid workers told Elia’s husband that they were there to raise money for a road-building project in the area. After driving around the village and chatting with a few people the men were suddenly joined by a bus filled with uniformed DINADRO. These were Peru’s counter-narcotics police who are supported by the US to interrupt the supply of coca paste – from which cocaine is made -- to global markets. Chaos ensued as the aid workers flashed badges showing their true identity, causing village men to run into the hills, and women to grab their children into the safety of their doorways. Police dragged a hooded man out of the car who pointed mutely to two villagers and to Carlos, a shabbily dressed, thin teenager, who had come from the jungle where he worked picking coca, to visit his highland cousins. Police took the boy to one side of the plaza and brutally beat him in front of the remaining stunned villagers. Bleeding, Carlos told them which adobe house held the kilos of unrefined cocaine that he had been paid to store on its way from jungle to the city.

“We cried out for them to stop,” my neighbor Julia told me later, “we told them that he was just a kid, just a burrier [a person hired to carry drugs for a dealer],
but they kept on hitting.” Julia remembered that when villagers begged for the police to show some mercy, an officer answered them: “Go back to your homes. Nothing is going on here, nothing at all.”

If the dirty war is, as Michael Taussig has argued, a “war of silencing,” (Taussig 1992) then how can we conclude that it has finally ended? Was the police officer’s denial of torture, even as torture was clearly taking place, a signal of a new war begun? Or was it a continuation of an older one that was supposed to be between rebels and the state—and whose official end was signaled by the Truth Commission? What are we to make of the striking use of deceit by police now, as in wartime? These questions were not lost among villagers who had been commemorating the massacre on the very same day of the drug bust. They were quick to point out the similarities between the police incursion and the various military and rebel violence over the years, which escalated from identical incidences of beating and intimidation to disappearances and massacres.

In the context of Peru’s transition to peace and transparency, the violence and disguise of this police action seemed surreal. Ironically, it was just this sort of dirty war silencing that truth commissions were created to counteract. Inspired by the Nuremberg Trials, the first Truth Commissions appeared in Africa and Latin America in the late 70s and mid-eighties as a response to covert violence. These “dirty wars” as they became known, were shaped by US intervention and cold war policies. Fearing Soviet control of Latin American peasantries, the US made it clear
to foreign governments that in order to qualify for economic assistance they would have to secure their countries, but refrain from using overt forms of violence (Shaw 2005: 2). These policies led to the development of invisible forms of repression and, as Rosalind Shaw points out, a vocabulary peculiar to dictatorships of the 1980s: “disappearances” “secret detention centers” and “death squads” -- all “deniable forms of repression” (ibid.).

But Peru’s Truth Commission investigators did not (and, given its short mandate, could not) witness this police brutality in Wiracocha; nor did the conditions exist so that villagers might come forward to testify about it. Caught as it was between two different covert wars, Wiracocha's new terror exceeded the Commission's investigative jurisdiction, which covered only the crimes of the previous war (from 1980 to 2000). Bracketing covert violence into distinct periods is a characteristic of truth commissions in general; it is necessary in order to distinguish present democratic reforms from past authoritarian regimes. Nevertheless, villagers who had been commemorating their war dead on the same day of the incursion were quick to point out the similarities between the attack and the various military and rebel violence over the years, which escalated from identical incidences of deceit, beating and intimidation to disappearances and massacres. The dirty war may have officially ended, but the repression of the drug

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9 The National Security Archive has recently posted much of the declassified information on US undermining of democratically elected governments in Latin America as well as the order to cover up atrocities. See for example the case of the Kissinger telephone conferences with Chile at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB123/index.htm
war drew on its predecessor's techniques of silence, and terror, as well as on an ethnically and regionally informed structural violence, pitting state perpetrators against indigenous peasant citizens. These patterns of repression include other tacitly sanctioned abuses that have become almost a national custom, such as the leva - the illegal abduction and forced conscription of rural highlanders and young men living in the urban shantytowns of Lima into armed service. Considering this repeated pattern of state abuse of indigenous citizens, it is less surprising that villagers declined to report the public torture they witnessed in their own plaza to any of the many local and international human rights organizations in town.

Complicity, Truth and Blame

By explaining the logic of village resistance to the Truth Commission I do not wish to retreat into a relativism that would deny the importance of setting the record straight, or conclude with the unsatisfying postmodern proof that "there is no truth". It is tempting to see rumor as a “weapon of the weak,” one that, by virtue of its whispered covertness, and humble origins, could access a more authentic source of truth than the truth commission itself (Scott 1985). As Scott and others have shown, rumors and other weapons of the weak can cause a lot of damage. Because they act covertly, rumors about the Truth Commission act outside of the Commission’s social control, or the state’s judicial power; they cannot be easily verified or even explicitly disputed without causing more suspicion (Stewart and
Strathern 2004). Like witchcraft, rumors about the Truth Commission projected guilt and harm on others from afar, somewhat shielding the teller from retribution (ibid).

But any understanding of rumor must also take into account how rumors about the Truth Commission might work in collusion with the status quo as much as in resistance, to shield perpetrators of human rights crimes from prosecution. While it is easy to name specific perpetrators of war crimes, such as rebel leaders or military commanders who gave a green light to massacres or ordered assassinations, it is much harder to put the everyday complicities of the dirty war into Manichean terms of good and bad, victim and perpetrator.

I never heard villagers describe other villagers as clear-cut perpetrators. Much more common were those who occupied what holocaust survivor Primo Levi once called the "gray zone" - a morally fuzzy area of varying degrees of guilt and complicity. The gray zone includes everything from those just "following orders" to bystanders who watched an atrocity take place. This included, for example, Betty's neighbors, who, according to her, were indirectly responsible for her father's assassination by Shining Path. Everyone in the village knew someone that they suspected of such gray zone behavior - this ranged from suspicions that neighbors turned in a family member for vengeance or financial gain to clapping at a Shining Path public trial. Anthropologist Kimberly Theidon, working in another Ayacucho village, also found that an intricate web of culpability was a common pattern of the dirty war. Her understanding of the violence as an especially intimate experience –
one that she has termed “intimate enemies” – redirects research toward the proximity of victims and perpetrators of war crimes in Peru, among kin, villagers and neighbors (Theidon 2004).

In a war whose lines were fuzzy, it is possible to cast the whole Peru’s conflict as a gray zone - one whose victims were also, at times, perpetrators themselves.¹⁰ For better or worse, villagers themselves had taken control of these "gray areas," within their community, punishing erring members during the war, and "forgetting" afterward. Villagers managed what they talked about in public, both around me, and other strangers. They had decided among themselves what their official story would be, and had achieved some compromise and consensus that it would not involve prosecution of their own members.¹¹ Truth telling to the state would most likely lead to the prosecution of individuals, upsetting the ways that locals had come to live in peace with their neighbors; truth telling about the war was also not going to change the structural violence which suffocated rural life in the present. The gradations of internal village divisions and complicities paled, moreover, in the context of the disguised police incursion, which reinforced instead

¹⁰Degregori, talk given at Duke University
¹¹Such previously –agreed upon, collective retellings of violence were not uncommon among communities most impacted by dirty war violence in Ayacucho. In the widely publicized case of a massacre in the village of Uchuraccay, villagers have long stuck to an official story in which they accepted guilt for killing eight journalists, but would not name the individual villagers responsible for the killings. As a result, the state charged and convicted a few village authorities for the crime, while the witnesses to the crime were killed or mysteriously disappeared – to date no one knows by which side, Shining Path or the military (Mayer 1991, 488).
of reconciled wartime divisions between the country and the city and indigenous
and mestizo.

**Conclusion**

If the traumatic memories of the betrayals, disguises and deceits of the dirty
war were all that motivated villagers’ resistance to testifying to the Truth
Commission, then it would be possible to hope for a better integration of
Ayacucho’s peasantry into national reconciliation discussions. Village anxiety
about the intentions of the investigation would have shortly been mitigated, for
example, following the publication of the Commission’s final report. In 2003 the
Commission reported startling statistical findings that proved, among other things,
that far more citizens of indigenous highland descent suffered wartime fatalities and
atrocities than had other sectors of the nation. This statistical evidence might have
gone far to support villagers’ claims that campesinos suffered an unequal share of
the violence, a point that all villagers in Wiracocha had originally hoped to make in
the Commission’s public hearings. The survey method used by the Commission
investigators fractured villagers' narratives of the past, and alienated them from
those memories and from the management of their testimonies in ways they found
anxiety producing. The statistical information the survey elicited, however,
ultimately coincided with villagers' own perspective of the past.

Given the prevalence of political violence during "peacetime," however, any
attempt to give testimonies about the compromised nature of the war faced
impossible obstacles. Without a drastic change that assured villagers of governmental accountability and security, the continuation of state sanctioned violence into village life today undermined the participation of highlanders in official national reconciliation projects.

Rather than understand these village rumors as more true, innocent or authentic than the Commission's project, I understand them as offering an alternative testimony, one that, to paraphrase Nancy Scheper Hughes, existed alongside the official initiative, and perhaps is even stirred up by it. Rumors after all can act as a kind of informal knowledge, one that, in the telling, seeks out the truth (Kapferer 1990). Thus Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern have recently written that while rumor can be used as a punitive and normalizing device, rumors also “work as explanatory devices, filling in the interpretive gaps around ‘facts’ or ‘reports’” (2004: 42). Rumors about the Commission in Peru also resonate with the similar modern phenomena surrounding the international traffic in organs (Scheper-Hughes 1998). From South Africa to Turkey and India, poor people will often sell a kidney for transplant to wealthier patients who have no time left to wait on official lists, and can afford the bill. At the same time, rumors circulate in various corners of the Third World about vampiric doctors and development workers managing to cut out the eyes, hearts, or others organs for the transplant trade. Rather than just simply “irrational,” or “backward” fantasies, Nancy Scheper-Hughes argues that

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In her book on pishtaco rumors in the Andes Mary Weismantel notes the connection between rumor about monsters and Nancy Scheper-Hughes’ work on the organ trade (Weismantel 2001).
these stories of organ theft capture something of the reality of the organ trade, one
made possible by the differences between rich and poor: those in the First World
who can afford a transplant and those so poor in the shantytowns of Guatemala or
India that they must sell a part of themselves to survive.

Like organ stealing rumors, and much like the Apocalyptic rumors discussed
in Chapter 2, the negative rumors circulating around Peru’s Truth Commission can
be seen as an alternative ways of understanding the experience of war. On the
national level, rumors testified to the tenacity and danger of structural violence – in
particular the veiled repression of the dirty war. Rumors about the Truth
Commission thus expressed insecurities that are impossible or unsafe to articulate,
including living under the constant fear of brutal treatment by police, who may or
may not be controlled by unseen international powers; or, the fear of reprisal by the
rebel factions who, despite government claims to the contrary, are sometimes
present in the rural areas beyond state reach. These rumors show that poor people
understand that this logic of justified terror is still strongly held, and even made
policy. In light of their past and present experiences, it seems reasonable that some
villagers might not want to lose their narrative control over official representations
of their war service, or reveal secrets that could expose them to revengeful attacks
without more solid proof of state accountability or other security measures (ibid).
Instead of dismissing village rumors and resistances to the Truth Commission as
obstacles in the road to democratic transition, we should consider the ways that they
might be heard and included in the transparency process (Scheper-Hughes, 1998).
In this sense, rumors are one way that villagers protest the silence of the dirty war that continues to operate in newer, but more hidden contexts of low intensity policing in the Andes today.
Every Sunday the village of Wiracocha awoke to the clanging of the iron bell in the crumbling tower of the Catholic church. A half hour later the plaza filled with women dressed in layers of bright pollera skirts and multicolored shawl mantas, carrying their children on their hips. Meanwhile, men in thin windbreakers, sombreros and tire sandals shuffled into short lines before the flagpole that dominated the village square. The men, representing the head of each household in the village, blew on their hands and stamped their feet for warmth in the freezing mountain air. In front of the lines the autoridades – the mostly male village officers – waited for the last stragglers to arrive. Meanwhile, people chatted and passed around coca leaves to chew.

Then Luis, the village secretary, dropped his normally soft voice into a deep imperative baritone, barking out a sequence of orders: “Des-file! For-mense! Atención!” Villagers who had been casually chatting suddenly pulled their bodies into a rigid stance, one arm shot out in front to measure the distance between themselves and the person preceding them. Once aligned and uniform, they dropped their arms to their sides and threw out their chests. As the Peruvian flag was raised they moved their sombreros to their hearts and begin to sing the national anthem in shaky, almost whispered voices. “Viva Peru!” Luis shouted in the deepest voice he could manage at the end of the anthem and “Viva!” came the
response from the waiting villagers. Then everyone relaxed and the weekly village assembly would begin.

The formación - as this event was called - was a ritual that harkened back to the militarization of the countryside during the war. At that time villagers had established their own rondas campesinas - peasant patrols, to fight against Shining Path. Begun as a largely local uprising against the Maoists, the patrols came increasingly under the control of Peru’s armed forces as part of a new strategy to draw the peasantry into the state’s counterinsurgency. Although the rondas, even then, were not simple puppets of the military, patrollers had to report to local officers to undergo training and observe the weekly formación. Soldierly uniformity and discipline, standing proudly and patriotically at attention, shouting commands and mechanizing bodies - this was the style of ritual that state forces required village men to adopt and perform with regularity.

The formación might be explained as an imposed artifact of the war, one that would gradually be abandoned as Ayacucho demilitarized. But demilitarization had already happened, and villagers had no apparent reason to continue military rituals. One might think, in fact, that these poor farmers would view any association with the military dimly. After all, the armed forces committed most of their atrocities in the countryside, where they systematically tortured, disappeared and raped peasants.
When I began my fieldwork, Ayacucho's state of emergency had been lifted, the major threats and actions of Shining Path had diminished, and rebels and withdrew further away into the coca-growing jungle. A program of military reform was underway, and then-president Alberto Fujimori was closing down bases and recalling troops in the former emergency zone. Yet villagers continued weave militarized rituals into rural life.

Militarized commemorations have been part of a longer tradition of citizenship rituals in Peru and elsewhere, such as in national Independence Day celebrations and in the more everyday classroom salute to the flag. But, during my fieldwork in Wiracocha, the breath and variety of civilian rituals commemorated in a military style permeated into village institutions and everyday life. Performed with a theatrical flair more at home in the army barracks than in a relatively peaceful country square, the military style of the formación now showed up in Wiracocha's elementary school graduations, mothers' day tributes and swearing-in ceremonies to village offices. In some commemorations, such as the oaths of office, women also participated in this militarized style, throwing their voices down an octave and standing at soldierly attention while they pledged their vows to serve as village leaders.  

1 State abuse was not limited to highland indigenous in places like Wiracocha but also to lowland tribal groups, such as the Ashaninka. These abuses have been recently documented in the Truth Commission (CVR 2003).

2 In fact, when Maria Huaman - the first woman elected to public office in the village - was sworn into her official cargo with the other local officials, she faltered for a
In this chapter I explain the history of militarization in Wiracocha, from the beginning of the local rondas, and their subsumption under army control to the current practice of military drills and nostalgia for a militarized past. More than a remnant of Peru's recent war, I argue that militarized rituals such as the formación are around today because they invoke and perform a particular kind of militarized masculinity that encodes gender, ethnicity and national citizenship in ways that are powerful and meaningful to participants. In my analysis I refer to this performance as "military drag" because it involves a tranvestic performance that invokes an exaggerated masculinity, but also draws on racial and regional stereotypes of Andean indigenous men. Like a drag show where performers cross dress in order to perform an essentialized gender identity, military drag mimics an ideal citizen-moment and then barked her swearing in responses in the same militarized shouts of allegiance as her (all male) colleagues. The militarization of everyday life has gone far beyond Ayacucho, however: since the dirty war high-school children and their marching bands are also required to march with the army in the Huamanga plaza (and other cities) every Sunday.

3My use of "drag" here was suggested by conference participants at the Latin American Area Studies conference in San Juan, "De los heroes de la patria a los clubes de madres Gendering the Body Politic in Latin America." This chapter builds on previous studies on militarization, gender, and indigenous citizenship in the Andes, including Orin Starn's research on the Cajamarca rondas and the balance of military coercion and autonomy that characterized Ayacucho's patrols (Starn 1998, 1999), Lesley Gill's research on Bolivian indigenous men's desires to enlist in the military (Gill 1997, 2000). I take the concept of "militarized masculinity" from Cynthia Enloe's work on women and militarization (Enloe 1983), as well as Kimberly Theidon's fieldwork in Ayacucho on this importance of this masculinity to male authority and a masculine heroic narrative of the war that excluded women's roles in the counterinsurgency (Theidon 2003). In a different vein, Del Pino describes the patriotic heroism of the jungle rondas in Ayacucho, revealing the was men saw their ronda identity as "macho" (Del Pino 1991). For more detailed studies of the Ayacucho rondas see (Coronel 1996; CVR 2003; Degregori et al. 1996; Starn 1998).
soldier identity, and aims for a technically savvy, convincing performance. I use drag here not to unearth the subversive potential of these soldierly performances (Butler 1990), but to understand villagers' often ambivalent support for certain kinds of militarization that establish them as citizens - even as the military itself exposed villagers to violent state repression.

Negative memories of military violence have by no means vanished in an area where many peasants had at least one relative killed by the military or the Shining Path guerrillas. Military recruitment and training often demeans indigenous men, while placing them at the bottom of a military hierarchy ruled by predominantly light-skinned, coastal officers from Lima’s officer training schools. At the same time, the armed forces remained one of the few ways these men claimed their rights as citizens of a nation state. By becoming soldiers, subaltern men in Peru as well as neighboring Andean countries gain some social standing and access in a society marginalizes them (Gill 1997; Theidon 2003).

Paradoxically, too, the embrace of military drag in Wiracocha measures a kind of reaction to demilitarization itself. Under martial law since the early 1980s, in 1999 military reform, disarmament and the retreat of state troops and army bases from much of Ayacucho drastically reduced the presence of the military in villages. This marked a sharp change in state presence in villages like Wiracocha, where the closest representatives have long been the military and police forces. Ideologically, demilitarization has also eroded the patriotic soldier model of citizenship, by shifting the ways that rights are understood and organized, from a nation-state
model to a transnational one of the universal human rights of the international citizen. This shift from national citizenship rights to international human rights parallels a more universal move from Keynesian state welfare programs to an increasingly "neoliberal governmentality" that privatizes and outsources the regulation and management of populations far beyond the space and authority of the nation state (Gupta and Ferguson 2002). If service in the armed forces or rondas used to be a guarantee (theoretically) of rights as Peruvians, now rights are managed through para-state organizations (non-governmental organizations and international bodies like the UN) that are mysteriously beyond the sovereignty of Peru. Most villagers in Wiracocha are ambivalent about the military, yet, I argue, that their reaction to demilitarization and human rights reforms has been anxious, as if the state or international groups had pulled out the rug of patriotic glorification that has been so important to villagers ronderos. In such a transition, some villagers experience demilitarization anxiously, as a destabilizing force, and even express nostalgia for wartime discipline. As we shall see, these reactions are themselves crosscut by gender, and revealing about the complex dynamics of militarization,

4For example, ronda commanders complained bitterly when the troops at the Santillana (Huanta, Ayacucho) army base were withdrawn, along with the soldier's arms, and also the arms that ronderos had purchased with their own funds. Ronderos argued with the armed forces to either leave the troops or to at least leave the arms in the case of another Shining Path attack, but their concerns were dismissed (Márquez Calvo 1999). According to one reporter, "it is paradoxical result that it may be the very campesinos who demand the FFAA stay that are also those who denounce abusive situations such as the levas [forced recruitment], that are still practiced in some villages, and different forms of 'aid' to the maitenence of troops in the region" (ibid.).
masculinity, and femininity. Men in Wiracocha tended to experience recent
demilitarization and humanitarian intervention as a loss of virility and solidarity, but
women often appreciated the ways that human rights supported their increasing
political and economic independence. The apparent paradox of military drag turns
out to be a revealing way to understand the complex interrelationships between war,
gender, and citizenship in a part of Peru where the very “right to have rights,” as
Hannah Arendt once put it, was itself something for which villagers had to fight in
their own sometimes divergent ways.

*History and legacies of village militarization*

Villagers like Luis – the Wiracocha leader in charge of running the
formación - had never served in the armed services, yet he and others learned to
conduct the formación during the dirty war. Like thousands of other peasants in
Ayacucho, Luis and his family fled Wiracocha several times in the 1980s. They
feared the assassinations and massacres that plagued the countryside – over half of
which were authored by rebels and 36% by state forces (military and police).⁵ The
military was especially hard on Wiracocha, which, as early as 1981 was stigmatized
as an area of rebel sympathies.⁶

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⁶ At the beginning of the war Wiracocha was attacked by the very first rondas in the
area - those in the neighboring *puna* level villages. These villages had some history
of antagonism with Wiracocha - based on land disputes that pre-dated the dirty war.
In the midst of this violence Luis and others villagers sought refuge in the anonymity of distant towns, where they survived by working for scarce wages and survive on thin staples of *sopa de trigo*, wheat soup, a watery combination of celery and ground grain. After several years of exile, some families decided they had to return. The village already had a few people who had decided to arm themselves and to station guards at the access points of the village. When the city refugees returned they joined their armed neighbors; they bought two Mauser rifles and formed a small *ronda campesina*, to protect their village from rebel raids. Besides these few rifles villagers fought with simple weapons, including knives, slingshots and homemade guns made of wood and metal pipe. Women collected rocks to throw from the cliffs that shadowed Wiracocha's plaza. Others made *queso ruso* – Russian cheese – homemade bombs made from empty milk cans, nails and gunpowder. In the evenings families cooked their meals in their houses, then trudged up the mountainside to eat their dinner and sleep in the freezing caves scattered along the highest mountain slopes.

Although the peasant rondas were key actors in the Ayacucho war-zone, they were modeled on the original patrols begun in the northern provinces. These early rondas began before the war, in the 1970s in Peru's northern department of Cajamarca: villagers there formed the first patrols to catch thieves and enforce punishments ranging from fines to physical pain. The Cajamarca *ronderos* served as a do-it-yourself kind of justice, punishing those crimes that were ignored by the police or judicial authorities (Starn 1999). Ayacucho villagers began their first
rondas based on this northern model. When news of these patrols reached the cities, many Peruvian and international activists feared the rondas would only increase the violence of the countryside, as had patrols in Guatemala. Many on the left feared that the rondas could degenerate into death squads or vigilante groups, or, worse, be duped by the military into serving as the first line - the cannon fodder on the war front. By the mid 1990s, however, analysts argued that the Ayacucho rondas were grassroots or semi-autonomous actors, motivated to join the counterinsurgency as much by their own frustration with Shining Path attacks as by pressure from the state (Degregori et al. 1996; Starn 1993, 1999; Del Pino 1991). Like their cousins to the north, the Ayacucho patrols became a source of peasant pride for their ability to turn back Shining Path where state forces had failed (ibid.).

Wiracocha’s rondas were made up of local village men and, as I would later learn, even some women, between the ages of 16 and 60 (although younger boys were frequently brought to patrol). These were people who knew the craggy terrain and its hiding places more intimately than the soldiers – an advantage which allowed them to finally succeeded in driving rebels back into the jungle (Degregori et al. 1996). Long after the war, villagers remembered this success as a patriotic service to the nation; this narrative was especially important in Wiracocha, where it counteracted the community’s earlier stigmatization as a treasonous place of rebel support. Even when the state, in the spirit of peace and democratization, ordered the rondas to turn in their arms, the narrative of patrol service has remained an
important way that villagers stake a claim in debates about reparations and political representation (Yezer 2005).

But while the rondas in Ayacucho were not dupes of the army, neither were they only grassroots affairs. At first the state ignored the rondas formed by villagers themselves; the “scorched earth” military strategy of indiscriminate violence against peasants meant that any villager was also a *terrorista*. For a while this strategy worked to weaken rebel support. Yet no matter how much the military "drained the pond to kill the fish" Shining Path militants still eluded capture. In 1985 the state changed its strategy to include Ayacucho’s peasant civilians in the counterinsurgency: the grass-root rondas that already existed were subsumed under state military rule, while villages without rondas were forced to form them or be labeled terrorists. President Alberto Fujimori deepened the connection between ronderos and the counterinsurgency in 1991, by officially allowing rondas to use firearms and by donating rifles to ronda organizations in several highly publicized public ceremonies.

*Peasant militias under state control*

The army came to Wiracocha in 1988 to take control of the Wiracocha patrols. Earlier that year village had just suffered its largest loss during the war - the massacre of twenty of their ronderos (see Chapter 2). After the massacre, some villagers wanted to quit the rondas: Don Felipe explained, "how many of us died,
just for being rondas?" But more were welcoming of the army as a chance to
avenge themselves on the killers.

State militarization changed Wiracocha’s rondas. No longer under the rule
of peasants themselves, officers ordered ronderos to expand their patrols far past
their communal lands. Ronderos were now required to go on longer, more
dangerous patrols to search out rebels across the bare moon-like landscape of the
high punas (plateaus about thirteen thousand feet above sea level). Patrollers were
also put on internal village duty, where they were in charge of ensuring villager
attendance at the highly visible, village-wide patriotic rituals such as the raising of
the Peruvian flag. Thus began the formación described earlier – in which everyone
was obliged to report to the plaza to be counted, sing the national anthem and salute.
Villagers understood the risk of this patriotic display: the brilliant scarlet and white
stripes of Peru’s flag stood out from the dusty, dun-colored earth of the village
plaza. The formación was a dangerous performance that proclaimed village loyalty
to the state, taunting rebels and guaranteeing their future attacks.

State militarization also brought a particular masculinization to the rondas
that shaped the way that they would be remembered after the war, as a male-
dominated institution.⁷ As anthropologist Orin Starn found in the original rondas of
Cajamarca (Starn 1999), the history of women’s participation in the patrols was
seldom commemorated and often forgotten, even as women’s work was present in

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⁷ Kimberley Theidon, Ponciano del Pino and Orin Starn have shown that village
militarization is often remembered as a macho narrative. See (Theidon 2003; Starn
1999; Del Pino 1991)
various forms of feeding and clothing ronderos who were male kin. I myself doubted women’s roles in the rondas at first. In the early 1990s, the Fujimori government brought highland rondas into Lima to march in patriotic parades; women would also march in their own columns. Press photos from that time depict marching "women's rondas" dressed in highland peasant skirts and carrying arms (Starn 1998). I doubted the existence of these women patrollers. Unlike the rondas I encountered in Ayacucho's villages in 1998 and 1999 were all male, and the photos I saw of marching women in full traditional outfits seemed too precious and supportive of the Fujimori administration. By invoking the cultural and ethnic diversity of Peru, the images of woman ronderos served to vindicate Fujimori's hard-line military tactics by showing the state had "rechanneled the dangerous energy of Peru's poorest inhabitants to the defense of democracy and nationhood" (Ibid.).

I never encountered the columns of women ronderos from those Lima marches, either in Wiracocha, or other villages. Yet I found that women did form part of Wiracocha’s rondas for a time. One day while seated with a group of women sorting grain in the village plaza (an activity that is often an ideal cover to speak privately) I was asking general questions about the counterinsurgency. Julia, a 30 year old who spent much of the war in exile in the jungle, scoffed at the very ideal of the patrols, saying that women had "nothing to do with such nonsense." Starting at this, Mama Domitilia, an older, soft-spoken woman, recited a long list of
women's participation that stunned more than myself. Domitilia recounted how she herself had been a part of the rondas, to the extent that she had gone on short patrols, as had all women left in the village during the war. According to her, the rondas operated on a gendered division of labor: During the daytime Wiracocha women patrolled the village perimeters, or took their places in the now crumbling watchtowers that stood at the four corners of the region. They were armed only with whistles to warn the village of incoming strangers. Only men patrolled at night, but even then women's work was present, in the potatoes and soup that their wives and sisters had packed for them in the afternoon. In the early rondas, then, village women participated directly in the patrols. But when they were militarized, women's roles were forgotten, as they became less visible and less valued in the village than they had been under local control. Women's militarization instead was characterized by sexual violence and misogyny that were essential to the training of state forces.

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9 Recent analysis reports that similar division of labor structured other rondas, in which women patrolled during the day, and that, in villages with few men, women also assumed leadership positions during the war (Theidon 2003).

10 Theidon, working in an area of Ayacucho like that of Wiracocha, found a very similar gender patterns in other villages: division of labor in which women patrolled during the day, and that, in villages with few men, women also assumed leadership positions during the war (Theidon 2003). She also found that women’s roles were more circumscribed after they were militarized by the state, as well as made more hierarchical (in terms of gender) than the more complementary women’s roles that existed before: "the construction of the ‘hypermasculinity’ of the warrior did not provide discursive space for the protagonism of rural women in the war effort" (ibid, 71). While much of Theidons’ findings were present in Wiracocha, I did not find evidence that much gender complimentarily and equality existed in great measure in Wiracocha before the war. For an earlier description of the gender inequality in the memory and history of the Cajamarca rondas see (Starn 1999).
Militarization and Masculinity

There are few ethnographic data on the ways that soldiers and officers sent to Ayacucho incorporated the Ayacucho rondas into their counterinsurgency. Most of the quantitative information we have from the Truth Commission, especially from the statistical data from surveys and forensic evidence from gravesites, shows a systematic pattern of torture, rape and race violence accompanied military presence in the countryside. As in other truth commissions, however, few perpetrators of these war crimes came forward to offer information, yet, a few early personal testimonies of military recruits sent to put down the rebellion in Ayacucho do exist. One particularly revealing soldier’s testimony, published in 1990 and analyzed by anthropologists Carlos Iván Degregori and José López Ricci, shows the extent to which racism and sexual violence were central to military training. The testimony was from a marine recruit and a criollo Lima youth named "Pacho," who enlisted with the hope of becoming an officer. Pacho testified to the way that gendered ideas about home and patriotism, were aligned with misogyny in his training and later practiced against villagers.

Pacho explained that he enlisted in the marina - the naval marines- the branch of Peru's military that had the most criollo and white coastal elite. Marines hailed from coastal cities where ethnic and regional hierarchies where highland migrants were mostly present as maids and laborers to criollo upper classes. Coming from a background of These marines were the first forces sent into Ayacucho, and were the worst perpetrators of state atrocities committed against
highland civilians. Before being sent to Ayacucho Pacho's training consisted of three and a half months on the island of San Lorenzo; he explained: "No sooner were we off the ship sergeant yelled, 'pay attention bitches, … you are here on this damn island to be baptized, you are going to leave being a civilian behind bitch" (Degregori and al. 1990). Pacho rationalized the exercises and insults from his superior as a necessary part of becoming a soldier. The humiliations were designed, he explained, "so that you lose the civilian in you, you change all the little girl you could be, you take out all that comes from home, in other words you become more man, more capable on your own" (Degregori and al. 1990) (my emphasis). This transformation from immature subject to mature (male) citizen is what, according to Foucault, makes the barracks, along with the clinic, prison, and school, an important site of governing and producing modern citizens:

> the soldier has become something that can be made; out of a formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit; in short, one has ‘got rid of the peasant’ and given him ‘the air of the soldier’ (Foucault 1979).

In the military barracks, soldiers transformations from peasant to patriot were reckoned through gender: new recruits had to be taken out of the feminized domestic sphere, - the "little girl" - to the mature, masculine sphere of the patria, and citizenship. Alongside this gendered training Pacho received classes in geography and patriotic history, especially military history and Peru's War of the Pacific. In the San Lorenzo barracks, training became a way to instill a nationalist
ideology and sense of broader political community, one that replaced the individual recruit's local ties of domesticity, kin and barrio. Because local and domestic ties were seen to stand in the way of soldierly solidarity, these regional affiliations and family obligations were emasculated; recruits were encouraged to shed their pre-military connections, in exchange for the uniform and the imagined community of the nation.\(^{11}\)

Given the importance of misogyny to the military training that separated men from local communities and into a national imaginary, it is little wonder that the state did not pursue women as potential recruits. The state itself did not provide for, or arm, women patrollers like Domitilia; instead the army restricted its focus to men and boys. Fifteen men were chosen to be the "tigres" - an elite part of the militarized rondas that reported to the barracks every month to receive orders and march in the district plaza. The army's stay was brief, as they sent a group of ronderos from Ayacucho's infamous coca-growing jungle to put Wiracocha's men through strenuous workouts and weapons training (although the weapons they used were still only crude ones) over the course of several weeks.

\(^{11}\) These gendered tropes of becoming a soldier-citizen are of course not unique to Peru, but, as Cynthia Enloe argues, an important part of militarization in many contexts (Enloe 1983).
Figure 4. Active *ronderos* pose with author in front of communal house (turned into army barracks), Viracochoan, Ayacucho, 2000, photo C. Yezer
The rondas of the Apurímac Valley, known for its lush high jungle climate ideal for coca and coffee, were reputed to be the best equipped and highly trained of any in Ayacucho. Their bases were decorated with the symbols of the state forces, in camouflage and images of semi-automatic rifles and animals of prey (Figure 5). These jungle rondas stationed in Wiracocha were from Pichiwillca, and many of the commandos had served in the infantry for years. Their official training made them a more disciplined group, at least as village men recollected. Men reminisced to me about the toughness and discipline of the Pichiwillca rondas. “Our auto-defensas (another name for rondas) were well formed. But the ones in the jungle, pucha!” Felix, an ex rondero said with obvious admiration. “They were organized.” Unlike the rag-tag teams of village rondas, who did what they could to fight rebels with knives and slingshots, the Pichiwillca rondas were well-stocked with rifles and grenades. Rumor had it that they financed their own weapons through proceeds from the drug trade, which was booming in the Apurímac Valley in the 1980s.12

The Pichiwillca rondas encouraged village men to choose *nom de guerre*, a common practice for soldiers in basic training. The names were often from Hollywood action films with stars like Rambo and Van Damme (Figure 5 and 6).

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12 Eventually one of the more famous ronda commandos, Huayhuaco, was jailed for moving large amounts of PBC through the jungle to the city, and reaping the profits.
"Maybe you have heard of Comando Huayhuaco of Pichiwillca? Or Tio Choque (uncle bash)? Commando Bestia? Commando Loco?" Felix asked. As I shook my head at each name he sighed, chagrined that I could not fully comprehend the

Figure 6. "Lince" - Special operations soldiers show the kind of "drag" that borrows from masculine stereotypes of Ramboesque Hollywood action heroes. Military public relations demonstration in Huamanga, Ayacucho, 2003, Photo C. Yezer
Figure 7. A state special ops soldier wears a "Rambo"-style bandana, that borrows from the idealized macho Hollywood soldier. Photo C Yezer, Huamanga 2003.
Figure 8. Village girl holds up her doll, which her brother has altered into a ronda action figure complete with a penned-in headband, "Commando No. 51" Photo C. Yezer 2002.

Despite the fact that villagers were proud of defending themselves, they also knew that the rondas came at the high price of increasingly brutal rebel violence. Men and women explained that rebels targeted them because they were yanaumas – blackheads - the derogatory name used by Shining Path for those the side of the state.13 “So many died in the rondas, just for being rondas” the Presbyterian lay preacher Don Julian explained to me sadly as he remembered how, in the late 1980s, the rebels forced 20 ronderos into the village square and killed them. Others like Prudencio remembered the rondas more favorably, as the force that finally ended the senseless attacks: “Sendero killed before we had formed rondas. They came out at night and left dead people. You would wake up and there would be dead.” Rita, a teacher from Ayacucho who lived in the village at the time explained, “The people wanted them [the army] to come. Many resented that they had lost so much, their family their animals, and wanted a chance at revenge”. Under Commando Loco the rondas received state military training, for village men and boys, who were given daily physical military exercises. Much like the basic training Pacho received in Lima, humiliation was central to ronda training. Rita observed that the Pichiwillca commandos patronized and shamed village men, “they were brusque and rude, like the military.” Commandos took the Wiracocha ronderos on long patrols, punishing those who could not complete the rounds with blows or whippings. Rita

13Yanauma, "blackhead" is the slang term for soldiers and ronderos, so called for their black balaclavas.
remembered one commando in particular, “he was really harsh. He used to say ‘you hit the burro if it doesn’t move’ and would hit the people, like that. Every morning the boys were made to run, and the last to return were punished.”

Women's militarization into the counterinsurgency differed from village men, although they also experienced humiliation and physical violence. As Cynthia Enloe has argued, an unseen side of militarization is women's recruitment for sex work, as well as rape, both of which are logical extensions of the cultivation of misogyny within the barracks (Enloe 1983). In Ayacucho women's sex work was made part of soldiers' barracks experience, when officers in charge of remote outposts would arrange for sex workers to visit soldiers. For local indigenous women (often referred to as cholas by men from the coast) who lived near these army bases, rape was always a part of militarization. But cases of rape were usually hushed up, shameful for the victim and thus difficult to document. Rape was so shameful and stigmatizing to the victim that it was rarely a topic of discussion in Wiracocha, although many women referred in oblique ways to neighbors who were victims of sexual violence. Rape has always been considered a misdemeanor rather than a felony in Peru, and especially in the highlands, where charges of rape are investigated and judged by local justices of the peace alongside petty theft and domestic violence. When reported in Wiracocha, rape was not prosecuted by the state; instead the emphasis is on restoring village members. Punishment includes

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14 As in many other conflicts, rape was used almost exclusively against women. Of the over 500 cases of rape reported to the Truth Commission in only 11 of them was the victim a man (CVR 2003)
whippings, but more often the man is merely told to stop it, and the woman who is raped is simply told that the leaders will protect her. Much surer in the Andes is justice of familial retribution

When villagers referred to rape they never used word "abusada" - abused - Records from the Truth Commission show a systematic pattern of sexual violence inflicted on indigenous women by state forces: rape was reported in 500 separate testimonies; of these rapes, the perpetrators were overwhelmingly state forces (83).

Other systemic abuse of poor urban and indigenous women reinforced violence against women, such as Fujimori’s demographic control program (1996-2000) that sterilized an estimated 200,00 poor urban and rural women against their will or without their knowledge.15

Pacho spoke candidly of the banality of rape in the war zone. He recounted that, given his racism towards all "indios" he at first he didn’t like cholas. But that began to change: "at first, it was, 'out of here shitty chola,' fifteen days go by and its, 'after you miss.' After a month and a half…'mamacita…' finally, you understand, right?" Yet like cholos, cholas were disposable creatures:

One day they gave us [patrol] a chola. …We each passed one by one. I remember she said 'I'm a virgin'. Get out of here chola. Of course she was

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15 The sterilizations were performed in family planning clinics, through biased counseling (women were told it was the only family planning option available to them) or performed without any consent, secretly (Ibid.). Such was the case of one village woman I met in Ayacucho, who went into the clinic with a minor pain complaint only to wake up later with a painful incision badly sutured on her abdomen. When she had the incision investigated later by other doctors, she was told that she had been given a hysterectomy.
not a virgin…Afterwards the boys had her like a yo-yo. And afterwards we taught her a lesson [killed her]. (205)

Pacho's chilling words bear witness to the carte blanc given to soldiers in Ayacucho to village women, and the central role of rape in establishing soldierly camaraderie among recruits.

According to the findings of the Truth Commission, rondas who were from a village were less likely to perpetuate sexual violence against village women than soldiers who were always imported from a region outside of their barracks. Yet, rondas did participate in atrocities in some areas. In the Chungui region of southern Ayacucho, the transformation of the rondas into soldiers was more extreme, and more deeply patriarchal than in Wiracocha. There the army forced patrollers to undergo bloody military initiations rituals given to army recruits. These included killing village dogs and eating them raw in a ritual intended to toughen them up. Edilberto Jimenez, an Ayacucho anthropologist who studied the Chungui rondas and even went on a patrol with them in the late 90s, recalled the transformation that he witnessed among ronderos. Using the slang term *cholo* – meaning a citified indigenous highlander that sometimes has gang-like associations - Jimenez created a new word to describe the process - *choleando*.¹⁶ For Jimenez, choleando encompassed many militarized rituals, such as the war names that the Chungui ronderos assumed, like "Rambo" (taken from US movies about a Vietnam warrior) (see also Theidon). Jimenez noted that when they donned their military-issued ski

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¹⁶ *Choleando* is not a term used commonly in Peru, but it has been used by analysts of race and ethnicity such as (Nugent 1992)
masks “They would take up their weapon and begin to cuss, just like the military… they stomp around, saying "carajo this," (damn it) "carajo that," for everything.” Jimenez continued, “In a minute they would be choleando, insulting. And when you take off the hat, it’s the same campesino. It’s like with the hat and the gun they become something else, they transform.”

**Military “drag” and indigenous masculinity**

Jimenez's description of the Chungui rondas reveals the importance of gender and performance to the transformation from rural indigenous men to patriotic counterinsurgents. I refer to this type of performed militarization as “military drag” because it captures the masculinized vocal ventriloquism and martial bodily discipline of rituals like the formación. As Roger Lancaster has shown, drag (or what he calls transvestitism) may refer to all kinds of "social mimicry" in which one “throw’s one’s voice, one’s gestures, one’s demeanor – one’s self – into the position of another” (Lancaster 1997).¹⁷ Lancaster's expansion of drag from the "drag show" other ritualized or everyday performances - includes many types of social impersonation. More than “cross dressing” - drag in this sense plays with gender or

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¹⁷ Drag, as I describe it here, refers to something less comedic than other kinds of transvestitism, such as gay camp. Lancaster describes the difference between camp and other tranvestic performances: in camp “one mimics the gesture or words of another - not quite literally, but ironically. The audience must both see the irony and find it amusing” whereas in ‘drag balls’ “a ‘good’ performance is a convincing one” (565). Judith Butler has famously argued that drag performance loosens up the binary grid of gendered subjects (Butler 1990).
sexuality in ways usually associated with gender transvestitism, but it also includes “other crossover desires” such as embodying the identity of the soldier-citizen and the urbanized cholo (ibid, 568).

Drag may have the potential to re-signify hegemonic gendered and sexual relations, and may, at times, work as social critique (Butler 1990). Yet in the case of Ayacucho, drag has bleaker social consequences. Military drag involves collusion with culturally specific gender stereotypes that preceded the war, as well as larger structures of racism and violence in Peru. These include not only machista stereotypes of indigenous masculinity, but also other dimensions of regional and racial identity. Military drag is expressed through the war atrocities committed by the Chungui rondas, and through the tamer militarized rituals of the formación in Wiracocha.

Military drag especially draws on an understanding of misogyny and savagery inherent in negative stereotypes of indigenous masculinity, in particular the stereotype of the *cholo*. Cholo is a term that has a deep history in many Latin American countries with large indigenous populations and massive rural-to-urban migrations. Unlike some countries where cholo is a derogatory term for mestizos, in Peru the term refers less to race than to place – or, less to racial mixing than to an Indian who is “out of place” (i.e., a country person who lives in the city). But,

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18 *Cholo* can have very different valence depending on the region or country in which it is used. The word almost always carries a reference to criminality, but in some countries it is a racial insult, whereas in Peru it could be insulting but also affectionate (*cholito*). In the US southwest "cholo" also has criminal valences, but.
why this desire to maintain a macho "drag," along with its militarized rituals now, in peacetime? What does this stereotype refer to, and what kinds of “crossover desires” (to paraphrase Lancaster) does “choleando” express?

Indigenous soldiers and respect

Feminist scholars argue that is not enough to understand the relationship between civilians and the military as solely oppressive. Rather, we must also focus on the ways desire, power and cultural capital are bound up in military conscription and service (Enloe 1983; Gill 2000, 2004; Lutz 2001). Anthropologist Lesley Gill has shown that, for indigenous men in Bolivia, serving in the armed forces is not necessarily a forced conscription, but one that some marginalized men may seek in order to improve their status within a society that systematically excludes them (Gill 2000). Subaltern men become soldiers, she argues, because it is one of the few

the word differs from mestizo - a person of European and indigenous heritage, or, as in Guatemala, an indigenous person who adopts Western ways and lives in the city. In Peru, cholo is not an identity that gives up Indian ways for urban ones; it refers more fundamentally to the indigenous highlander "out of place" in the city (Nugent 1992).

However many kinds of forced conscription are also a part of Latin American militaries. Under Peruvian law after young men and women turn 17 they are required to inscribe themselves in a draft for two years of military service. Theoretically they are supposed to be enrolled in a draft with the rest of their peers. In practice however it is poorer young men who are targeted for forcible recruitment when they get their libreta militar (proof of registration card), or when they are caught without one at police checks along highways, or, through the infamous theoretically illegal leva - raids on villages, in shantytowns or on highway road blocks to forcibly round up new recruits. According to the Peruvian human rights coordinator, a common practice in the leva is extortion, or coimas in which children
ways to gain official citizenship in the nation (becoming a citizen rather than a peasant or "Indian"), but it is also a rite of male passage, through which young men prove their maturity, capability for leadership either as a potential head of the family or of their community (Gill 1997). In Peru, moving from Andean countryside to the city, or becoming a soldier instead of a peasant, also provides certain kinds of social capital and respectability to rural villagers. Rather than a repressive state apparatus, the military barracks can be seen as a privileged site of social production. Michel Foucault, in fact, saw the barracks one a key site for the bodily discipline and control that created citizens of the modern nation-state (Foucault 1979).

This transformation from peasants to soldiers operates through what anthropologist Marisol De la Cadena has called becoming "less Indian". Aspiring to become *decente* – whiter, urban, more elite – was a practice entrenched in Peruvian society well before the war (De la Cadena 1997, 2000). But, De la Cadena notes that this process of "mestizised" urbanization, or formal education, has always been less a female prerogative than a male one. Indigenous women are considered or compelled to be “more Indian” than indigenous men; rural women are encouraged and obliged to wear *traje* - traditional clothing - maintain indigenous language and forsake formal education far more than men, who speak Spanish and adopt mestizo clothes without censure (Nelson 1999).

or their parents pay sums of $300-400 – perhaps a year’s salary - to be excused from service. Because of the size of this sum it is often only the upper middle classes and elites that can afford to escape (see Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos, “El Problema de las ‘levas’ y maltratos durante el servicio militar obligatorio” Informe. 1997)
**Cholo rage and the ideal soldier**

Ayacucho’s militarization also traded in economies of gendered ethnicity and urbanization. Peruvian sociologist Eduardo González has charted how popular Peruvian beliefs about the ideal soldier are entrenched in the cholo stereotype. Cholos, it was supposed, were more genetically disposed to aggression and misogyny than other Peruvians, precisely because of their indigeneity. Gonzales notes that the phrase, “*Se me subio el indio*” – the Indian in me rose up - spoken in Peru and other countries with indigenous citizens - equated male Indian-ness to an "unmediated instinct, natural violence and mindless courage" (González-Cueva 2000). Such stereotypes were behind the placement of rondas, or the browner, more indigenous infantry, in the first line of fire in Ayacucho. Pacho, the marine recruit quoted earlier expressed, "Look when the *terrucos* attack you, you send the cholos, you send them in front. The cholos go with *huaraca* (woven sling used to heard and hunt) they put in the 'Russian cheese' they light it and begin to sling it at the target. They have great aim!" (205). But Pacho's respect only went as far as their fighting technique; beyond that, he explained, the "cholo is like an animal." As both ronderos and infantry, indigenous men were seen as more savage, less important and more expendable than the *criollo* marines.

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20 Other contexts also link indian blood with stereotypical indian behavior: in Guatemala recruits are told to “*quito el indo*” – to take out the Indian – during their training (Diane Nelson, personal communication).
Analyzing news coverage of 1990s urban crime, González shows that in Peru this perceived “Indian” rage was coded as criminal and vicious when applied to the civilian highland immigrants who came to Lima to work. As civilians, cholos were represented in the media as delinquents and soccer hooligans; but in the service of his country, state sanctioned violence transformed this ethnic stereotype into a productive patriotic citizen.

These economies of gender, violence and criminality reach beyond the Peruvian example. Just as cholos occupy the paradoxical position of criminals and potential soldier-citizens in Peru, post 9/11 Latino immigrants and other ethnic minorities have served as urban or homeland security criminals (illegal border crossers) and as important new source of military recruits (Mariscal 2005). Chicano studies scholar Jorge Mariscal has shown that Latinos are increasingly recruited by the U.S. due to their bleak economic outlook and high unemployment, but also for their supposed martial nature. As former Army Secretary Luis Caldera, now president of UNM, succinctly put it: "Hispanics have a natural inclination for military service" (Mariscal 2005). Since the Afghanistan War the U.S. has created more initiatives to aggressively recruit Latinos, providing education, English language training, and expedited documentation to give immigrants legal citizenship.21

21 For example the Foreign Language Recruitment Initiative of 2002 promised enlisting immigrants crash courses in English, and, in the same year, President Bush's Executive Order No. 13269, expedited the naturalization process of non-citizen soldiers serving in the U.S. military. According to a 2005 strategic army
The patriotic inclusion of Peruvian indigenous men is part of this global pattern of militarized citizenship, in which indigenous, "illegal," immigrant and ethnic minority subjects overcome their second-class citizenship through military service. Given the ubiquity of this model, and the rights it confers, it is perhaps not surprising that now, even in peacetime, some villagers find positive associations in militarization and its maintenance in the present. In fact until Peru's recent efforts at demilitarization and military reform, men have had to register and receive a *libreta militar* - the official documentation of military service - in order to have any national identity document at all. Historically, Peruvian elites (those from wealthier or whiter urban or landowning families) have bought these documents without actually serving. The most fundamental rights of citizenship, like being able to vote, to marry or seek formal employment in the city also require a *libreta militar.* Despite recent reforms intended to resolve the problem of documentation, millions of rural highlanders have yet to obtain official documentation of their

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22 Since 1999 military service, once obligatory in Peru, has become voluntary, and the obligation to carry a military draft document is no longer necessary (as of 2004). Yet the military card is still often used to obtain a voters card, or other proof of citizenship. Many villagers do not have birth certificates, due to its cost, the loss of documents in the war, or simply to change identities when the military and rebels kept lists of their targets (Ardito Vega 2004; Ardito Vega and Salazar Villalobos 2004).

23 Bolivian recruits have also used the libreta militar in that country in order to have formal documentation of citizenship that is needed to gain urban employment, marry, etc. (Gill 1997).
citizenship, and are essentially excluded "from the condition of citizens" (Ardito Vega 2004).

Not to be a machu qari – rights, autonomy and military nostalgia

Besides inclusion in the nation, however, many village men told me that militarization might be a necessary ingredient in village solidarity and self-governance. In interviews (especially those who had served in the patrols) they expressed nostalgia for the way the village operated during the war. Many felt that their militarization had disciplined and organized village life and had become a crucial ingredient in communal solidarity. They contrasted these glory days with the present weakening of the rondas in the state’s calls for demilitarization. They also perceived that increasing interference by NGOs and, more generally, los derechos humanos - human rights – was to blame for the downsizing of military support and the decline in the power of local authorities.

Nostalgia for militarization was partially shaped by what all villagers perceived as an upswing and spreading of crime was spreading in rural Ayacucho. Both men and women despaired that this rise was due to a lack of rural governance and discipline that were in abundance during the years of militarization and ronda discipline.24 Because rural misdemeanors were often handled informally, reported in the "yellow" press but not studied and counted, I could not verify this crime.

24 Daniel Goldstein and Angelina Godoy have recently explored the links between poverty or post-conflict violence and rising vigilantism and/or crime in the case of Bolivia and Guatemala (Goldstein 2004; Godoy 2006)
increase. Yet everyone in Wiracocha complained and worried about it. In my interviews, villagers marked this increase in the rise of new crimes, including livestock thefts and wars between drug dealers. Villagers also perceived a rise in crime among neighbors, including an increase in the frequency of adultery. The state did not intervene in these problems, as the remoteness of Wiracocha made such crime invisible, or ignorable such that the village was in charge of governing itself. Both men and women despaired that this crime and corruption in the village was getting out of hand. “We are morally degenerating.” Don Julio, the village justice and head of the Pentecostal village church complained to me. “We have more and more maldad here - every day, it continues”.

Against this moral decay, most men saw the discipline of even a war-ridden past in a rosy light. Daniel, a former ronda commander recalled with some pride, “Before it was – you didn’t show up to your patrols? Well, straight to the village jail”. Prudencio, another former rondero, exasperated at trying to get villagers to show up to village faenas (obligatory communal work projects) explained that in wartime, when villagers did not perform their community obligations, they were whipped in the plaza, or, if a greater offence, then they would be made to stay awake all night standing in a deep trench filled with water. Now that these physical punishments were discouraged, or outlawed, by recently implemented human rights laws, leaders resorted to monetary fines as incentive, at least in theory. But Prudencio, plagued with his failed faena said disgustedly "They just don’t pay the fine. Why should they, when there is no whipping to enforce it?"
Moreover, military discipline was valued for the ways that villagers appropriated it to serve local needs - a use that was not necessarily in accord with the state itself. Julian, for example, complained of two recent cases of police brutality, one the drug clash that I wrote about in chapter three, and the other an increasing tendency of police to threaten and physically intimidate local leaders. Don Felix, a church elder and village justice, was physically intimidated on a regular basis by police patrollers who were trying to cut down on the coca leaf traffic going through the village. Shoving him around a little to prove their point, the policemen yelled that if any drugs passed through town they would hold Felix responsible. Julian explained that during the war the rondas would never have allowed that to happen: “You know, the police are lucky because, in some places, when people come in - without authorization from the city? The rondas shoot people like that.”

Of course no one missed the terror or violence of the war. But many men lamented a loss of village solidarity, consensus and discipline that seemed to arise from wartime crisis, when neighbors banded together in the face of a common enemy. Eduardo explained to me that the rondas ensured inter-communal service, “if something happened in one part others would come to their aid. Even if there was someone who was a desconocido [stranger] then they would go to investigate.”

Prudencio, the frustrated director of the work project explained, In those days [during the rondas] it was so much stronger, there were stronger leaders. People were afraid not to attend the assemblies and the
patrols. Now with the pacification, no one does a thing; there is much less participation.

**From staff-bearers to ronderos: militarizing customary justice**

Both men and women also recalled that before the war the village was more unified due to the presence of traditional leaders. At that time the *varayoq* (staff bearers) were the informal village police in Wiracocha.25 These "traditional" offices dated back to before the Spanish conquest and through Velasco's land reform of the late 1960s. Varayoq were allowed a certain amount of autonomy, in accordance with a culturally vague rule that they must act according to the *usos y costumbres* - uses and customs (or customary justice). But the office of the *varayoq* –which had been declining even before the war died out during the violence, as Shining Path and the armed forces singled out village leaders for assassination (Mitchell 1991). When villagers returned from exile these traditional roles were partially filled by the new rondas. Villagers over forty who remembered the varayoq mourned the loss of communal order kept by these leaders, even as they recalled

25 *Varayoq* duties and power vary across the Andes, but they are usually in charge of distributing and controlling resources and duties, such as access to pasture land, crop rotations, water and irrigation, and organizing the catholic festival cycle (Coronel and IPAZ 2000). Many villages in Ayacucho had stopped the tradition of varayoq due to the violence of the war, when leaders were targeted by Shining Path and the state.
how they received a lash of the whip when they let their goat graze into a neighbor's alfalfa field.

Rather than clash with local forms of justice, the rondas merged with it. In the past the state had long looked away from the forms of punishment used by peasant communities to deal with misdemeanors and other infractions. Similarly, under the state of emergency, the Ayacucho rondas were given tacit encouragement to use violence to maintain order. As the rondas slipped into the role of the "traditional" varayoq the physical punishments meted out by ronderos within the village merged with physical punishments proscribed by customary justice. Eduardo, a thirty year old who lived part time in the ceja de selva - the high jungle where coca is grown and crime is high - explained: “We need the rondas, just to maintain the peace, even if it is only among ourselves”. But because the Wiracocha rondas had ceased almost all of their activities, the patrol leaders had lost their authority after the war. In 2003 the nostalgia for previous village order was so strong that Don Erasmo, the village president, held fort at a community meeting to bring back the office of the varayoq. Villagers overwhelmingly voted to reinstate these traditional leaders, and Erasmo concluded:

All the old rules and customs of the village, they have all been burned, lost, who knows, during the violence. We used to have rules, but now we don’t anymore and that is why we have to re-do them. …The varayoq used to take care of the fields like foxes. They would lie in wait 'til your animal would graze in someone else’s field, and then – bam! The whip. That was respect, in those times.
For many villagers, the militarization of the war years had stood in for this swift "traditional" justice of the varayoq's whip that Erasmo described. This corporal punishment was in fact, resonant with villager's customary justice, which emphasizes reconciliation and restoration of erring village members back into the community, rather than putting them in jail. At times men spoke of this local sovereignty and age-old cultural punishments alongside militarization as if the latter had become the new customary justice, and an important characteristic of village sovereignty.

Village authority, virility and human rights

Against these memories, men lamented that they were now weak - mana kallpawanchu - and desorganizada - disorganized and incapable of reaching any consensus. Women, too, were very vocal in their complaints about a general lack of village justice, but for their part they blamed the male leaders. Some of the more outspoken women took some pleasure in insulting the masculinity of post-war leaders in some of the harshest Quechua: for being quella - lazy - or having loqlo runtu - literally, "putrid balls" - for lacking the masculine qualities they defined as courage or virility. These insults were leveled at male leaders that did not follow up on elderly women's complaints about neighbors who stole their crops, for example, because they were too quella to trudge up the mountain fields to investigate, or they were too permissive, because they allowed a physically abusive husband off with merely a warning instead of a lashing, as in the old days. According to women, the
loss of village order was due to men's weakening since the war; their laziness as authorities was not only dramatic in comparison to the courage and activism of previous leaders, but were symptoms of the general village decline.

While women blamed men for not being manly, some men agreed with them, saying that they would like to be stronger, to do better, now. But, almost every man explained that he could not do better, as leaders were now fettered by new limits placed on their authority. This external intervention came in the form of demilitarization (the state was withdrawing military outposts, and asking rondas to turn in guns and grenades left over from the war) and, even more fundamentally, in what they saw as the fundamental reason for military reform - human rights. Los derechos humanos - human rights - were understood a new legal system that constrained male authority, and even endangered village sovereignty.

In their roles as counterinsurgents, village men found a coincidence between their roles as village authorities and protectors of the nation. Interference by a legal discourse of human rights, and of the increasing presence of NGOs and other groups meant to oversee compliance with international human rights law, were understood as weakening their virility and furthering their loss of authority. If during the war they were powerful patriots fighting treasonous terrorists, now, men complained that they were simply machu qaris –old men - incapable of instilling fear or meting out punishment.
From militarized to the neoliberal state: NGOs in Ayacucho

Men's complaints about human rights were due to a change in state presence in the countryside, which shifted from a military presence to one of public works (Coronel 1996), and from domestic to international relief aid. Even before the war, remote rural communities without roads the state was represented by the military or police (then the guardia civil). The martial law of the war years pushed the village’s reliance on the armed forces as state representatives further. In the late 1990s, however, the presence of the state began to change; instead of military state presence came in the form of domestic relief aid, a flood of public works from the Fujimori government, and the creation of NGO-like state aid agencies (for example, FONCODES, PRONAA, PAR, Proyecto Sierra Centro Sur) that built roads, health posts, schools, and other special war-aid projects (Ibid.).

International, private NGO aid projects proliferated in Ayacucho at this time, as international human rights groups put pressure on the Peruvian government to demilitarize and build peace after the worst of the war. In Huamanga a rising class of NGO administrators - teams of foreign and domestic professionals - brought new demands for luxury goods to Ayacucho. The dusty colonial city was suddenly filled with new SUVs, a Honda distributor, "grocery stores" carrying rolls of exotic softened toilet paper imported from the US along with peanut butter and Belgium beer. By the end of the Fujimori administration, relief aid and public works were accompanied by an increase in new NGO-like organizations that brought a brand new discourse of human rights, rights programs targeting women -- all
accompanied by the pulling back of state military aid (spurred by military reform and demilitarization). Private, international groups such as CARE, the Christian-based NGO World Vision, and smaller local NGOs set up aid and rights projects, operated off of increasingly limited international funding.\(^{26}\) This private aid was accompanied by NGO-like state aid and by watchdog groups, such as PAR (the state refugee agency) and the liminal Defensoria del Pueblo - the Public Defender's Office - that acted as the ombudsman for human rights complaints between civil groups and the government.

**Human Rights and military reform**

Throughout the 1980s and early 90s, Peru's state and military officials denigrated aid and human rights groups, which they categorized as shelters for terrorists.\(^{27}\) Yet the last years of President Alberto Fujimori's office saw Peru yielding somewhat to international pressure to democratize, and the state embraced international human rights law and demilitarization. One of the main reforms was of the military, including cutting back army patrolling of the emergency zone, the

\(^{26}\) Many local NGOs based in Ayacucho suffered major funding cuts when the European Union decided to pull much of its funding from the region in 1998 and 1999 as the area was no longer considered an Emergency Zone (Zona de Emergencia - a state of exception where constitutional rights are suspended). The impact of this change in status on Ayacucho and its middle class educated professionals - anthropologists, social workers and educators - had a drastic effect on this urban sector. The aid worker market picked up temporarily, however, for a year and a half when the Ayacucho branch of the Truth Commission hired back many of these surplus fieldworkers.

\(^{27}\) Most outspoken was Fujimori, who once claimed that humanitarian organizations were neo-imperialist Yankees determined to undermine Peru's sovereignty.
closing down of military bases from much of the Ayacucho, redirection of military aid, plans to make military service voluntary (until recently registering for service was a requirement). Demilitarization affected the rondas as well. By 1999 the rondas campesinas, which were known more officially by the military as Civil Defense Committees (or CADs - Comites de Auto Defensa) were told to reorganize: from now on they would not be known as "auto-defense," but "auto-development" committees (Comites de Auto Desarrollo). Despite these reforms, many of which were criticized as being too superficial, after Fujimori's final abdication, official peacemaking initiatives faced much less opposition. In 2001, institutions like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the proliferation of state aid and NGO programs were accompanied by a sudden influx of human rights capacitaciones (workshops, or training sessions) into the Ayacucho countryside.

It would be hard to underestimate the novelty of these workshops to peasants in rural Ayacucho, or the way that villagers often opposed the new discourse of human rights with cultural rights - in terms of village autonomy and sovereignty. Although the Peruvian constitution allows villagers to implement their "traditional" forms of justice, as long as they do not conflict with individual constitutional or fundamental human rights, it is notoriously vague about exactly what kinds of customary punishments would be acceptable. This has become such a problem in Peru that the state has had to create a special law for those who implement corporal customary punishments that violate human rights, but unintentionally. Of course, international human rights law did not mark a rural awakening of feminist and
humanitarian consciousness where there had been none before; to the contrary, there had always been a local understanding of rights, and powerful women have long exerted their sway in the Andes (Silverblatt 1987). Nor do I mean that peasants were somehow so remote, or so unattached to the rest of the world that villagers had no conception of rights at all. Derechos, rights, were not a new concept: villagers knew when they did and did not have the right to quejar - to place a complaint; when they had the right to own land, or the right to sue; they had been making use of the court system, and filing formal complaints to the endless bureaucracy of police and lawyers, etc, for decades. They also knew when those rights were taken away, as they were in the state of emergency of the dirty war.

But derechos humanos - human rights were a new breed. Aid workers introduced human rights to villagers as a radically new system of justice. And, in theory, they were: unlike rights guaranteed by the state, human rights involved new kinds of sovereignty that could bypass a corrupt state, where state abuse could not take place because accountability would be assured by an unseen international community. For their part, villagers talked about human rights as a novel and abrupt change, and more than anything a foreign, non-Peruvian import whose sudden appearance in the countryside could almost be narrowed down to a precise date.

A woman-focused humanitarianism
The groups that introduced this new system of justice and accountability (in Wiracocha it was a combination of private and state agencies: PAR, World Vision and the Truth Commission) targeted women's groups for consciousness raising workshops about their rights within the home and village. These interventions came on the heels of the increasing participation of women migrants in political and economic life, including the rising visibility of women in the informal business sector (as market or itinerant vendors, in craft cooperatives, etc) as well as in the political sphere as communal leaders, and as organizers in soup kitchens.

In Wiracocha, for example, workshops held by the state refugee organization (PAR) and by NGOs focused on the Club de Madres (Mothers Clubs). Begun in the urban areas of Ayacucho to share resources in the 1970s, the Mothers Clubs spread in the desperation of the war, and during the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s. In Huamanga and Lima women also took the lead in organizations of the relatives of the disappeared, and the Vaso de Leche, Glass of Milk, program - all in

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28 Likely this feminine focus was not meant to be exclude men; but was tailored to practical concerns, such as the fact that women are usually more available to attend daytime NGO visits than men, who are more often far off in the fields until sundown six months out of the year, or working as temporary laborers in the jungle the rest of the time. But besides this, women are also often a higher priority target for aid agencies. International funders are often more inclined to finance gendered focused development projects, as aid organizations place women's needs at a higher priority than men (who are less likely to suffer abuse within the domestic sphere). In 1998 when I traveled with aid agencies to various returning refugee villages throughout Ayacucho, local NGOs were just implementing women's projects not because that was the sector they determined needed the most aid, but because, as one aid worker told me, "that is what your people [i.e., USAID, etc] want".

29 In 1988 there were 270 Mother's Clubs in Ayacucho which made up the Federación Provincial de Clubes de Madres de Huamanga. (Coronel and IPAZ 2000)
response to wartime violence and the desperate needs of woman-headed families. These and other women's groups were either formed or sped up by the war, where widows and single mothers - often refugees from the countryside - came up with independent and coordinated solutions to their economic desperation (Blondet 1991, 1995; Coral Cordero 1998).

Unlike the men I spoke with, most women in Wiracocha looked upon the interventions of human rights workshops favorably, explaining to me that "human rights" gave them someplace to voice their complaints, and helped to restructure their power in the domestic sphere. “Before we were ignorant here,” Berta, the village president of the Mother’s Club told me, “but now we know we have rights, and we can complain." Other women told me that they were less afraid to make complaints about rape or spousal abuse because of the availability of human rights organizations, which would put pressure on the mostly male authorities to investigate and back their claims if the local juez de paz (village appointed justice of the peace) did not follow through in prosecuting offenders.30 Women also valued the new discourse of rights when it intervened in matters of family planning which has been a source of conflict between domestic partners for a long time. At a Club de Madres meeting Berta explained to the assembled women, “Since we have human rights…We can have the number of children we want; now it has to be

30 These jueces de paz form a network of local justice in official peasant communities. They have the power to punish misdemeanors and resolve local disputes, including the discretionary control over what is passed on to higher magistrates. For a fascinating look at the workings of jueces de paz and state power in remote communities in Ayacucho see (Poole 2004)
decided by both spouses, the man and the woman”. The women around her nodded, saying, "That’s right!” "That's very good."

It was not surprising to hear women more in favor of these human rights reforms than men. After all, men could be concerned with their own loss of power, and weakening of household control. At least in theory, men were the ultimate authority in households, determining what family planning would be. Although no leader I spoke with defended domestic violence, it was nevertheless one of the most frequent and widespread forms of community conflict. Throughout Peru domestic violence has become such a problem that, according to one study, over half of Peruvian women will have been beaten at least once in their lives by their partners.31 During the war domestic violence surged in villages, as had the alcoholism. Although Fujimori passed a law in 1993 to outlaw domestic violence, the customary justice of the village, and even that of many higher-court judges, is to reconcile the man and wife, privileging the conservation of the family unit above that of the protection of an abused wife.32

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31 Although notoriously difficult to survey, studies rank Peru as having one of the highest incidences of domestic abuse. This is supported by a study by (Movimietno 2003) cited in (Boesten 2006)
32 Boesten shows that this belief in keeping the family together at all costs is widespread in Peru, where it often undermines new laws abolishing wife beating (Ibid., 357). See also Cecelia Blondet's scathing critique of Fujimori's superficial domestic-abuse policies, which, she notes, were more about creating a stable, democratic image to international lenders (after the autogolpe and strong-arm martial law tactics in the war zone) than with any real concern or intention to curb domestic violence (Blondet 2002).
Beyond intervening in the domestic sphere, however, the rise of new humanitarian interventions into the countryside made for clashes between local and national authorities. According to one survey, 80% of conflicts are resolved through local custom. Increasing attention to international human rights law made almost all kinds of customary justice illegal (Speed and Collier 2000). Customary physical confinement and punishments, ranging from public shaming to whippings, increasingly clashed with institutions charged with protecting individual human rights, such as the Public Defenders office (*Defensoria del Pueblo*). Villagers who were given a typical local punishment - for example, a public whipping for several counts of adultery - could go to the Public Defender's office to detain or begin legal proceedings against the local village judge or president. Sometimes these interventions worked to curb local abuse, but other times the very literal interpretation of human rights law backfired. For example, the same literal interpretations of human rights law that requires local authorities to intercede in domestic violence, might also serve to limit village leaders' ability to impose strict physical punishments on those men that were wife beaters. Without immediate access to state police, military or even a jail, even the confinement of criminals was a difficult process. Simply detaining a cattle thief in a classroom, for example,

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33 Survey by the NGO IPAZ, Ayacucho, cited in (Coronel and IPAZ 2000) According to the survey the most common communal conflicts in highland villages are domestic, including physical abuse, abandonment, and adultery; after which come conflicts over inheritance of lands. Coronel, 2000 #202}. Second and third to domestic conflicts were those between neighbors (over destroyed crops for example) , and inter-communal (over territory, borders, cattle rustling).
could violate human rights law if there were not access to a mattress and a toilet or latrine - both uncommon luxuries in the Ayacucho countryside.

For their part, however, the language that men used to express their complaints about external intervention into village affairs was one of gender and power. It was human rights, many complained, that made them machu-qaris because it interfered with their ability to make judicial decisions and enforce punishment at the village level. Without some form of customary punishment, many felt that the village could not recreate the sense of communal cohesion and a rule of law that had been destroyed in the years of the dirty war. Rather than a failure of rights, for many men militarization, actually enforced rights, order and security. It did so by taking over the physical punishments of customary justice. In turn, the state tacitly approved leaders' sovereign right to punish, first by defining punishments as cultural traditions, and later, as martial law.

**Conclusion**

When the votes were counted in Peru's 2006 presidential run-off election, analysts were stunned that the Ayacuchano ex-army officer, Ollanta Humala, had won a landslide of votes in Ayacucho's former war-zone.\(^{34}\) At the time the candidate was under investigation for torture kidnappings and killing of civilians committed

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\(^{34}\) Humala won 62.2 percent of all Ayacucho votes in the primary election against several competitors. Besides Accomarca, Humala won 69% majority in Cayara (68.6 percent), where the army murdered 31 people, 73 percent in La Mar, 65 in Huanta, 59 in Huamanga, and 65 in Vilcashuamán (Páez 2006).
during the dirty war, as were many of the officers in charge of areas where state brutality occurred. Although Humala lost nationally to the former president Alan García, his lead was very strong precisely in the areas that had been hardest hit by state violence: he found the most support in villages that had suffered some of the most infamous massacres by state forces. Most surprising was Accomarca, a village in southern Ayacucho where the state massacred over 60 civilians twenty years ago voted 97% in favor of Humala in the run-off (Zighelboim 2006).

Humala's success in these villagers less surprising however when we take into account the longer history of ambivalence between indigenous villagers and the armed forces, and the maintenance of militarization in everyday life. Many villagers have had to struggle against forced recruitment into Peru's armed service, either through the *levas* - where young men are kidnapped into service - or through mandatory ronda service. At the same time, service in the armed forces has also served as the primary way that village men, and, by extension, their families, have symbolically surpassed their status as second-class citizens, and obtained the documentation that makes them legal citizens. Without the documentation of draft registration or ronda service under the military, village men ran the risk of becoming part of the invisible “undocumented” masses, or, as one pundit put it: “illegals in their own country.” As Hannah Arendt famously observed at the end of World War II, what was been unseen and missing in our understandings of fundamental human rights was that they are always preceded by a “right to have rights” (Arendt 1968 [1951]). The right to have rights could be figured only through ones membership in
a community of nations. In Peru as in other countries in Latin America, the thousands of people without official documentation of their citizenship – (in Peru this is over a third of the nation) – have become un-countable people.

We might think of this kind of un-countability as a perverse element in Foucault's biopower, a kind of anti-statistic that renders populations invisible instead of measurable. Certainly this kind of invisibility has always been at the heart of dirty war "disappearances" and other deniable forms of state terror, such as concentration camps. Giorgio Agamben's concept of "bare life" - a life without social meaning, or a life always marked by its social death - is useful here to think about whole populations of people marked for their political and social invisibility (Agamben 1998). Invisible, un-countable people allow for “un-accountability” and the genocidal dimensions of Peru’s dirty war, where peasants bore the brunt of the casualties. Truth Commissioner Carlos Iván Degregori concluded it was this the lack of documented citizenship - an "existence stripped of political and social value" (Langford 2005) - that allowed villagers in Ayacucho to make up over half of all the war victims; without these countable forms of citizenship, he notes, indigenous war victims were “dead before they were killed” (Degregori 2005).

Maintaining military drag in Wiracocha is, therefore, a very limited and partial way of proving rights that have been systematically denied to marginalized populations. Unlike Peru's criollo or white upper classes, whose citizenship is rarely questioned, marginalized Peruvians without official identities must earn these rights through participation in the rondas or army. The fact that so many rural highlanders
depend on this military model, however, stymies demilitarization efforts, which assume that the relationship between villagers and soldiering is only one of state oppression. CARE, PAR, and other international aid and national human rights institutions aim to shift the institutions responsible for governing and defending the rights of campesinos to civil society. They hope, at least in theory, to transfer the oversight of human rights to a broader, international community that may hold the Peruvian state as well as others accountable for rights violations.

Yet, village men sometimes experienced these very reforms dedicated to victims of the war - demilitarization and human rights intervention - as insecurity. Even as pressures to adhere to international human rights law serve to protect highlanders, they also erode one of the fundamental ways that many villagers demand citizenship rights and state accountability: through military service. Within the village itself, men and women struggled differently over human rights interventions. Secondly, these international laws, interpreted literally, often clashed with villagers systems of local authority and customary justice. During and after the power vacuum left by the war, traditional village offices and customary corporal punishments went unchecked by the state, and merged into the martial law of the counterinsurgency. In the absence of other state representatives in the remote countryside, the customary physical punishments of Wiracocha have served to maintain village order and autonomy.

But militarization in Ayacucho was a complex phenomenon experienced differently by men and women, both during the war, and in the present era of reform.
and peacemaking. State forces and international aid groups have changed the articulation of village justice, gender roles and solidarity. In some ways these conflicts between human rights and self-governance are a foreseeable result of the swift change in state policy: one that almost overnight substituted ideals of masculine military patriotism with a cosmopolitan discourse of transparency, democracy and human rights. These transformations now make for a confused present with little consensus, particularly across the gender divide. The warrior model of war memory and citizenship leaves little room for women’s roles, even as rural women are increasingly visible in economic and political life (Enloe 1983; Theidon 2003). In this context, men and women experience demilitarization and human rights interventions in opposing ways: where women welcome some kinds of intervention in the domestic sphere, men experience human rights interventions into both domestic and public spheres as de-masculinization and a blow to village autonomy.

More than just a recent nostalgia, the maintenance of military drag in villages like Wiracocha is part of a larger history of militarized citizenship in Peru, where populist or caudillo leaders from General Juan Velasco to Ollanta Humala have received strong support from the browner rank-and-file men of the military. Like Velasco, Humala embraced the armed services as a positive, anti-racist and socially equalizing force in the country, a socialist alternative to the often superficial "democratic reform," that goes hand-in-hand with free-market, neoliberal adjustments demanded by foreign investors and multilateral lenders. Unfortunately
neither model of government - a superficial, market-based democracy that undermines the sovereignty of Peru, putting power in the hands of other nations and economic interests - nor the populist dictatorships of Velasco and those proposed by Humala - provides satisfying solutions to real democratic reform and peacemaking in Peru. But, until human rights reform can go deeper than "consciousness raising" workshops to provide some guarantee of rights to the poorest and least represented citizens of Peru, indigenous villagers and other less-documented people may continue to opt for military citizenship to democratic reforms and humanitarian interventions.
Chapter 5. The Return of the Leaf: Narcoterrorists, Culture-talk and Reparations in “Post-Conflict” Ayacucho

In the fall of 2002, the coca growers of Peru’s south central highland jungle gave a large North American aid organization an ultimatum: either take their coca substitution and eradication programs and their workers out of the jungle or be thrown out. After ten days the growers, or cocaleros as they are more commonly known in Peru, forced the largest NGO in the area, CARE, to leave the jungle, and then made a three-day march toward the capital of the department. Their leader, Nelson Palomino, wore a traditional peasant chullu cap and carried the rainbow colors of the Tawantinsuyu flag of Inca heritage into the peasant rally. When he entered the Ayacucho plaza in the first regional protest in August, he wore a band of dried coca across his chest. A wad of the green leaves protruded from one cheek. Yelling "kawsachun cocamama" - Quechua for "long live coca", along with the protesters, he spoke about the failure of aid and eradication projects in the coca region, and a peasant subsistence crisis caused by declining prices for alternative crops such as cacao, rice and coffee.

The protest -or paro –stop/strike - as it was called, was the first in a series between the end of 2002 and 2005, and one of the largest organized demonstrations of civil unrest the region had seen since Shining Path's devastating "popular strikes" of the 1980s which shut down commerce in Lima and beyond. Unlike strikes in the U.S., where employees stop work and protest, paro nacional - a national strike such
as that organized by the cocaleros aimed to block highways and close down stores so that no commerce at all could take place. The paro affected jungle towns, the capital of Lima, but primarily in Ayacucho's state capital of Huamanga. The protests punctuated my final year of fieldwork in the highland village of Wiracocha, a six hours drive away.

Villagers talked excitedly about the latest events and composed their own passionate political stump speeches about their frustrations with NGO programs of alternative development and coca eradication. Wiracocha was far too high for the cultivation of coca - but like much of Ayacucho's highland villages it was only a few days walk from the coca growing jungle. Those who could afford it bought small parcels of Apurímac land during the war, when the demand for coca was at its peak. Others worked seasonally in the fields picking leaves for a wage. After the war villagers let their parcels lie fallow, or planted them with coca again according to market demand from Colombia, the US and Europe. Highlanders thus had a vested interest in the protest of the cocaleros; some men joined up with Palomino's march and went to Huamanga, the capital of the state of Ayacucho, to demand their right to grow and pick coca leaf.
The strikes of the Peruvian cocaleros came at a time when peasants in neighboring Bolivia were also gearing up anti-eradication protests and entering into
government negotiations. But while the charismatic leader and coca grower Evo Morales was able to capture the popular vote in Bolivia's 2006 presidential election, the Peruvian growers had less luck. The Peruvian government’s negotiations with the cocaleros failed on multiple occasions and the sub secretary of the largest cocaleros union, the Apurímac and Ene River Valley Agricultural Federation (FEPAVRAE), was imprisoned on charges of, among other things, inciting civil unrest and promoting terrorism. In response, the cocaleros formed regional roadblocks, and planed further national strikes. Meanwhile, in the coca growing jungles, many feared that cocalero mobilization combined with US pressure to eradicate the crop might lead to a militarized, forced eradication program that might bring the country to the kinds of fractured, deathly conflicts seen in Colombia.

In this chapter I examine the context and the social meaning of the cocaleros’ fight. My findings are based on fieldwork in Wiracocha as well as with Ayacucho's coca growers on their frequent marches to Huamanga in August 2002, February 2003 and a return visit to the coca growing Apurímac valley in August 2005. I contextualize the strikes in terms of the failure of eradication and alternative crop development in Peru, exacerbated by the US drug war policies. I examine two novel ways the cocaleros have framed their demands for social justice. The first is

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1 Cocalero protests in neighboring Bolivia were much larger than Peru’s, and used much of the same demands and ideology. However, while the rhetoric of cultural indigenous rights is common in Bolivia – a country famous for its strong national indigenous movements – it was less so in Peru, where highlanders identify predominantly by class and region rather than ethnic identity. Although I have not been able to document the connection, it is probable that the language of indigenous pride that touched some of Peru’s cocalero protests was a linguistic diffusion from neighboring Bolivia and Ecuador.
in terms of indigenous imagery and cultural essentialism, a strategy that the
cocaleros used strategically, I argue, to redefine coca production as a cultural and
collective right of Andean people. This imagery is surprising given what has
commonly been called Peru’s "exceptionalism" - that is, its lack of coherent national
indigenous movements, and its modern history instead of peasant identity
movements, where class (in particular, the identity of "campesino") has been the
preferred rallying point (García 2005). But here culture and ethnicity became an
effective means for cocaleros to promote their solidarity. Framing claims in terms
of culture also projected an image of “indigenous rights” - a concept that aligned the
cocalero struggle with the larger global indigenous rights movement and its
international NGO supporters. The cultural politics of the coca leaf and the militant
expulsion of the "gringo NGO" CARE recalls a much older ethnic political myth of
the Inkarrí - the return of the Inca King. This colonial era prophecy told of a
messianic return of executed Inca emperor, Atahualpa, who would lead his people in
a victorious battle against the white imperialists. Like the Inkarrí, the rise of coca
leaf politics infuses modern day political struggles in Peru with the symbolism of
cultural pride and ancient empires, even as it does so in thoroughly postmodern, self-
conscious and instrumental way.

Cocaleros re-deployed this strategic essentialism with a newer language of
justice and reparations that was used by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
In particular, cocaleros used the memory of their participation in civil defense
patrols to frame their demands for social justice. Here I discuss the recent war in
Ayacucho and the failure of some international aid projects to attract the participation and imagination of some of the hardest hit by the war – highland peasants.

**Coca protest and eradication in Peruvian context**

Cocalero unrest in the Apurímac and Upper Huallaga valleys was simmering before the end of the Fujimori regime in 2000. President Fujimori was known for his “tough” authoritarian rule, which effectively defeated the rebels Shining Path, and for his auto-coup that drew criticism from international humanitarian groups. While national opinion had justified Fujimori’s earlier extreme tactics as necessary for a successful counterinsurgency, civil groups increasingly protested the president’s later policies across the country. In 1999 Fujimori increased his dictatorial powers, changing the constitution to allow for a third term in office, and “winning” the 2000 campaign amid clouds of corruption and charges that he had fixed the election.\(^2\) The US officially criticized these elections, but they continued to support Fujimori, and his Security Advisor, Vladimir Montisinos, because of their determination to comply with a plan of coca eradication campaigns. Peru reported to the US that four years the land use for coca cultivation had been halved (from

\(^2\) The Carter Center and other election observers pulled out of observing the 2000 elections due to “irregularities”.
For a while, Peru became the poster child of productive drug war policies. It appeared to be a rare success story in the United States’ long-running, largely futile War on Drugs. Cocaine production was increasing in Colombia, but politicians and technocrats in both Peru and Washington rushed to claim credit for decreasing Peruvian coca production. Nevertheless, production was increasing as well in Peru. Despite the dramatic decrease in the total area of coca cultivation, the agro-
technology of coca was undergoing a revolution. According to one NGO, unprecedented advances in farming technology in the coca valleys have boosted production 65% in two years: from 2,200 kilos of coca leaf per hectare in 2002 to 3,624 kilos per hectare in 2004. Since 1998 the demand for coca has also increased, and prices have steadily increased, from $13 for an *arroba* (11.5 kilo bag) of coca leaves to a current price of almost $50.

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4 Victor Belleza, director of Vision Mudial (World Vision) reported these results of a survey conducted among VRAE coca producers. Personal communication, August 2005.

5 This brings the price of coca leaf in Peru within the range of its historically highest rate in 1991. See Remon.
In the past two years cocaleros unified and increased their demands on the government for slower eradication that included peasants in the planning process. Cocaleros threatened regional and national strikes. Under pressure from these threats, first Fujimori then the transitional government of Valentín Paniagua, and finally President Toledo considered concessions to grower’s demands, even sending representatives to sign agreements and promises. But, peasants pointed out with bitterness, very few of these agreements had been honored. During much of the early cocalero strikes the Peruvian state was forced to choose between anarchy in the coca regions and angering the US. Peru finally chose the latter, with the temporary suspension of forced eradication projects.\(^6\)

The suspension of forced eradication did not last long. The US embassy was quick to pressure the Peruvian government not to bargain with cocaleros, and to discredit attempts to achieve a solution to coca production through anything other than eradication. The recent renewed Andean Trade Pact (1991) is now the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA), and is a measure of US drug war skepticism. Begun in 1991, the Trade Pact aimed to strengthen Peru’s economy and democracy by allowing Peruvian products tariff free access to the US market. The ATPDEA act renewed this aid, with the added condition that it would be contingent on the amount of coca eradication achieved by Peru. Before the cocalero strikes, President Toledo promised to eradicate twenty-two thousand hectares of coca by 2006. It was this threat of renewed, toughened eradication

\(^6\) Rojas “The Push for Zero Coca”
programs and the failure to bring peasants onto the bargaining table that brought cocaleros to the desperate methods of strikes and road blocks.

*Coca welfare, surplus crops and the survival of peasant subsistence*

Plans that suggest alternatives to eradication have failed in Peru. The state-run National Coca Company (ENACO) has long held a monopoly on coca production: the company determines who is allowed to produce legal coca, and it buys leaves from legal coca producers for traditional coca use. But few peasants were allowed to sign up for the legal growing program, and, the state will only pay $17 per arroba of leaf, well below the market price of $50 offered by drug dealers. Alternative cash crops to coca crops, such as coffee, despite being celebrated in the yearly reports of USAID completely failed to produce the quality product and price that aid groups promised the cocaleros. Coffee prices dropped to under a dollar a kilo (or $8 per arroba). Even the sale of surplus subsistence crops such as beans, rice and corn could not compare to coca; each of these sold for under $5 per arroba.

This drop in the prices of subsistence cereal crops affected not just the coca producing valleys, but the entire highlands, where the sale of surplus beans, corn, and potatoes have been one of the only sources of cash income. For many of these peasants, the only other possible income must be earned in the coca fields they

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7 Rojas points out that the biggest obstacle to legal production and consumption of coca is the states extremely obsolete coca legislation (law # 22095, passed twenty years ago during Peru’s military government). Only the very few families whose names are actually inscribed in the legislation can produce coca legally (see Rojas). One of the cocaleros demands is to be inscribed in the logs of legal producers so that they do not have to participate in an illegal market.
themselves own in the valleys, or from working in the coca fields of others as temporary migrant laborers. This temporary migration has become so marked in Ayacucho’s highlands that sometimes an entire village is emptied of its residents in the dry season. In these months whole families take advantage of the school vacation to go to Apurímac in order to earn money for the rest of the year.

In Ayacucho, picking coca leaves became an especially important option for women, especially single mothers and war widows, the only source of hire for females on a temporary basis. According to a widow in Wiracocha who routinely brings her children to the jungle for work, in these three months, women can earn enough income for their children’s necessities for the year. Even children can earn about half of what their mother's earn by picking leaves. They also earn by taking on the noxious job of processing coca leaf into cocaine paste, by stepping on the leaves in a shallow bath of chemicals. Police have learned to spot those who process coca leaf because the chemicals eat away at the skin on feet and hands, leaving telltale signs of drug production. In Ayacucho this very modern pattern of labor and migration between jungle and highlands have become a new tradition and subsistence strategy, one that is not at odds with pre-Columbian patterns of dispersed farms and settlements that John Murra called the "vertical archipelago". This pattern of migration and trade between dispersed regions of upper and lower
climes describes the ways that highlanders have long sought out different ecological zones to support their settlements in the freezing Andean plains.\(^8\)

That the transnational and illicit economy of cocaine has come to be the new vertical archipelago comes as an ironic surprise: a cocaine economy now maintains the families of so many “traditional” campesino villages. The irony of such a situation is due to a poverty of social scientific imagination that sometimes sees peasant culture as inherently defensive to global influences. However, for students of Peru’s informal political economy, coca and subsistence are not such strange bedfellows. Edmundo Morales, a Peruvian sociologist who studied coca producers in the early 80s went so far as to say that coca cultivation actually “reestablished a subsistence economy.”\(^9\) His data for Peru showed that “more than half of all working Peruvians survive because of their role in the nations amazing ‘informal’ sector which functions outside the official economy. A major pillar, if not the very foundation of Peru’s parallel economy appears to be illicit cocodólares.”\(^10\) In the harsh economy of postmillennial Peru, working in or owning a coca field is one of the few ways to make a peasant lifestyle viable.

\(^8\) Temporary migration to different ecological zones is a pre-Columbian subsistence strategy studied by John Murra “The Vertical Archipelago”. Seen in the context of history, migration to coca zones is not a new thing.


\(^10\) Morales page 15
Figure 11. Picking coca leaves, Apurímac Valley, Ayacucho 2005

Figure 12. Homes of small farmers of coca cacao and bananas, Apurímac Valley, Ayacucho 2005
Economic crisis and the War on Drugs

Yet, as sociologist Isias Rojas has perceptively observed, the desperate situation of peasants is obscured by the discourse of the “war on drugs” as it is used by US and Peruvian bureaucrats. Rojas reports that most farmers in Apurímac plant only one or two hectares of coca, just enough to cover income needs for the necessities of food, healthcare and education: “Coca is not a large-scale activity or a source of profit for most farmers, as it is for the drug traffickers.”¹¹ Drug bureaucrats do not see small producers as the most desperate and marginal of the drug trade. In an embassy report, former US ambassador to Peru John Hamilton referred to the small peasant producers or pickers of coca as “narco farmers.” Discursively, this kind of labeling brings peasants one-step away from the leaders of the Cali cartel. This language reinforces the policies that punish the most marginal and desperate of the drug trade. For example, Morales found that Peru’s coca eradication and anti-narcotics legislation protects the local elites at the source of the coca leaf production, and the “super rich” of the cocaine cartels while the laws against production and trafficking are actually designed to punish the “petty traffickers.”¹² Almost half of Ayacucho's prison population (43.9 %) are prisoners accused of drug trafficking (Coronel and IPAZ 2000). In my fieldwork I found that petty traffickers are the very peasants who find themselves crushed by the

¹¹ Rojas “The Push for Zero Coca”
¹² Morales, “The Political Economy of Cocaine Production” pg. 4
decreasing subsistence crisis. Almost all families in Wiracocha have a relation that has served time in jail, or is in there now, accused of transporting illegal paste or the chemicals called “chas” that are used to process it.

This crisis in the highlands goes hand in hand with participation and migration in illegal coca circuits and with the particular history of Ayacucho. Besides being the cradle of the war between Shining Path rebels and state military forces, the Ayacucho highlands were the hardest hit by political violence. Thousands of peasants who lost their families, livestock, homes and belongings in this war have only recently begun to return and to restore their fields to their former production. Many of these former refugees are still in debt from their time spent in the city where they lived hand-to-mouth working the fields of others, or have been devastated by the loss of family wage earners. The drop in cereal prices hit these war-torn villages hardest of all. One market day in Wiracocha - when villagers bring their surplus crops to sell to traders - I met a war widow who, after lugging her year’s surplus harvest of 20 kilos of dried peas to market, was told that their value had dropped to only $5.50. She was in tears because that amount would not even cover the school supplies needed by her grandchildren for the next year, and had nothing to buy noodles to fill her soup pot for the next month. Under severe

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13 A recent trip to Ayacucho’s maximum security Yanamilla prison in February 2003 drove this point home. The majority of the inmates, men and women, are from highland peasant families and are in jail on charges of drug trafficking. I met one inmate who was from a highland village I had spent some time in. He asked for help getting a lawyer, as he had been in jail awaiting sentencing for thirteen months. He finally received his sentence this year, 10 years for helping to transport six gallons of “chas” a chemical used in the preparation of PBC.
economic stress, most of these families have found some way of participating in
coca production just in order to meet their basic food, medical and educational
needs.

In the valley, things were not much better. Forced coca eradication
programs have made subsistence precarious and life cheap. One report on coca
eradication quoted a cocalero leader who described the toll of the eradication
programs in human terms: “[Our crops] were brutally eradicated in 1999 and 2000.
Several people were injured during the eradication....Seven people committed
suicide after their coca was eradicated. The people lost everything.” Eradication
did not simply deprive peasants of their one or two hectares of coca crop, however.
In the late 80s, Morales noted that the policy for destruction of legal crops was to
reimburse farmers $300 per hectare, while illegal growers are given no
compensation. Yet, even this amount “can barely pay for the clearing of a new
hectare of land. So the peasant becomes an illegal coca farmer deep in the forests
where his chances of being discovered are minimal”.

Despite these problems in defeating coca cultivation, Peru must engage with
plans to eradicate as it signs up for international assistance. The developmental
carrot dangled by the ATPDEA agreement was the trade pact’s potential to increase
employment opportunities in a country in severe economic crisis. According to
neoliberal logic, social welfare must come from increasing production: more
markets for Peruvian products should create more jobs for Peruvians working in

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14 Leader Nancy Oberon, quoted in Isias Rojas “The Push for Zero Coca” page 4.
15 Morales, “The Political Economy of Cocaine Production”.

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cash crop agriculture. But since alternative development of replacement crops failed, the only cash crop that could be grown in areas such as the Apurímac valley is coca. Although it aimed to include the countryside in market profits, the free trade agreement with the US did not help the coca growers because it did not include rural production. Potatoes and grain grown by highland peasants, for example, would not benefit from the tax breaks; rather they helped the more “developed” business on the coast, where the large industrial asparagus and cotton growers would profit from the reduced tariffs.\textsuperscript{16} According to Nancy Obregón, the leader of the Upper Huallaga valley producers, “ATPDEA is against us, not for us. They’ll come and eradicate the coca at all costs, without ensuring that conditions exist for alternative products in the short term.”\textsuperscript{17}

\textit{Who counts as indigenous?}

Although the Apurímac valley cocaleros were engaged in largely peaceful protests, violence erupted among their fellow growers in Tingo Maria, where strikers stormed the drug office and burned the office furniture and computers. Some cocaleros were hurt as they clashed with police. At the moment when news of the Tingo Maria protests reached the international press, the First Lady Elian Karp was out of the country speaking at a conference of indigenous delegates organized by the Organization of American States (March 2003). Karp, a white,

\textsuperscript{16} Remón, “Will Drug Crop Eradication Spark Conflict in Peru?”
\textsuperscript{17} Quoted in Remón
redheaded Belgian anthropologist who trained at Stanford, had spoken with passion about the lack of indigenous rights in Peru. When asked about the strikes at the indigenous conference, Karp criticized the cocaleros and warned, “We shouldn’t confuse the subject of coca farmer exploitation with the organized and coordinated indigenous movements that wish to create propositions within a democracy.”

I was reading the first lady’s comments while in the highland town of Huamanga, Ayacucho, where the cocaleros were holding one of their largest rallies for the release of their recently imprisoned leader. Huamanga is known in tour guidebooks, as it happens, for its indigenous majority. Here the language of the street is Quechua, and it is common to find peasants and professionals sharing the same public spaces. In fact, only a few months earlier I had seen Karp and her husband, stump-speeching in the rain in the same plaza now occupied by dusty cocalero protesters. In the middle of that earlier campaign speech Toledo passed Karp the microphone and the first lady read a message in Quechua to those assembled. The speech earned Karp an ovation, much stronger that the applause for her husband, who was to become Peru's first indigenous president. After Karp's reading, a woman in a campesino shawl and hat turned to me excitedly and said, "Its true, she really does speak Quechua!"

At one moment then, the first lady of Peru, a well-known advocate for indigenous peoples, could use Quechua to win the vote of indigenous Ayacuchanos, and in the next moment describe these same people as non-indigenous "coca

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18 As reported in *Diario El Peruano*, “Eliane Karp condena acciones violentas” February 27, 2003.
farmers” without cultural heritage and therefore, access to collective rights. Huamanga, a city whose majority were indigenous Quechua speakers, was surely as indigenous as one could get, yet sitting in the plaza I found myself wondering exactly to what other “organized and coordinated indigenous movements” Karp referred. Peru is often cited by cultural theorists for its uniqueness as the only country in Latin America with a majority of what most of the world would call “indigenous” citizens, yet with the least indigenous based social movements on the national level. Peruvian "exceptionalism" is often used as a foil to talk about the surge in identity-based movements like the Maya and Zapatistas in Central America, or the strong Quichua and Ayamara movements in neighboring Ecuador and Bolivia. In contrast, in Peru, the word “indigenous” usually does not refer to people in the Andes at all, but to the tribal peoples of the lowland Amazon, such as the Aguaruna and Ashaninka. While tribal peoples have indigenous organizations, they are not articulated with highland agricultural peoples. Neither is the word “indio” used as a self-identifying marker of people who are of the highlands. Rather, most refer to themselves as campesinos (peasants), or refer to the region or village as their way of representing their identity.

The two thousand cocaleros who had come to occupy the central plaza of Ayacucho certainly looked the part of what many of us outsiders would call “indigenous.” Tired from their three-day march from Apurímac to Ayacucho, they

19 Maria Isabel Remy’s article shows the dichotomy between highland and lowland indigenous, with highland being mainly peasant farmers (mainly in the Andes), and lowland being tribal hunter gathers (especially Amazonian groups). In Indigenous Peoples and Democracy in Latin America edited by Donna Lee Van Cott, NY: Saint Martins, 1994.
slept wherever overhangs offered some shelter from the heavy downpours of the rainy season. Most of the women were dressed in traditional southern Andes style, which is common in the coca growing valleys that were colonized by highlanders during the Agrarian Reform. Everyone claimed family roots in a highland villages and most owned fields in both the highlands and the valley, living their lives in constant migration between the two. Women were wearing long braids down to their waist, heavy full skirts and wool felt sombreros. The men however, wore “western” jeans and baseball caps, while a few had chosen to wear their *chullus*, some *llankees* (tire sandals). Everyone was chewing coca and speaking in Quechua.

While they fit the part, the marchers I spoke with did not conceive of themselves as natives, indigenous, or any other category that would necessarily ground them in the politics of ethnic identity movements that have made such headway in places like neighboring Bolivia and Ecuador. Their solidarity was based on their definition of themselves as peasants who happen to grow coca among other crops. Clothing is one way that the coca strikers drew reference to their peasant identity. Men who otherwise wore windbreakers and baseball caps in the city donned their field clothing for the strikes, such the *chullu* cap and other clothing only used in the fields. (Women wearing indigenous clothing in highland cities are

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20 The chullos themselves were a conscious clothing choice of many of the men – at that time in Ayacucho, the relatively warm rainy season, it made no other sense to wear a knit cap.
more accepted and unremarkable in Peru than men). However, the imagery used in the marches, and most importantly, the ways they justify their claims to their rights are framed by claims to cultural traditions. Most importantly, they reference themselves through the way they talk about the coca leaf, called simply “la hoja” (the leaf).

_Coca talk and coca culture_

Cocaleros are quick to bring up the economic hardships and state neglect that make participation in circuits of coca production necessary to their survival. However, the overarching “coca talk” used by the cocaleros to criticize state and US eradication programs is distinctly cultural and historical. “We have used coca for trading purposes since the time of our grandmothers” a woman told me, citing the cultural practice of using coca instead of money between Andean villages and _allyus_ – kin groups that reciprocally traded products of their fields. “The hoja is pure and medicinal, the campesinos have been using it for ages” said another. Several leaders invoked the use of coca chewing as an ancient pre-Columbian tradition that they were maintaining. One leader, for example, claimed in his speech to the marchers “Coca was used by the Incas to build Machu Picchu, chewing the hoja sustained the ancient builders when they carried the stones from far away.” “Coca is the life blood of the campesino, it is the campesino’s food (_alimento_)” one man in a rally told me.

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21 In general, indigenous women in Peru are expected to be “more indian” (De la Cadena 1995).
I was surprised at this use of pro-coca language that draws on cultural continuities to pre-conquest traditions among campesinos today. These indigenous images used by cocaleros may be seen as part of what anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena finds to be a larger and sudden profusion of racial images in Peru. Analyzing the racial imagery at work in Alejandro Toledo’s presidential campaign De la Cadena notes that there is something new in Toledo’s unabashed “cholo” identity (cholo meaning citified indian) in a country where elites traditionally deny their racial backgrounds: “rather than using education to silence his origins … Toledo loudly claimed cholo identity” (De la Cadena 2001).

In the cocalero protest the cultural coca connection was generally effective as a rejection of policies that would reduce coca to its base for pasta, or PBC, the raw material of cocaine. “The coca is alimento, not a drug,” I was told over and over while being offered a wad of the green leaves to put inside my cheek. “See?” said the girl who offered it to me as I let the contents settle in my mouth, “are you drugged out? Are you crazy? No. Why do you gringos want to eradicate it? Why do you want to turn it into a drug?”

Anthropologists have long noted that the coca leaf has religious and cultural importance among Andean peasants. In the 1980s at the beginning of repressive anti-coca policies, coca chewing in the highlands was looked down upon by urban and coastal citizens as a degenerative and backwards practice. At this time some anthropologists worked as advocates for the use of coca leaves in Andean culture. For example, Catherine Allen’s 1980s ethnography of coca use in the village of
Sonqo in the Cusco department eloquently shows how the leaf is used to communicate with mountain deities, to mark rites of passage, and to reinforce campesino identity apart from urban *mistis* - landowning elites of European descent - who looked down on peasants (Allen 1988).

However, few of the cocaleros from Apurímac came from villages like Sonqo where pre-Columbian traditions are conserved. In fact, the coca-growing valley is the strongest center of Pentecostal and Evangelical religions in all of Ayacucho. In fact cocaleros from the Apurimac are more likely to speak in tongues than worship *huacas*, and other traditional highland spirits and sacred places. Many churches even prohibit coca chewing as well as the consumption of alcohol, which is also a key ingredient in Andean rituals (some cocaleros who were Evangelicals nevertheless chewed coca during their march despite these restrictions, in order to show solidarity for "the leaf"). Nevertheless talking with cocaleros about the culture of the coca, it began to seem a little like they had been reading the same ethnographies I had. Peasants did not usually talk about Incas and "traditional" continuities - those kinds of classifications were the territory of the provincial elite or anthropologists. Ayacucho’s Huari empire, for that matter, was resistant to the Incas, and Ayacuchanos see the Cusco and its Inca heritage as very different from their own. Yet, here it was, a kind of folk discourse about Andean culture that had seemed to come full circle from a symbolic anthropology class.

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**The return of the Inca?**

If we think of anthropology as just one producer of a much larger, popularized discourse about cultural difference and identity, then the circulation of cultural consciousness and packaging from the anthropology class to the village is not such a far-fetched metaphor for what was happening. Recent Latin American social movements that articulate their claims through an idiom of indigenous cultural rights have achieved great success.\(^{23}\) An emphasis on the politics of identity unveils a history of repression of the most marginalized citizens, and can be used with great effectiveness into shaming states on the international stage. States concerned with maintaining good international relations (especially among World Bank members who can be turned to for economic aid) are increasingly accountable for their actions against groups that can be seen as “peoples” or “nations,” whether this solidarity is based on bloodlines or cultural continuities.

But achieving transnational solidarity requires that social actors in Latin America learn to speak an international language of culture and rights, and to project their speech in the postmodern information age.\(^{24}\) One of the most effective ways to enter into the symbolic realm of international aid and intervention is through "strategically essentializing" cultural identity, to paraphrase Gayatri Spivak.

\(^{23}\) For an examination of how discourses of rights, culture, and multiethnic nations can be turned into issues of international morality, see *The Guilt of Nations* and Richard Wilson *The Politics of Reconciliation in South Africa*.

\(^{24}\) Alison Brysk, “Turning Weakness into Strength: The Internationalization of Indian Rights” in Latin American Perspectives, vol. 23. 2, spring 1996.
The small but potent coca leaf became the symbol indigenous cocaleros (who do not normally think of themselves as indigenous) to enter their struggle into the idiom of fundamental human rights. In a similar fashion, Alison Brysk has shown how indigenous groups across Latin America “turn their weakness into strength” by bypassing historically unresponsive state institutions and courting powerful transnational advocacy groups precisely through this cultural lens. Demands such as peasant access to land, development funds and resources must be recast as cultural rights and self-determination. Brysk shows that images and information are the idiom in which demands are entered into the global system, and the best way for marginalized groups to seek transnational alliance. Dealing in the postmodern traffic of images may be the cheapest and most successful method for disenfranchised groups who, like the cocaleros, are “rich in identity but poor in everything else.” The discourse of global indigenous rights had gained new visibility at the end of twentieth century: The United Nations declared 1993 the “Year of the World’s Indigenous Peoples” and a Mayan woman, Rigoberta Menchu, won the Nobel Peace Prize. Asserting their own indigeneity was a way for cocaleros to authorize their own claims and legitimacy by tapping into the new cultural capital attached to the cause of indigenous rights.

But there were also other currents in their protests, including dimensions of older, more conventionally leftist, anti-imperialist brands of political vision. In one of many protests in Huamanga, marchers walked under a banner depicting a

25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
bleeding coca leaf being stabbed by a knife, and the words “Gringo, please don’t kill me” (Figure 7). Most likely, the banner was created in the hopes that some international press corps might be in attendance. But as I was the only gringo present at the time, the ostentatious banner seemed to address me in a personal way.

![Image of protesters with a banner]

*Figure 12. "Gringo don't kill me" Cocaleros march in Huamanga, Ayacucho (note man in foreground wears a *chullu* hat), C. Yezer 2003*

I felt obliged to wave, and when the marchers noticed that I carried a camera, they shook the banner and insisted I take a picture. “Tell Bush about this, he needs to know!” one protester shouted. In this way “coca talk” and its images seek attention that bypasses the state, bringing the dire situation of campesinos directly to an
international community. One way that indigenous people do bypass the state is through the increasing role of NGOs in countries like Peru. But the cocaleros wanted to bypass NGOs completely. Unlike Brysk’s transnationalized indigenous groups, cocaleros viewed NGOs with animosity. Their experience with the NGO CARE and with state agricultural reforms funded by the US “war on drugs” had been more than a failure.27 According to cocalero leaders, CARE had photos of alternative crops being grown and over 4,900 peasants listed on its logs of recipients of alternative crop projects aid. Yet, cocaleros say that only a handful of producers received this aid, and the rest of were still waiting. After three years of waiting, they say, they finally got fed up and kicked the NGO out. “We want help, we just don’t want any more of these mafioso NGOs” one leader told me, “Why can’t your country just work directly with us, directly with the campesino?” This self-management of resources was the same kind of request made by many indigenous groups, such as the Maya.28 Cocaleros asked for direct international assistance, between themselves and transnational funders such as USAID. Cocaleros are exasperated by the failures of NGOs in Apurímac. But their calls for international assistance have been ignored.

27 In fact, the ineptitude with which the programs have been conceived and run has the cocaleros and some policy makers wondering, whether or not these programs were ever intended to achieve success or just provide a convenient political tool and placebo for international funders and voters concerned with the consumption side of the drug trade. In a scathing report on eradication efforts Michael Coffin finds that eradication has not succeeded “by any measure. Since efforts began in earnest in the 1970s, cultivation has consistently increased. Eradication programs have escalated, but cocaine availability has shown no signs of decreasing: Nearly one-half million acres of coca were reportedly eradicated in South America between 1985 and 1997, yet cultivation increased 87% from 295,000 to 552,000 acres” (Coffin 1998).

recognition of their plight, points towards a new understanding of how to achieve social justice on a global level.

*Buscando una terrorista: Coca and post war Ayacucho*

Brysk warns that one sensitive point in the internationalization of cultural rights is that states can discredit the authenticity of indigenous groups by citing international support as meddling by “outside agitators” (Brysk 2000). As James Clifford shows in his study on the Mashpee Indian’s fight to claim legal tribal status in North America, indigenous identities are never unchanging or untainted by the outside world. Yet claims to indigenousness demand a kind of essentialization that is sensitive to critiques of authenticity. 29 The First Lady Elian Karp’s comments about the cocaleros not really being authentically indigenous is a case in point. However the cocaleros situation is unique. The most damaging international connection in cocaleros’ claims to cultural solidarity did not come from “meddling” by liberal minded foreign advocacy groups. Rather, the cocaleros claims were undermined by what Alan Garcia has called Latin America’s “only successful multinational,” the cocaine industry. 30 This illicit transnational link was the best weapon to discredit coca growers' demands.

In Peru, and, increasingly in post-September 11 United States, the criminality of cocaine trade has been linked to a war on terrorism. The most

29 See for example, Clifford’s work on the Mashpee Indians, “Identity at Mashpee” (Clifford, Marcus, and School of American Research (Santa Fe N.M.) 1986)

common critique of the cocaleros was that they are either narco-traffickers, or financed by narco-traffickers, or that they are terrorists, or financed by terrorists, which in many bureaucrats' minds are all one and the same. These charges were echoed in state claims that the valley coca-growers organization was encouraging the “perverse relationship between narco and terrorism.”31 Most recently, these words were put into action when the FEPAVRAE leader Nelson Palomino was arrested under charges of “terrorist propagandizing.”

The link between terrorism and the illicit dollars made by turning coca into cocaine is real, but successfully combating these links through coca eradication may actually lead to a stronger drug-terror connection than before. Historically, the drug trade in Peru developed along side the rebel group Shining Path, in the late 1970s and early 80s, just as the rebels were training and arming themselves for war. During the height of the dirty war between state forces and Shining Path, the rebels found a redoubt in the jungle, where the sheer interpenetrability and lack of infrastructure impeded the penetration of state counterinsurgency forces. Although the rebels have been defeated by the counterinsurgency, there are still a few hundred holdouts (an estimate by scholars familiar with the zone) in the jungle, and they are engaged in drug trade. Narcodollars help support what is left of this group, but, strangely enough, the state’s fight to eradicate coca may be the rebels’ best chance of survival and even support. According to many reports from peasants in the jungle, Shining Path militants are now positioning themselves as one of the few

31 Karp’s words to the Indigenous Delegates conference at the OAS, as reported in Diario El Peruano, “Eliane Karp condena acciones violentas” February 27, 2003.
heroes of the poor peasant through defense of coca leaf production. One 20-year-old village man - too young to remember much of the war - told me, “The compañeros (Shining Path) are not bad any more. They are friends. They want to help out the campesino. When the burros (peasants who carry coca leaf overland) travel with their merchandise, the compañeros accompany them, making sure that their coca isn’t robbed.”

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Patrols, Patriotism and War Reparations

Most peasants do not share the same sunny view of a rehabilitated Shining Path as the man I interviewed. In fact, the second most powerful discourse for the cocaleros protest comes from their participation in the counterinsurgency. This was described to me during the coca protests quite graphically when a cocalero bragged that Apurímac peasant patrollers “kicked the shit out of those terrorists”. Like many peasants throughout the highlands the coca-growing valley became a cradle of the war hardest hit by violence. During the war, as Shining Path increasingly saw villagers as revisionist ‘traitors’ to the revolution, the majority of rural Ayacucho shifted to the side of the army. It was the army that first realized that it had to change tactics and include peasant-armed patrols into its counterinsurgency plans.

Many male cocaleros served in civil defense patrols, or rondas, which were

32 This information comes from highland villagers who migrate temporarily to the jungle. The cocaleros on the march never offered information about Shining Path, which is understandable considering the charges made against their leaders, and rumors made against themselves. The point about eradication fueling terrorism has been made repeatedly: in 1990 by Edmundo Morales in “The Political Economy of Cocaine Production” and, much more recently Isias Rojas in “The Push for Zero Coca”.

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originally formed out of the desperation of war. Unlike peasant patrols in other “dirty wars” such as in Columbia and Guatemala, rondas in Ayacucho were organized as much from villagers’ own initiatives as they were “from above” by the armed forces (see Chapter Four). In fact, it is the coca-growing region of the Apurímac Valley that has the toughest, and most independent reputation for civil defense patrols in all of the country. Rather than being forced by the army to start up patrols, as did happen in some parts of Ayacucho, valley peasants organized themselves into some of the most disciplined patrols. Indeed, to enter into some villages in the interior of the valley one still needs to seek the permission of the Civil Defense Commander. A fierce pride in the patriotic tour of duty as patrollers is found among many men and women from the valley.

Their history as defense patrollers makes most cocaleros defensive and furious with the charges of being terrorists or tied to narcotraffickers who support them. In prison, when I asked Palomino what he thought of the terrorist charges against him, he threw up his hands, “How can I be a terrorist, when I was president - president - of the civil defense committees?” Palomino’s reaction was exemplary of his followers, who express this same anger in their rallies. More than one cocalero put it thus: “We are the ones who fought against the subversion. It is

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33 Peru’s patrollers differ in their relation with the military and their level of war abuses from the Guatemala case. In Guatemala patrols were controlled much less by peasants themselves and more often by a military commander. See America’s Watch, Civil Patrols in Guatemala, America’s Watch Report, August. New York: America’s Watch, 1996; O. Starn writes about the interplay of military and local control of the Ayacucho rondas and their comparison with those of the northern Andes in Nightwatch: The Politics of Protest in the Andes. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999
thanks to us that the country wasn’t taken over, but now the government thanks us by calling us terrorists”. In fact, scholars of the war have confirmed that peasant patrollers were key to winning the counterinsurgency war (Degregori et al. 1996).

Just as references to cultural use of coca were vital to grower’s claims for social justice, so are these invocations of patrol service. However, while the cultural claims may play best to an international audience sympathetic to the plight of indigenous peoples, references to war service are meant to invoke support, and even a sense of collective guilt, on a national level.\(^\text{34}\) Claims to counterinsurgency service take place within a recent atmosphere of reconciliation that has been officially framed through the formation of the state’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Like the majority of truth commissions across the world, the most difficult challenge for Peru’s TRC has been one of reparations for victims of the war. Truth Commissions are often shackled by what Robert Wilson has termed its “liminal” positioning – with not quite a legal institution, but with the task of legitimizing the new democratic state. Without the ability to officially offer economic reparations to those war victims who live on the edge of subsistence, such an emphasis seems more like a weakness than help.\(^\text{35}\) Similarly, many villagers do

\(^{34}\) I am indebted to historian Jaymie Heilman for this insight on the differing levels and intended audiences — international and national — of cocalero discourse.

\(^{35}\) Several years after the cocalero march the Peruvian state has begun to investigate reparations, 2006. Richard A. Wilson uses Van Gennup and Turner’s idea of ritual liminality in his examination of the South African TRC. For Wilson, TRCs can be examined as a ritual that symbolizes the state’s passing from one phase (authoritarian, dictatorial) to another (democratic) through the theatricalization of state power. See The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State. Cambridge University Press, pages 19-21.
not see human rights organizations as an ally of peasants. The post-war reconciliation work is made even harder by the histories of unfulfilled promises for monetary compensation for the families of injured or killed ronda members made by former president Alberto Fujimori early in his presidency. Without the promise of reparations the human rights movement loses its support in Ayacucho (see Chapter 4).

Disillusionment with human rights organizations was particularly evident among cocaleros. In one protest in the plaza of Ayacucho, the cocaleros were surround by riot police who took away their blankets and mattresses that they had brought for a peaceful sit-in and hunger strike. There were only seventy protesters present, and an almost equal number of police, dressed in gas masks and riot shields. At one point the police were beginning to draw in close, menacingly swinging clubs near the protesters. Mariela Guillén, a FEPAVRAE leader, spoke out to the crowd:

We are here peacefully here in the plaza. Where are our brothers at the Defender of the Pueblo? Let them defend the pueblo! Who will defend us, the poor farmers here in plaza? Where is the Peace and Development Representative? What are they off doing? This is the moment when we need them! They should be taking note of this violence that is being done to us. This is what we had in 1985-90! When we fought against the subversion! Who cured us of the subversion? The Apurímac Peasant Defense Committee! Now, were the police present in those moments? Perhaps the army was able to go it alone? [Audience:] No, it was us!
By invoking the unpaid debt of the patroller’s service to the police and army, the cocalero leader was using mobilized patriotic war memories against further mistreatment at the peaceful sit-in. The unpaid debt was also called upon to critique the state’s use of human rights, in the form of the Defense of the Pueblo and Peace and Development – two state run human rights organizations – to ignore the cocaleros' fight.

The use of ronda pride was also present when cocaleros invoke this history of the war as a debt to be paid to the patrollers. In one dramatic gesture during a rally, a leader brought forth a patroller that had been recently wounded in an attack on a remaining Shining Path column in the Viscatan area of the coca-growing region. The patroller had his pants leg rolled up to the thigh in order to reveal his prosthetic leg, his real one wounded beyond repair in the melee with rebels. “We are sick of being tricked (engañado) by the government!” he said, “I am still awaiting reparations” Another tied the cultural argument for coca chewing directly into the ronda success, saying,

What is the Peasant Defense Committee? We are farmers, we chased the subversives chewing the hoja de coca, we are here for a just claim, we played an important role in the pacification, and we still have the remains of the subversives in Viscatán. We are alert, along with the police and the military. But without us, we will have the subversion again. Without us, the violence will return. Where is the reparation for those fallen in the war? I am a representative of the FEPAVRAE, of the pacification, and there was never any reparation coming from the government. For this we have joined the march of sacrifice to reclaim our rights that have not been fulfilled.
Conclusion

The cocalero strikes were some of the strongest social movements that the Apurímac and other coca-growing areas had seen in recent years. They were a response that was, on the one hand caused by economic desperation and eradication plans enforced by powerful international interests and inefficient local bureaucrats. On the other hand, the strikes were demands for self-representation in planning alternative policies and for self-management of international anti-drug resources. That these demands were made in terms of claims to culture is a novelty for Peru, and should be understood within a greater context of an increasingly international discourse of human and cultural rights. To make their claims heard, cocaleros invoked images of cultural maintenance that are surprising in a country used to social demands made in terms of region and class. Cocaleros also drew on a history of warfare and patriotic debt that they felt was necessary to pay so that true reconciliation could occur.

The struggle of coca farmers unveiled the weak points in Peru’s recent rhetoric of pacification, reconciliation and democratic transition. Cocaleros' invocation of war abuses showed, for example, that rather than helping the democratization of the country, US pressure to eradicate was, in fact, pushing the area into civil unrest. As of 2006 the cocaleros were still organizing strikes against the state, reinvigorated by a new trade-for-coca eradication pact known as the TLC (in English the Free Trade Agreement). It remains to be seen how these strikes will end. But it is certain that to maintain a lasting peace in Peru, measures must be
taken on both the national and international levels to accommodate peasants’
demands.
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