Sobreviví Como Flor De La Sierra: Women, Violence, and Resistance in Peru

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Abstract

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Drawing upon twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2009 and 2012, this dissertation explores the experiences and lives of primarily indigenous, rural-to-urban migrant women living in grassroots domestic violence shelters in and around Lima, Peru. It examines the institutional barriers women face, as well as the difficult choices and creative solutions they practice as they attempt to leave abusive relationships. It investigates the responses of social institutions and the state to intimate partner violence, and the impact that limited resources pose on the quality and consistency of intervention services made available to women in grassroots shelters.

To shed light on these phenomena, I ground this participatory ethnography in the stories and lived experiences of women living in shelters as well as shelter directors and advocates, and advance three central arguments. First, I argue that women's experiences of intimate partner

violence are connected to broader forms of violence, including institutional and structural violence. Second, I argue that displacement and migration, racialization, and class inequality are critical factors shaping the experience of intimate partner violence among women. Third, I argue that while grassroots shelters fill a crucial need for women who are denied resources from social institutions and the state, and provide a space where women exercise agency by practicing transformational survival strategies, limited resources impact intervention services that shelters can provide to women who experience violence from an intimate partner.

By focusing on women's attempts to navigate structures that produce and reproduce violence, and the role that grassroots shelters perform in helping women rebuild their lives, I hope that this dissertation draws attention to manifestations of individual and collective resistance that have the potential to transform approaches to intimate partner violence. In also exposing how agency and resistance are constrained, however, I hope that this dissertation makes clear the persistent flaws and contradictions inherent in policy and legal frameworks currently in place in Peru

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Acknowledgements

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Dedication

Dedico esta obra de amor a

Mis padres – Lourdes y Jorge Espinoza

A las mujeres de los refugios del Perú

y

A mi tía - Marisela Espinoza-Gomez

Chapter One/Primera Flor:
Sobreviví Como Flor De La Sierra, An Introduction

Introduction

Domestic violence is not a new problem but only in the last thirty years has it become visible as a major social issue and public health concern. Despite its prevalence around the globe, domestic violence manifests in various forms across different cultural settings, as well as within the same cultural setting (Alcalde 2003). Local manifestations of domestic violence can be influenced by a host of factors, some of which include existing gender inequalities, levels of violence in the broader society, what resources are available to those who experience violence, and by the individual's vulnerability to racism, poverty and marginalization (Merry 2009). While domestic violence is often described as affecting women across race, class, nationality, and religion lines equally, worldwide poor women of color are most likely to be both in dangerous intimate relationships and dangerous social positions (Ritchie 2000).

Intimate partner violence, a form of domestic violence that includes physical, psychological, economic, and sexual violence, is the most widespread form of violence experienced by women worldwide. According to a recent systematic study of global data on the prevalence of violence against women gathered from 81 countries, it is reported that intimate partner violence against women has reached epidemic proportions (WHO 2013). Worldwide nearly 30% of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their male partner. In Latin America, the highest prevalence of intimate partner violence was found in Andean regions, where more than 40% of women reported having experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner.

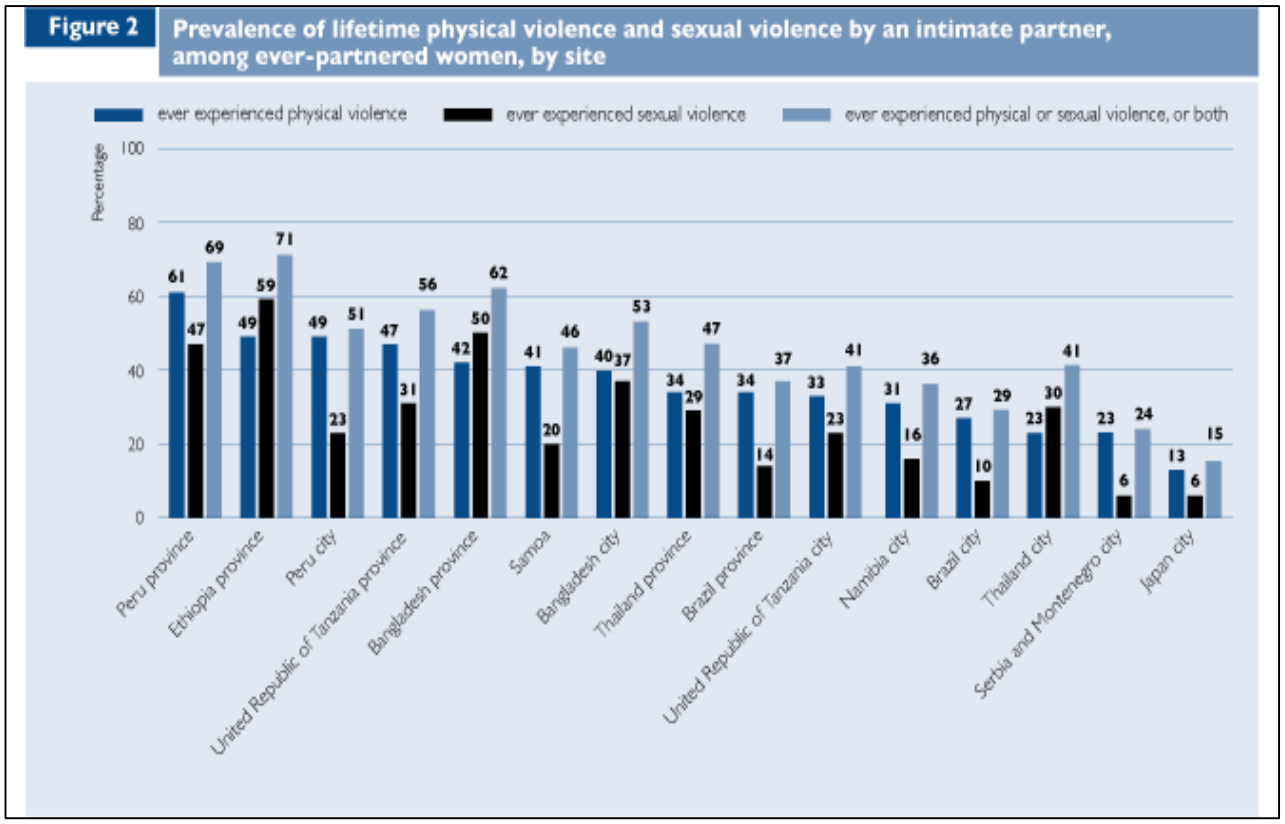

Figure 1: Prevalence of Lifetime Physical Violence and Sexual Violence by an Intimate Partner, Among Ever-Partnered Women, By Site. (Source: WHO 2005)

In Peru, more than 50% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner (WHO 2005). In Lima 99% of women from the lower socioeconomic classes state that at least one of the women among the women they know well suffers abuse from an intimate partner (Loli 2001). In addition, twelve women die every month in Peru as a result of intimate partner violence (PNCVFS 2013). While these statistics certainly capture our attention, they obscure significant aspects of the experience of living with violence and the difficult choices and creative solutions Peruvian women practice as they attempt to leave abusive relationships. These statistics fail to explain the response of social institutions and the state to intimate partner violence or the impact that limited resources pose on the quality and consistency

of intervention services made available to survivors. These statistics, moreover, cannot be isolated from the fact that women experience violence along different lines of race and class. Indeed, across the globe, indigenous women and women of color are at greater risk of experiencing interpersonal violence, including sexual assault and coercion (Smith 2005).

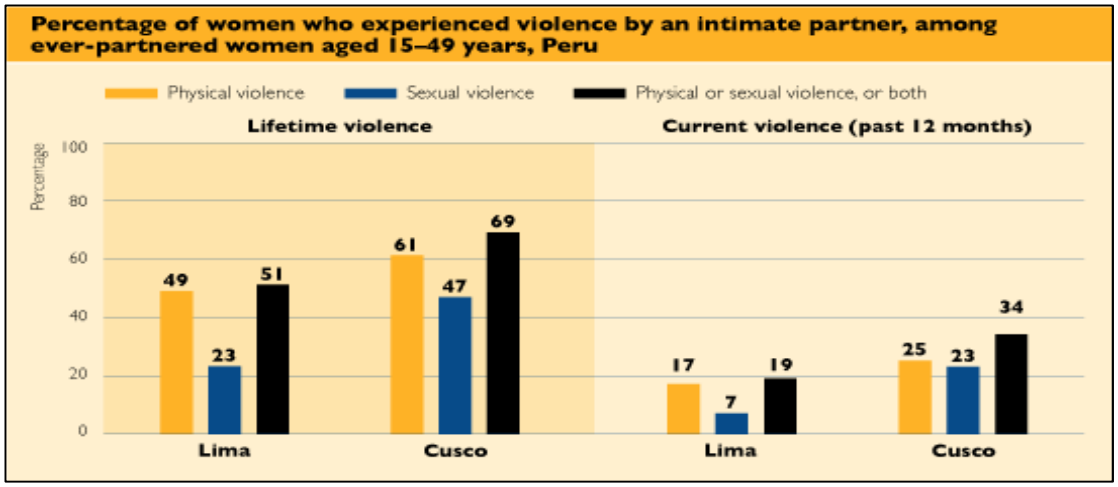

Figure 2: Percentage of Women Who Experience IPV in Peru (Source: WHO 2005)

This dissertation is based on research conducted over a twelve-month period (from 2009-2012) in grassroots domestic violence shelters in Lima, Peru. It examines Peruvian women's experiences of multiple forms of violence, from intimate-partner violence to state and structural violence. By structural violence, I mean structural forms of violence that:

> Socially and culturally marginalize individuals and communities in ways that deny them the opportunity for emotional and physical well being, or expose them to assault or rape, or subject them to hazards that can cause sickness and death (Anglin 1998: 145).

More specifically, this dissertation examines the creative survival strategies that grassroots advocates and survivors attempt to practice in the context of flawed legal policies and unavailable social services that collectively fail to protect survivors of domestic violence and

sexual coercion. This dissertation shows how it is necessary that our understanding of Peruvian women's experiences of intimate partner violence extend beyond quantifiable data in order to understand how to best develop and implement intervention efforts.

This study explores the lived experiences of 35 women living in and/or working in solidarity with grassroots domestic violence shelters in Lima, Peru. Most of the women who participated in this study are migrants who have come to Lima from Peru's Andean regions. Many did not choose to leave their home, but came out of economic necessity and as a result of decades of political violence. In this dissertation, I unpack how violence in intimate relationships is inseparable from societal conflict, violence, and injustice – the very experiences that displace Peruvian women from their home in the country's Andean regions and shape their experiences as migrants in Lima. This ethnography endeavors to uncover the inseparable bond between intimate partner violence and structural violence – the violence of poverty, displacement, and social exclusion. The life stories presented in this dissertation are not isolated cases but are rather illustrations of inequalities organized along the fault lines of gender, race, and class that shape how Peruvian women experience, cope with, resist, and attempt to heal from violence.

Research Questions and Goals

This project originally sought to answer the following questions. 1) What individual, community, and structural factors mediate the ways women experience and cope with violence? 2) What individual, community, and structural factors explain women's survival strategies including the range and efficacy of the ways they attempt to cope with vulnerability to violence

and discrimination? 3) What are the sources of cultural and social capital underlying the range of individual and collective practices of resistance, resilience, and healing from violence?

Following a community-based participatory research framework, these questions emerged from collaboration with directors from two Peruvian grassroots domestic violence shelters where I conducted field research. Early in the research process, after I had volunteered at the shelters for a few months and had built relationships with advocates and residents, I met with shelter directors to discuss what we collectively hoped my research and dissertation would accomplish. Azalea[1], director of *Mujeres en Acción* (Women in Action), a shelter located in central Lima, stressed the need for researchers and the public at large to understand and value the work that grassroots domestic violence shelters do in supporting women to rebuild their lives after leaving a violent household. According to Azalea, the state ignores the presence and the work that grassroots domestic violence shelters contribute to the health and well being of women who are often "forgotten and left to suffer… because the state prefers to invest in things like weapons and tourism when our women need support." For Azalea, it was important that this study shed light on how women "continue to survive even when the state does nothing to keep us alive."

Hortensia, director of a shelter in Huaycán called *Mujeres Para la Salud y la Justicia* (Women for Health and Justice) shared similar concerns to Azalea's, but also hoped the study would capture the "trajectory of women's lives." Hortensia explained that in her experience with state institutions and NGOs who work on issues related to women's health, domestic violence, and children, many service providers are under the impression that the interventions they offer are sufficient to help women change the conditions in their lives that influence their vulnerability

[1] To protect the identity of study participants, throughout this dissertation I use pseudonyms for people and specific organizations (e.g. shelters).

to violence from an intimate partner, poverty, and lack of health. Hortensia hoped this study would provide insight into the individual, community, and structural factors that mediate the ways women experience and cope with violence. She explained:

> Most of the women who come to the shelter, come here because they have already been to the police, to a judge, to the doctor, to ten other organizations and none of them are able or even care to help them in the way that makes sense to them.
>
> You tell me, how a bag of rice or a bar of soap is going to help a woman and her children when they still have to live in the same house as the man who hits them?
>
> She needs the police to take the man out of the house and the judge to say that he can't live there if he's going to be violent. That doesn't happen here in Peru.

Additionally, it was important to Hortensia that the study go beyond documenting women's experiences of intimate partner violence as isolated events. She explained:

> Women's lives don't begin or end when we experience violence from a husband or a *conviviente*[2]. Most of the women in the shelter, including those of us who work here…have experienced different forms of violence throughout our lives.
>
> We came to Lima, to Huaycán escaping from violence…The violence of not having food to eat, the violence of poverty, the violence of neighbors and families accusing you of being a terrorist…

To some extent, the women I interviewed for this study also helped to develop and refine the research questions that are at the center of this dissertation. I first met a majority of the women I interviewed when I traveled to Lima as a research assistant in 2009 for a public health study that examined domestic violence interventions in Peru. From my experience as a research assistant on this study, it became clear to me that the women I interviewed and met through focus group sessions had very lucid ideas about what intervention strategies they believed were needed to assist abused women either leave an abusive partner or to address a partner's violence. When

[2] Spanish term meaning partner or live-in partner, lover, boyfriend/girlfriend, concubine, or common-law spouse. *Conviviente* refers to either woman or man.

it was time for me to begin designing my dissertation research and applying to my university's Human Subjects Division, I went back to the focus group transcripts. Some of the major themes that emerged from these sessions revealed that in light of existing ineffective intervention strategies - for example, those implemented as part of Peru's Family Violence Law- women engaged in individual and collective practices of resistance, resilience, and healing from violence. This insight compelled me to want to understand the role that grassroots domestic violence shelters play in supporting these practices.

In conducting this research, I have been guided by four overarching goals. The first goal is to contribute an ethnographically nuanced perspective to how domestic violence influences the lives of women in Peru. The majority of the women I interviewed are from rural regions in the Andean highlands and have relocated to Lima either as a result of rural-to-urban migration or internal displacement caused by the prolonged armed conflict between the Peruvian government and *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path). Until recently, domestic violence has rarely been at the center of inquiry in anthropological studies (Weise and Haldane 2011). In the Peruvian context, the scarce anthropological literature that directly focuses on violence that transpires in the home most often examines this phenomenon as it occurs in Andean communities (for example, see Penelope Harvey 1994; for an exception to this see Cristina Alcalde 2006, 2010). By focusing on how violence influences the lives of Peruvian women this dissertation not only contributes an ethnographically nuanced perspective of domestic violence in the Peruvian context, it also brings rich ethnographic detail of how Andean women *in* Lima experience violence from intimate partners.

A second goal is to bring analysis of ethnographically rich data of the ways women cope with, resist, and heal from violence they experience in an intimate relationship. I agree with

claims made by feminists of color that we should not categorize all women as belonging to a contained homogenous powerless group (Mohanty 1988). In highlighting how Peruvian women cope with, resist, and heal from intimate violence, I aim to dispel myths about abused women that categorize us as passive and compliant victims. I also aim to challenge the popular belief that permeates Peruvian society that categorizes Andean women as particularly deserving of abuse and oppression from an intimate partner. Women's stories included in this dissertation elucidate the ways that women in grassroots domestic violence shelters assert their agency by resorting to transformational survival strategies. By placing emphasis on Peruvian women's agency, this dissertation contributes to efforts by feminists of color to contextualize oppression by focusing on the multiple ways that women of color resist restrictions placed on them based on their own ideas of what their lives should be like (Davis 2001).

My third goals is to investigate the contradictions arising from Peru's dependence upon shelters to assume its responsibility for the care and reproduction of its citizens and the simultaneous denial of resources that keeps women from receiving basic domestic violence services. In examining this contradiction, I aim to bring to the fore the often overlooked contributions of grassroots domestic violence shelters.

A fourth goal is to contribute to the scarce but recently growing collection of anthropological text that focus directly on activist research in the field of domestic violence. In situating myself as a survivor of domestic violence and an activist scholar, my hope is that this dissertation makes visible contributions that anthropology can make in our collective effort to transform the world into a more peaceful and equitable place for women, children, and men.

Site Background

This is a multi-sited dissertation with ethnographic research conducted in grassroots domestic violence shelters in Peru. From 2009 to 2012, I volunteered and conducted ethnographic research in *Venerable Mujer* (Venerable Woman), a network organization of grassroots domestic violence shelters based in Lima. Founded in 1997, *Venerable Mujer* currently includes seventeen shelters throughout Peru in regions such as Lima, Ancash, and Huancavelica. All *Venerable Mujer* shelters are women-led. While I visited and interviewed women – both residents and advocates – from various shelters within the *Venerable Mujer* network, the majority of the data and life histories presented in this dissertation were gathered from the two shelters where I was able to build a more collaborative relationship with participants: *Mujeres en Acción* (Women in Action) located in central Lima and *Mujeres Para la Salud y la Justicia* (Women for Health and Justice) located in Huaycán, 90 miles east of Lima.

Figure 3: Map of Peru (Source: http://i.infoplease.com/images)

Venerable Mujer

Venerable Mujer was officially established as a network of grassroots domestic violence shelters in Peru in 1997. When it was first established, *Venerable Mujer* consisted of four shelters in Lima and in the decades that followed, it has expanded to include seventeen shelters.

Many of the shelters are located in *barriadas*[3] (commonly known as shantytowns or human settlement) in Lima and other urban centers, though there are also shelters in rural areas throughout the country, including Ancash and Huancavelica.

Venerable Mujer shelters are all women-led organizations, and the majority of advocates are themselves survivors[4] of domestic violence. In addition, *Venerable Mujer* shelters are all place-based organizations, meaning that they are located in the communities where advocates live and work. Indeed, all seventeen *Venerable Mujer* shelters are located within, adjacent, or a few street blocks away from the director's family home.

As place-based organizations, advocates[5] at *Venerable Mujer* shelters have a greater opportunity to remain aware of issues within the community in which they live and work and as a result, provide relevant services to the women they serve. In addition to living in the community they serve and their experience as survivors, advocates share a similar cultural background to the women and children in the shelters, which often allows them to connect with survivors in deeper, more meaningful ways. Azalea, director of *Mujeres en Acción*, works primarily with Quechua-speaking women who have recently migrated to Lima from rural Andean regions. As a Quechua-speaking woman from Ancash and migrant herself, Azalea understands many aspects of women's experiences of intimate partner violence, isolation, and

[3] The first true *barriadas* in Lima were established in 1940 in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake. The poorer residents in the city could not afford to re-build damaged structures after the earthquake and consequently invaded undeveloped spaces to build new residential dwellings.
[4] Throughout this dissertation, I use the term "survivor" to refer to women who have experienced and survived varied forms of violence, including intimate partner violence. My use of the term is informed by a political choice to highlight the strengths and agency of women, survivors of violence.
[5] Advocates include paid or unpaid staff that works to secure the best possible services for survivors. As Davis (2001) notes advocates are those individuals outside the formal institutional framework of government agencies. Most often, advocates are employed by not for profit, community-based organizations to assist, represent, and support marginalized individuals.

the difficulties and trauma associated with migration. For Azalea, her method to working with survivors who have experienced intersecting and compounding trauma is informed by her experience of having "walked very similar paths." She continued:

> In our shelters, every advocate has a different approach to working with survivors. In this work, so-called protocols don't exist. That's something for other professions. We work based on our knowledge, a memory that we have of having once walked similar paths as those the women and children who come to us are currently walking.
>
> A doctor or a judge looks at a survivor and they only see what their profession trains them to look for…a doctor is trained to look for disease, a judge is very focused on upholding the law as it is defined. These are protocols they follow. These professions are rigid. They teach people to follow regulations and to not reflect on their own personal thoughts and experiences as human beings. Doesn't it seem strange to you?
>
> One could say these professions are the most intimate of all professions because people's lives are at the hands of doctors and judges. This doesn't matter. The separation is there and we can't hold our breath hoping it will change. That's why I say we have to make our own alternatives.
>
> In our shelters, we work differently. We don't have these protocols. What we do have is a method. Our method is our knowledge. Our knowledge is unique. It's more than being a woman because not all women live the same in Peru. In my case, my method is one that comes from the life experiences that brought me to this work.
>
> I am a woman and I am a survivor. I experience violence in my life because I am an indigenous woman and I am a mother. Now, I am a grandmother. I've traveled the world because of my political work. I know places I never thought I would. But at the end of the day, I live here and my family is poor. I live these facts every day of my life. They are my life.
>
> So, then these experiences teach me how to work with women who are indigenous like me and who find themselves in one of the biggest cities in Latin America with nobody to count on. Many times, the only truth we can count on is that the day becomes night and our children's bellies will groan from hunger…

As Azalea notes, having a similar cultural background as survivors informs her approach to her work. Because of Azalea's interlocking identities as a woman, an indigenous Peruvian, a survivor, and a mother and grandmother whose family life is informed by poverty, she is able to not only understand, but work toward addressing the complex needs of survivors in her shelter.

In this way, Azalea's methodology to advocacy is informed by what feminists of color identify as a critical factor of transformational anti-violence work - that of placing women of color at the center of organizing, service delivery, and analysis of domestic violence (Kanuha 1994; Koyama 2002; Ritchie 2000; Smith 2005). As Crenshaw explains, "strategies based on the experiences of women who do not share the same class and race backgrounds will be of limited utility for those whose lives are shaped by a different set of obstacles" (1991: 96). In addition, Azalea's approach to advocacy is closely aligned to Beth Ritchie's (2000) claim that we need to go beyond just centering our analysis on women of color and actually center our attention on those abused women most marginalized within the category "women of color." This approach is critical, Ritchie argues, because it is within this context that we hold ourselves accountable to the women and children who society deems the most "powerless" (Ritchie 2000 as cited in Smith 2005).

Additionally, because *Venerable Mujer* shelters are women-led and place-based, they create a space for women and families in their community to become informed and active participants in issues that impact their family and community, from domestic violence advocacy to environmental justice and educational access. A critical aspect of *Venerable Mujer* shelters is their active role in social and political issues that impact the communities where they are located and the families their services reach. Women from *Venerable Mujer* shelters – both survivors and advocates – are deeply involved in a number of social and political issues at the local, national, and global level. For example, in 2010 when I interviewed Gardenia, a young survivor-turned-advocate at *Mujeres en Acción,* she was the lead on a handful of projects in Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro[6] and in her home community in Ancash, and was beginning to become involved in World Social Forum processes in Latin America. Gardenia explained her activism as

[6] *Mujeres en Acción* is located in Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro.

a responsibility she felt for the many communities who provide her with support and strength as she continues to heal from the violence she experienced as an adolescent and young adult.

> Gardenia: When my grandmother was alive, she would always tell us that nothing in this life is free. If you take something, naturally, you have to leave something. One day somebody else will come looking for it, and if you left something there, they'll find it. If you take and leave nothing, that person won't find anything there. My grandmother would talk this way. We listened to her because we were children and she took care of us. I am an adult now and I what I learned from her I still remember.
>
> This is one reason why I work with women in the shelters. I have to be here so women have somebody who will advocate for them. When I came to the shelter, I was like many of the women who come to us. I was a different person. You see me now and I smile because I feel happiness. Before I was different. I didn't know what happiness was. I only knew suffering and humiliation. I was alone. I felt empty. Then my life changed. I came to the shelter and little by little I started feeling less alone because I was part of something that was here before and had a history.
>
> Damarys: And what were you a part of?
>
> Gardenia: The shelter. Well, the network too. I also felt a part of the community because everything that happens to us here as a community, as a group of families, influences how the shelter operates.
>
> Damarys: How does that happen?
>
> Gardenia: There is violence all around us here. It's more than family violence, much more. It's gang violence and the fact that our young people are on drugs. It's not having enough to eat. Some people work and they have salaries, but even that's not enough. So, all these things are happening at once and they impact our work at the shelter. Do you understand?
>
> When women leave the shelter, where do they go? Precisely to this environment! So, as advocates, and this is how I think…our work with women and families has to also be about working with society as a whole. We have to use our power as people in this country to demand for safer streets, different opportunities for young people. We have to demand change because politicians and people who are comfortable with their lives…those who don't struggle like us, they won't demand. Why would they?
>
> Damarys: What do advocates do to demand this type of change? What do you do?
>
> Gardenia: I do everything I can in my daily life to change the way women live in Peru and in other places, not just Latin America, around the world too. If we want change in our families, we have to demand change in our society. And if we want change in Peru, we have to demand change in Latin America and in other countries. What is Peruvian,

> like our products, those we make and those that naturally exist in our country are exported to other countries at the cost of our lands and labor. Poverty in Peru will continue as long as these practices are in place.
>
> So, I educate myself and educate others on these issues. I find people who can educate me. I learn from people here and from people I connect with on the Internet. What I'm talking about is a global movement. It's here in Peru and in your country. We have to join this movement. Not just women in Peru, but all women because when there's suffering in society, women and our children suffer most.

Gardenia's reflection on the factors that influence her involvement in addressing interconnected structural inequities that impact her community, the women and families she serves in her role as an advocate, and Peruvian society at large points to the importance of women leadership in grassroots domestic violence shelters. When women leaders are at the forefront of domestic violence advocacy in their own communities, they can more clearly politicize the position of survivors to argue that violence against women is a social problem, rather than a result of individual choices (Abraham 1995, 2000; Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). In addition, when domestic violence advocacy is politicized, advocates can develop strategies to combat violence within their communities that are linked to strategies that combat violence directed against communities, such as police brutality, prisons, racism, and economic exploitation, among others (INCITE! n.d. as cited in Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). Grassroots domestic violence shelters like *Mujer Venerable* and others across the globe have taken on this role and have developed transformative strategies aimed at combating interlocking violence and oppression. For example, *Mujer Vulnerable* shelters are deeply involved with local politics in Lima and led efforts to elect the first woman mayor in 2010. Indeed, Susana Villaran was elected as mayor on a political platform that prioritized addressing family violence and women's economic exploitation as key factors that impact women's health.

In addition to being women-led and place-based organizations, *Venerable Mujer* shelters are autonomous entities in the sense that each shelter operates according to the standards identified by the director and advocates to best fit the needs of the women and children who receive their services. As a result, standards associated with duration of services (e.g. housing, case management, etc.) and service delivery models vary from shelter to shelter. For example, *Mujeres en Acción* rely on a service delivery model that does not limit temporary housing to the traditional 2-week period used by other domestic violence shelters. Indeed, over the course of the nearly two decades *Venerable Mujer* has been in existence, it has consistently provided long-term housing (e.g. six years) to a handful of survivors. While providing long-term housing to survivors can limit the network's ability to offer services to more families, it increases opportunities for survivors to rebuild their lives. Having the option to remain in the shelter for a prolonged period of time helps survivors take steps toward reaching their own sense of autonomy. Autonomy for battered women can come about when women construct "instrumental relationships" that help increase their access to resources – both non-financial kinds of help and material goods (Davis 2001). It is access to resources such as childcare, education, safe housing, permanent employment, and livable wages that often equip a survivor with the decision-making power to not return to an abusive partner.

One factor that leads to *Venerable Mujer* having the autonomy to determine the standards and models of service delivery for each of their shelters is the fact that the network is self-funded and does not have to adhere to strict contract guidelines established by national or international funders. *Venerable Mujer* shelters are responsible for their own economic sustainability and mostly raise funds through small grants, community-driven projects, and small business ventures. For example, in the years that I conducted research and worked with *Mujeres en*

Acción, the majority of their funding came from small grants from national and international NGOs and non-profits, fundraisers supported by their community, and a restaurant they operated out of the shelter's kitchen. Similarly, *Mujeres Para la Salud y la Justicia's* funding was secured via a bakery they helped run and where survivors could work part-time while still being able to care for their children. In addition, *Mujeres Para la Salud y la Justicia's* funding also came from sporadic grants from national and international faith-based organizations.

Figure 4: *Mujeres en Acción Shelter* (Source: Author 2009)

Mujeres en Acción

Mujeres en Acción was the first shelter to open in 1982 and eventually led to the formation of *Venerable Mujer* as an integrated network. *Mujeres en Acción* is located in Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro, a *barriada* nestled along the Rimac River and Lima's industrial zone. Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro forms part of *Cercado de Lima* (Downtown or central Lima). Similar to other shelters in the *Venerable Mujer* network, *Mujeres en Acción* operates out of its director's (Azalea) family home. The shelter's capacity to provide housing at any given time is limited to three to four women and their respective children.

Cercado de Lima is considered the heart and soul of old Lima (Dietz 1998). It has been at the center of the capitol city since it became its own unique district in 1821. For centuries the nation's wealthiest and poorest inhabitants lived within the boundaries of Cercado de Lima. The Plaza de Armas, its main square, epitomizes the city's riches and power - it is the site of the presidential palace, the cathedral, the archbishop's palace, and the city hall (Dietz 1998). Yet, Lima, and consequently, Cercado de Lima reflect a profound regionalization of gender, race, and class. Since the 19th century, the city has grown and so has the division between socio-economic classes. With the influx of people to the city and as roads and development opened, wealthy residents moved away and upper class residential housing became dilapidated rental housing. Additionally, *callejón* (alleyway) housing was built specifically as low-income housing (Dietz 1998). *Barriadas* emerged in the 1940s to house the increasing flow of rural-to-urban migrants who were unable to access housing and employment among the city's middle- and upper-classes (Riofrio 1978). By the late 1970s, the number of *barriadas* in the Cercado de Lima area numbered so high, they were indistinguishable from other lower-middle-class neighborhoods.

Today, it is estimated that more than half of Lima's population lives in poverty, with at least one-quarter of residents living in *barriadas*.

In Peru and throughout Latina America the majority of *barriada* inhabitants are women. The extreme material deprivation found in *barriadas* increases women's reproductive and productive labor as well as their role in community management (Hays-Mitchell 2002; Rodriguez 1994). For example, in Peruvian *barriadas*, women are generally at the forefront of struggles involving basic services such as water, electricity, and sewers (Alcalde 2010).

Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro was founded in 1955 when ensuing agrarian reforms resulted in an increase in migration from rural Andean regions to Lima (Guillet 1976; Mayer 2009). Then and now, most people living in Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro are recent migrants and it is not uncommon to hear Quechua spoken as often as Spanish. The population of central Lima, the area where Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro is located is estimated at nearly 300,000, with migrant families make up a majority of the population.

Since its founding Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro has offered its residents a sense of belonging and protection from different forms of discrimination that rural-to-urban migrants experience in Lima. Indeed, the first individuals and families to arrive to the area along the Rimac that eventually became Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro were indigenous Peruvians who were denied housing in the more affluent areas of Lima. As Clavel, a longtime resident and *Mujeres in Acción* advocate explained, "Our families built this [Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro] so we would not be discriminated against for speaking our language and teaching our children our way of life."

While Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro may offer its residents a place where they experience less discrimination, its residents also experience social inequalities related to

structural violence. Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro sits on top of a landfill in the industrial zone along the Rio Rimac. Public health officials have listed the area as high-risk due threat of earthquakes, flooding, landslides, fire due to faulty electrical wiring, dilapidated structural conditions of buildings and living quarters, severe limited access to basic services such as clean water and sewage, and a lack of urban green spaces (Aspectos Sociales de la MIRR, n.d.). Indeed, there is not one urban green space, such as streams, parks, forest, and community gardens within Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro's boundaries. For Rosa, a community leader and advocate for children's rights in Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro malnutrition and hunger in the area are directly related to the inability of families to grow their own food and medicine. She explained:

> Very little can grow here. The soil is contaminated. I can't walk from my house to the market without feeling the earth below me cave in. There's nothing under there. It's rotten soil on top of rotten soil. It [the soil] can't regenerate because of the waste and pollution. There's also the issue with water. It's like a desert here. The only water we have is contaminated.
>
> So, it's like a cycle then. A cycle, I don't know if you understand me, it's like something with no end. We can't buy or grow food that keeps us healthy, so we eat the food that we can buy and then we feel sick, especially the children. They're born and raised in this environment and they're little bodies suffer.
>
> Adults have a less to worry about. We were born in the *sierra*[7]…you can say we're healthy in the sense that we grew up eating nutritious food, whatever our family harvested. Our air was clean. We could be curious and playful.
>
> We lived a life that is very different than how our children live now. So when we are sick, our bodies heal because as children we lived well. Now, when our children are sick, there's nothing in their bodies that can help them recover.

Rosa's assessment of the connection between environmental conditions and child health in Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro has also been documented in recent studies that investigate

[7] Spanish term that literally means "mountain". It is often used to refer to Peru's highland regions. A more in-depth discussion of the term is included in the latter half of this chapter.

health disparities in Peru's *barriadas*. Indeed, research into health disparities indicates that child mortality and morbidity rates in poor urban settlements can equal or exceed those in rural areas (Bartlett 2003). Inadequate water and sanitation in *barriadas* throughout Peru increase children's vulnerability to water borne diseases such as cholera, low weight and height, and parasitic infection (Oswald et al. 2008).

Mujeres Para la Salud y la Justicia

Mujeres Para la Salud y la Justicia was established in 2000 in Huaycán, a community in the eastern outskirts of Lima. Hortensia leads the shelter along with a board of directors composed of advocates and community leaders who have long supported Hortensia's work with survivors of domestic violence. Similar to *Mujeres en Acción*, Hortensia's family home *is* the shelter. As

the years have passed, Hortensia and her family have been able to build a second floor unit to their home, thereby expanding the shelter's capacity to provide housing to survivors. Much like Azalea, Hortensia and her family are deeply involved in local politics in Huaycán. In fact, Hortensia and her husband were among Huaycán's founding families.

Huaycán was founded on July 15, 1984 with the support of 23 different associations and the municipality of Metropolitan Lima and mayor Alfonso Barrantes. Huaycán is known as the first planned land seizure in Lima that was organized by primarily migrant and displaced peoples from the country's highland regions (Arévalo 1997). At its inception, an estimated 4000 people settled in the area, including working-class families, political party members, and state teachers. In the 1990s, families displaced by the war between the state and the Shining Path arrived in droves to Huaycán (Mortensen 2010). Today, Huaycán's population is estimated at over

180,000, with the majority of residents being primarily from Ayacucho and other highland regions most acutely impacted by the armed conflict. The influx of new migrants has contributed to a division within Huaycán that separates older parts of the community that were part of the original project (*partes bajas,* literally "lower sections") from the newer regions (*partes altas*, literally "higher sections"), where essential services such as water and electricity are more precarious (Mortensen 2010).

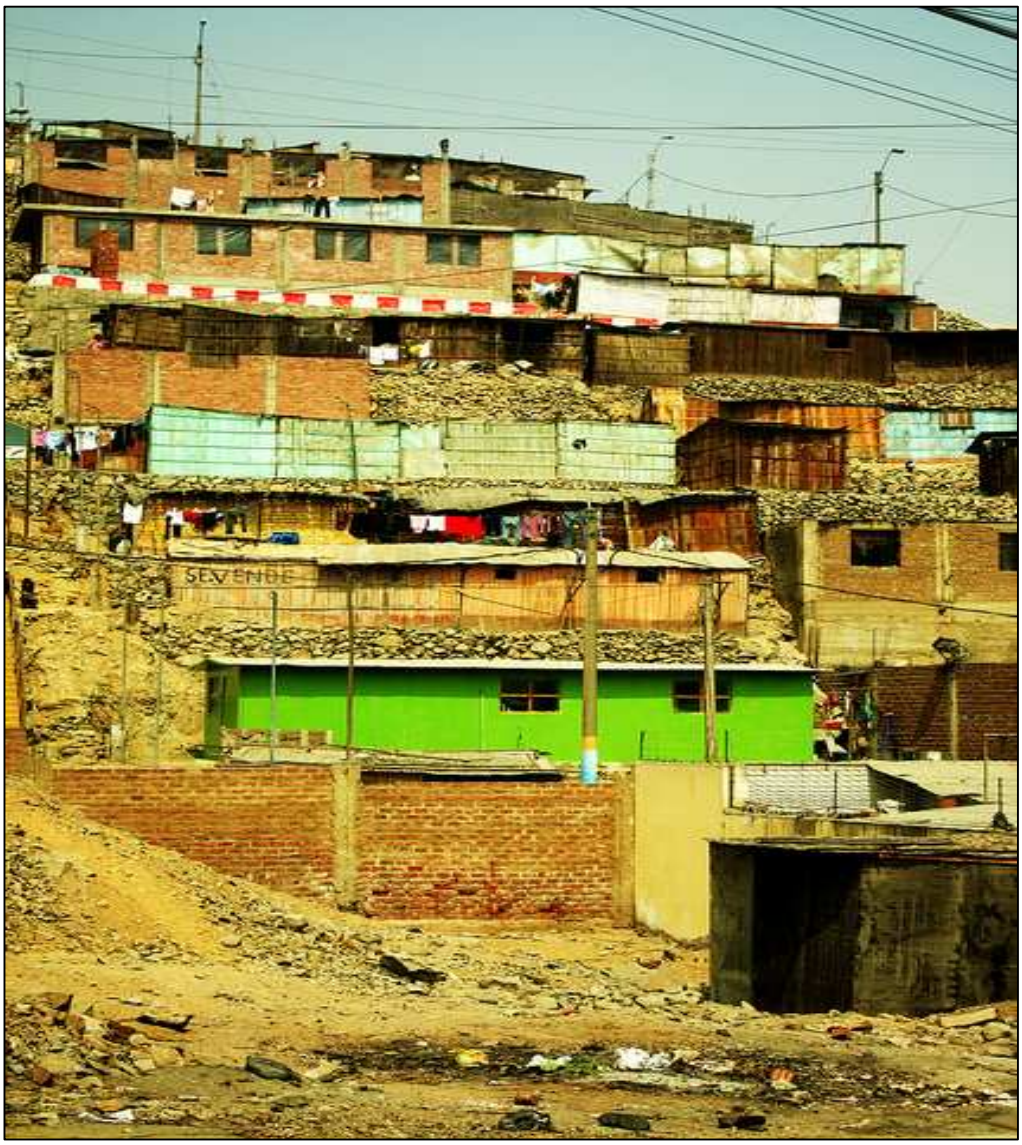

Figure 5: Partes Bajas y Partes Altas, Huaycán (Source: Author 2010)

Despite its growing population, there are limited agencies and services available to serve survivors of domestic violence in Huaycán. This disparity is of particular importance since the prevalence of violence against women is significantly high in the area (PNCVFS 2013). For example, there is only one police station in Huaycán to serve its more than 180,000 residents and only two shelters that offer services to survivors of domestic violence (one of which is *Mujeres Para la Salud y la Justicia)*.

Defining Key Terms and Concepts

Terms

Throughout this dissertation, I use terms such as indigenous, Indian, Andean, *serrana/o*, and *mestiza/o*. My use of the terms indigenous and Indian is informed by the fact that the Spanish translation of these terms is more frequently used to describe native peoples in Peru. Additionally, a number of women included in this dissertation refer to themselves in these terms (e.g. *mujer indigena*), and so my reiteration of these words is an attempt to honor their articulation of their identity. I do not use the term *indio*, as it is most often considered and used as a racial slur. Similarly, *serrana/o* (literally "from the sierra" or "from the mountains") is commonly used as insults by most Peruvians. I use the term *serrana/o* when highlighting intersecting race-, gender-, and class-based inequalities experienced by Peruvian women. Additionally, I use the term *mestiza/o* to refer to individuals who either have mixed ancestry or regardless of ancestry, claim "Hispanic" cultural traits. It is important to note that this definition of *mestiza/o* is significantly different than the definition and use of the term described by de la

Cadena (2000). In her scholarship on the politics of race and culture in Cuzco, de la Cadena proposes a more nuanced interpretation of *mestiza/o* identity, in which indigenous customs are not lost along the process of becoming a *mestiza/o*. According to de la Cadena, individuals have agency in asserting a *mestiza/o* identity that incorporates literacy and education *and* traditional customs and practices. Finally, I use the term Andean when referring to individuals from the Peruvian Andes.

Concepts

A constellation of frameworks and definitions have been developed to define and make sense of the multiple forms of violence that women experience, including "domestic violence", "family violence", "violence against women", "intimate partner violence", "gender violence", and "gender-based violence". In this dissertation, I use the term domestic violence and intimate partner violence interchangeably to describe violence that women experience at the hands of an intimate partner, though I recognize the critiques assigned to each term. For example, feminists of color argue that domestic violence and family violence, the most commonly used terms, frame household violence as occurring between heterosexual spouses or intimate partners and categorize men as the person committing the violence and women as the victim (Richie 2000; Smith and Ross 2005). While domestic violence is largely recognized as a predominately male phenomenon, these terms tend to ignore the maleness or masculinity of the perpetrator (Anderson and Umberson 2001). Similarly, these frameworks do not always specify the victims in gendered terms. As a result, we are given one-dimensional portraits of the person committing the violence and the person experiencing the abuse. Additionally, both frameworks situate

violence within the intimacy of the home and thus appear to "tame" the violence (Merry 2009), and ignore forms of power and oppression that occur outside the domestic sphere.

In contrast, violence against women is a broader term that incorporates actions outside of the context of the family, but has also been at the center of much professional and public debate. A primary issue is the breadth and simultaneous narrowness of the term "violence". At times, the term has been used in a broad and inclusive manner to capture often overlooked acts of violence such as verbal abuse, intimidation, stalking, and harassment, along with more generally recognized acts of violence, including homicide, sexual assault, and rape. Although an inclusive approach to measuring the prevalence of violence against women may have political advantages (for example, the issue appears very large and thus even more significant), Dobash and Dobash (1998) suggest it may have implications for research and explanations that are not always beneficial. For example, high rates of violence in a given community may result in its culture being defined as pathological and its members being viewed as inherently violence (batterer) and submissive (victim). Because the suffering and misery of others, particularly marginalized groups, is often explained away by associating the suffering with cultural difference, such acts of essentialism render invisible the structural factors that produce, reproduce, and exacerbate suffering (Farmer 2004). While violence against women does identify women as the victims, it does not consider the gendered dimensions of violence.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) provides a specific and at times, narrow definition of violence that people experience in intimate relationships. IPV is defined as the act or threat of: 1) physical violence; 2) psychological violence, including humiliation and insults; 3) sexual violence including forced sexual activities and control over sexual and reproductive health; 4) economic violence, such as withholding money for basic sustenance and shelter needs, as well as

not allowing an intimate partner to work to meet their basic needs, forcing them to hand over all the money they earn, and destroying personal objects of value. Indigenous scholars argue that IPV also encompasses "spiritual abuse," which includes degrading an intimate partner's spiritual beliefs and withholding or limiting the means for them to practice their spirituality (McGillivray and Comaskey 1999).

With a focus on violence occurring in intimate spaces and between intimate partners, IPV is often defined as a private matter and not a social problem. Isolating IPV as a private matter ignores the fact that it is tied to forms of structural violence and social beliefs about how men and women ought to behave (Brunson 2011). Furthermore, an IPV framework is based on particular notions of family structure and gender roles that do not always account for non-Western cultural practices and norms (Yoshihama 1999). Finally, IPV often obscures types of violence committed by an intimate relative, beyond a partner or a spouse. It ignores other types of violence, including battering, abuse, and even murder - for example, "dowry deaths" and "honor killings"- committed against women within extended families and other non-nuclear family kinship arrangements.

Recently, international documents such as the 1995 report of the Beijing World Conference for Women and documents from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights have discussed violence against women as gender violence and gender-based violence. Both terms encompass violence occurring in the family or in the general community that is condoned and exacerbated by the state (Weise and Haldane 2011). Gender violence engages gender as a dialectical social construct (male and female) and does not account for violence enacted against individuals and populations as a result of their gender positionality. However, gender-based violence includes acts of violence based on gender identity or expression,

including violence experienced by individuals and populations that identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender or queer (Weise and Haldane 2011). Scholars identify limitations to both frameworks. For one, they are much too broad and do no necessarily describe the violence between a man and his partner or wife (Brunson 2011). Second, by including other forms of violence against women outside of an intimate relationship, gender violence often negates the complexity and prevalence of everyday violence enacted against a woman by the people closest to her.

For this project, I use the terms domestic violence and intimate partner violence interchangeably to discuss the violence that Peruvian women experience. However, my analysis draws on theories of structural violence and intersectionalities and in this way, illustrates forms of power and oppression that women experience outside of the home. To make visible the connection between intimate partner violence and structural violence in the lives of the women included in this study, I focus on women's experiences of violence beyond the parameters of the home and that of an abusive relationship. Rather than emphasizing individual acts of intimate partner violence in women's lives, I look at trajectories of violence throughout women's lifespans. I find Haunani Kay Trask's (2004) notion of "quiet violence" helpful in contextualizing the violence that women experience outside of the home with the abuse they experience in intimate relationships with male partners. Influenced by Franz Fanon's concept of "peaceful violence," Trask explains quiet violence as the violence of colonization, characterized by continuing institutionalized forms of racism and discrimination that impact the every day lives of indigenous people and communities of color. She writes:

> We exist in a violent and violated world, a world characterized by "peaceful violence"…this is the peaceful violence of historical dispossession, of racial, cultural, and economic subjugation and stigmatization. Our psychological suffering and our physical

> impairments are a direct result of this peaceful violence, of the ordered realities of confinement, degradation, ill health, and early death" (2004: 82).

For the thirty-five women interviewed for this study, quiet violence is the violence of decades of armed conflict, internal displacement, and rural-to-urban migration. It is the violence of racialization. It is the violence of gender, cultural, and economic oppression.

Mapping the Journey Ahead: Overview of Chapters

My hope is for the voices and stories of survivors and advocates to comprise the core of this dissertation. To achieve this, I place women's interpretation and understanding of their lived-reality at the center of my analysis and rely on theoretical frameworks that on one level were articulated by the women included in this study. While survivors and advocates did not use the terms structural violence, intersectionality, and resistance and resilience in interviews, they did describe experiences that reflected specific elements of these theoretical approaches.

Chapter two includes an overview of my general theoretical framework. I also investigate anthropology's engagement with domestic violence as an area of study.

In Chapter three, I present an overview of key historical moments in Peruvian history that directly impact the lives of women living in grassroots domestic violence shelters in Lima. I specifically consider how colonization disrupted – and continues to inform – aspects of Peruvian women's lives as a result of gender, racial and economic inequalities. My discussion also considers how displacement and internal migration from rural-to-urban centers has been influenced by economic inequality, political violence, and neoliberal reforms and policies.

Chapter four articulates the methods I employed in the study. Because the study is essentially grounded in women's stories, I use indigenous frameworks for making sense of the inherent responsibilities of witnessing and retelling stories. I employ Margaret Kovach's (2005)

framework for indigenous research including three defining analytical elements: trust, respect, and responsibility. In my discussion of these elements, I address my positionality as a survivor of intimate partner violence, an indigenous Chicana, and an ethnographer. To show, rather than tell you, the reader, about how trust, respect, and responsibility shaped my relationships with survivors and advocates, I incorporate "ethnographic reflections" documented through field notes, correspondence with participants, vignettes, and personal journal entries.

Chapter five is composed of a collection of voices, from survivors and advocates to social service providers. This chapter makes visible the role that the state plays in producing and reproducing violence and oppression that shapes the lives of the women I interviewed. Dalia's story captures how the routinization of fear and terror associated with *Sendero Luminoso* continues to permeate social life in Peru. In her narrative, Dalia clearly explains her husband's violence against her as a result of his direct participation in the armed conflict as a police officer in their hometown of Ayacucho. As Dalia's story reveals, her attempts to leave her husband and rebuild her life are limited by barriers she encounters at different institutions charged with the responsibility of providing services to battered women. To balance my analysis of the state's failure to protect Peruvian women from violence, I draw on interviews with social service providers.

Chapter six details the services that *Venerable Mujer* shelters manage to provide to battered women and their children despite lacking tangible and consistent support from the state. Chapter six is centered on a collection of voices, including Cala, a mother of two whom, at the time when I first met her, had been living in the shelter for over six years. Cala's story reveals the complexity that shelter residents face in their attempts to transform their lives after an abusive relationship. Yet, Cala's story also helps the reader to gain a deeper understanding of

how in *Venerable Mujer* shelters, survivors and advocates exercise agency by practicing transformational survival strategies. Finally, to ground my analysis of the work that is done in *Venerable Mujer* shelters, this chapter also includes the voices of advocates.

In the conclusion, I reflect on the goals of the study, identify the study's limitations, and discuss the contributions that this research can make to diminishing violence against women in Peru by learning from intervention strategies that work to empower rather than 'serve' women. I also reflect on the teachings that I have gathered from living and working with survivors of violence.

Chapter Two/Segunda Flor:
General Theoretical Framework and Approaches to Domestic Violence Scholarship

Introduction

This project brings together integrated bodies of scholarship from three thematic areas: *Structural Violence*, *Intersectionality*, and *Resistance and Resilience*. My dissertation does not follow the structure of a traditional ethnography – rather than separating out my literature reviews from my data analysis, I have chosen to weave them together throughout the chapters. In the sections that follow, I outline my use of key concepts and the bodies of scholarship that inform the overall analysis I present throughout the dissertation. In the latter half of the chapter, I discuss conceptual approaches to domestic violence that scholars employ to make sense of the constellation of factors that help to produce and maintain domestic violence. I also present a general overview of anthropology's historical and contemporary engagement with the study of domestic violence.

Theoretical Framework

Structural Violence

This dissertation contributes to the anthropology of structural violence. By structural violence, I mean the violence committed by social structures of inequalities that, in the end, have similar injurious effects as acts of physical violence (Holmes 2013). More specifically, structural violence has been described as a

> …broad rubric that includes a host of offenses against human dignity: extreme and relative poverty, social inequalities ranging from racism to gender inequality, and the more spectacular forms of violence that are uncontestedly human rights abuses, some of them punishment for efforts to escape structural violence (Farmer 2005: 8).

Structural violence is thus deeply embedded in social structures or social institutions that constrain human agency and exacerbate the suffering experienced as a result of structural violence.

Structural violence is characterized and maintained by the interplay of different forms of violence. Galtung (1969) argues that in order to understand structural violence and the systematic nature of how it is distributed, it is necessary to consider the interplay of personal, structural, and cultural violence. According to Galtung, personal violence is characterized as direct violence where the actor or actors and objects and objects are readily identifiable. On the other hand, structural violence is usually indirect and there may not be a person who directly harms another person. Cultural violence refers to those aspects of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form.

Additionally, structural violence and suffering are organized and distributed in unique ways. First, structural violence is most often organized along the fault lines of class, race, gender, and citizenship (see Bourgois 1998; Eber 1995; Farmer 1996, 1997, 1998; Holmes 2013; Kleinman and Kleinman 1997; Scheper-Hughes 1992, 2002, 2003; Singer and Baer 1995). Consequently, the way that structural violence is distributed is by no means accidental – rather it is the result of unequal distribution of power among actors who get to decide how life-sustaining resources are allocated (Farmer 2006).

In this dissertation, I draw on two important facets of structural violence: 1) the connection between structural violence and interpersonal violence and 2) the role of the state in maintaining and promoting domestic violence. The connection between structural violence and interpersonal violence is well documented in anthropological studies. For example, in her ethnography on the everyday experiences of scarcity, sickness, and death among women and

children in Northeast Brazil, Scheper-Hughes (1992, 2004) proposes that the family unit has become a violent institution as a result of larger socio-economic conditions, which consequently make violence the only option. Bourgois (1995, 2004) explains the connection between substance abuse and multiple forms of violence, including gender-based violence, gang rape, and structural violence in urban U.S. Nelson's work in Brazil (1996) illustrates how violence is embedded in institutions of power such as women's police stations, where victims of domestic violence experience discrimination and are criminalized by women police officers. More recently, in his ethnography on Mexican migrant farmworkers in the U.S., Holmes (2013) brings awareness to how market forces, anti-immigrant sentiment, and racism undermine health and health care for these populations.

In this project, I consider the link between structural violence and interpersonal violence in the lives of Peruvian women living in grassroots domestic violence shelters. I do so by investigating how structural inequalities based on gender, class, and race in Peru result in the unequal concentration of power and resources that in turn translate into unequal access to legal, educational, social, medical, and economic resources afforded to survivors of intimate partner violence.

My analysis of how structural violence colors Peruvian women's experiences of intimate partner violence, as well as their attempts to escape from an abusive relationship draws on the work of scholars who theorize about how the state maintains and promotes gender-based violence. In her book *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (2005), Andrea Smith argues that past analysis of and strategies for addressing gender violence have failed to address the manner in which gender violence is not simply a tool of patriarchy, but also serves as a tool of racism and colonialism because colonial relationships are themselves gendered and

sexualized. As a tool of patriarchal control *and* racism and colonialism, gender violence can therefore be understood as impacting entire communities of color. Furthermore, Smith posits that racism, patriarchy, and oppressive colonial philosophies – maintained and promoted by the state – have constructed a "permanent social war" against bodies of Native women and women of color. She writes:

> …In the colonial imagination, Native bodies are also immanently polluted with sexual sin…because Indian bodies are "dirty," they are considered sexually violable and "rapable," and the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not count. (2005: 10).

Smith's articulation of state-sponsored gender violence informs my examination of domestic violence in Peru in two ways. First, the majority of women I interviewed are marked by Peruvian society as indigenous and therefore "worthy" of the violence and trauma they experienced. Their identity as rural-to-urban migrants, Quechua speakers, and domestic workers in Lima's affluent neighborhoods inform the way they are perceived and are consequently treated by society at large. In Peru, as in broader Andean regions, gender (female) is equated to ethnicity (indigenous) to geography (de la Cadena 1995). In this way, indigenous women are considered to be more indigenous than men both in Andean regions and in Lima (Fuller 2001). It is this indigenous identity that not only increases the varying forms of violence that women encounter – from interpersonal to structural – but also limits the resources and services they can access to escape this violence. According to Alcalde (2003, 2010), this dynamic is most evident in how indigenous Peruvian women are represented in popular media. The saying, *"más me pegas, más the quiero"* (the more you beat me, the more I love you) is widely used across socioeconomic urban classes to refer to *amor serrano* (highland love), which is characterized by domestic

violence and alcoholism. *Amor serrano* naturalizes domestic violence among indigenous women and men as customary and traditional (Alcalde 2010: 32).

Figure 6: *"Amor Serrano"* (Source: www.derechoeconomia.blogspot.com)

Second, as Smith and others (e.g., see Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004) articulate, gender violence exists in a continuum of violence that ranges from interpersonal to inter-state/nation war. In this continuum of violence, gender violence because of its intentional, coercive, and strategic nature, can be understood as a type of terror that makes a vulnerable population more vulnerable (Bourgois 2004; Whitmer 2010). Understanding gender violence as a type of terror existing along a continuum of different scales of violence (from wartime violence to intimate partner violence) allows for consideration of how in Peru, violence against indigenous women is naturalized as "everyday" violence. The impunity that characterized high

levels of rape and sexual violence against indigenous women by armed forced during the decades of political violence between the Peruvian government and Sendero Luminoso is one of the most recent example of the normalization of violence against women in peacetime.

Intersectionality

This study also advances theoretical discourses of *intersectionality* to explain the experiences of battered women in Peru. Developed by feminists of color such as Cherrie Moraga (1981), Gloria Anzaldua (1981), Patricia Hill Collins (1991), and Kimberle Crenshaw (1991), the concept of intersectionality underscores the multidimensionality of women of color's lived experiences. They argue that women of color exist in social contexts created by the intersections of systems of power and oppression. I employ the concept to show how multiple intersecting markers of difference, such as gender, race, and class inform how Peruvian women experience varied forms of violence.

Feminists of color developed the idea of intersectionality to analyze the relationship between race and gender in discrimination in the labor force and later applied the concept to examine how women of color experience domestic violence (Bauer, Rodriguez, Quiroga and Flores-Ortiz 2000; Menjivar and Salcido 2012; Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). Crenshaw (1991), for example, argued that mainstream discourses on domestic violence are geared toward white women and ignored how domestic violence impacts the lives of women of color. For Crenshaw, male-dominated conceptions of race and white-dominated conceptions of gender limit our understanding of violence against women of color (Smith 2005). Similarly, scholars have advanced concepts that resemble and/or build off of notions of intersectionality to challenge the hegemonic dominance of mainstream feminist thought that considered all women as a

homogenous group and largely ignored the ways that race, class, ethnicity, and sexual differences inform women's lives (Anzaldua and Moraga 1981; Hurtado 1996; Segura 1986).[8]

In domestic violence scholarship, intersectionality has challenged the traditional or dominant feminist perspective that viewed gender as the primary source of women's oppression. Theoretical discourses of intersectionality contest the notion that domestic violence is a monolithic phenomenon; embodied, experienced, and resisted in the same way by all women simply because of their gender. Through an intersectional approach, activists and scholars have shown how "intersectionalities color the meaning and nature of domestic violence, how it is experienced by self and responded to by others, how personal and social consequences are represented, and how and whether escape and safety can be obtained" (Bograd 2005: 26-27).

I find the concept of "social suffering" to be useful for thinking about domestic violence in contemporary Peru through an intersectionality lens. The concept refers to the clustering of social and public health problems in particular localities and under the weight of large-scale structural and societal forces that underpin disparate forms of violence that impact people in different ways depending on their social location (Kleinman et al. 1997; Benson & Fishcer 2009). That is, social suffering is intimately related to broader forces such as war, genocide, famine, poverty, as well as the unequal effects of environmental catastrophes (Farmer 2004; Kleinman et al. 1997).

Social suffering is a kind of suffering that includes but also transcends individual pain. The concept goes against a dominant tendency to reduce suffering to biological or psychological dimensions and instead emphasizes the collective nature of suffering. It thus illuminates the ways

[8] For example, Denise Segura (1986) argues that the intersections of race, class, and gender place Mexican women in a subordinate social and economic position relative to men of color and the majority of the white population.

in which suffering is, as Benson and Fischer (2009) suggest:

> ...Usually informed by social forces and played out in community settings in which people are differently positioned with regard to the material, symbolic, and social resources they can muster to pursue life chances, negotiate survival strategies, engage in entrepreneurial opportunities, and come to grips with perceived threats and uncertainties of restructuring" (164).

By situating suffering beyond the individual, I find social suffering a useful concept in thinking about how intimate partner violence is shaped by larger social inequalities.

Resistance and Resilience

> "Despite the powerful ability of violence to extract obedience and exert control, women are not totally powerless. In fact, women have proven incredibly capable of exerting agency even within the most constrained social conditions" (Heise 1997: 422).

Many domestic violence scholars challenge stereotypical images of battered women (Allard 1991; Ammons 1995; Davis 2006; Stark 1995). Perhaps the most persistent stereotypical image of a battered woman is that of the passive, helpless victim. Another enduring stereotypical image is that of the "bad" woman who resists the abuse and fights back. In the Latin American context, one of the most common images of battered women is that of the self-sacrificing woman (Rondon 2003). All of these stereotypical images blame battered women for the abuse they experience. The passive, helpless victim is deserving of the violence she endures because she doesn't fight back or leave. Ironically, women who resist abuse by fighting back are often perceived as enjoying the violence directed at them.

In writing about women's experiences with multiple intersecting forms of violence, it is important to acknowledge individual sources of agency and resistance (Collins 1998; hooks 1989; Mahoney 1994). In highlighting women's acts of agency and resistance in this dissertation, I counter the notion that women remain passive within the constraints of structural,

institutional, and intimate violence. I also provide multiple perspectives on women's lives and experiences of different scales of violence as a way to contest essentialized portrayals of women as victims. As Alcalde notes, "An understanding of women's lives and experiences cannot only focus on the aspects that oppress them but must also include an analysis of women's attempts to transform aspects of their environments that harm them" (2010: 33). Additionally, this project also provides rich ethnographic detail to the myriad ways in which women negotiate and contest violence. In this way, I seek to explore the options available to women - and those that women create- beyond the choice of staying in a violent partnership or leaving.

My discussion of women's lives centers on both the persistence and limits of their everyday forms of resistance so as not to present a romanticized narrative of the options available to women in the shelters and of women's collective agency in response to poverty, discrimination, and intersecting forms of violence. My focus on collective agency is in part a response to what anthropologists refer to as an "exaggeration of personal agency" (Farmer 2006).

One cannot live in the shelter without learning from the women about the power and necessity of collective agency. I use the term collective agency to describe the practices, choices, and sets of knowledge that study participants collectively employ as they seek to address their survival (Davis 2006). Collective agency is manifested in sharing in the reproduction of family life by caring for each other's children or working towards allocating land for a survivor so she can

build a home for her children and thus never have to return to her abusive partner. After some time living and working in the shelter, I too began to contribute to efforts of collective agency. For example, I cared for children while mothers went to work and joined concentrated efforts led

by advocates to build community-wide networks of support that survivors could access after they left the shelter.

Agency and Creativity

Locating the creative element in women's acts of agency is particularly necessary when discussing strategies cash-poor, rural-to-urban migrant, and indigenous Peruvian women employ in response to structural, institutional, and intimate violence. Within the context of flawed and non-existing legal frameworks and policies that do very little to curb the prevalence of violence against women and often times reify sexist, classist, and racist hierarchies that dominate Peruvian society, women's creativity is essential to their survival. Creativity in acts of agency and resistance here refers to how the women I interviewed strategically navigated different scales of violence within the home and beyond (Davis 2006). For study participants this meant secretly saving a portion of her wages with the hope of one day leaving her husband for good, saving enough money to undertake multiple business ventures so as to become financially independent from her husband, hitting back, secretly canvassing her community for resources available to battered women, forcing herself to abort a pregnancy resulting from sexual violence, taking steps to alleviate the suffering and trauma children experienced as a result of living in a drastically violent home, and withholding information from police officers that would undermine their domestic violence complaint.

More specifically, for Cala (whose life story I present in Chapter six) resistance meant secretly using forms of birth control, hitting back, defending her son from her partner's physical and verbal violence, working to have her partner legally recognize his son so that the boy can access a diversity of resources, and saving money in preparation for leaving. While these acts

could be perceived as strategies of agency and resistance directed at specific situations or behaviors and not necessarily contesting the broader structures that create and sustain intimate violence, these acts are nevertheless critical for they allow women and children to cope, and at times escape violence.

The act of attempting to access various institutions for support in the case of intimate violence is an act of agency and resistance, especially when these spaces represent specific dangers for women. It takes courage, strategy, and determination to access institutional sites because as the narratives of women's lives presented in this study show, women experience discrimination, lack of support, and are often revictimized by police officers, doctors, and judges, among other service providers.

Women's collective agency not only manifests in various ways, it also helps to achieve different results for different women. For Cala, the collective work of directors, advocates, and women in the shelter helped her to buy a piece of land and build a house for herself and her two children When Cala was unable to maintain her house, work full-time and care for her children, she returned to the shelter and again, the support of many allowed her to regain balance in her life. This form of collective agency led by female community leaders, survivors of violence, women's advocates, and community allies, includes multiple levels of engagement. It is the diversity of collective agency that allows for efficacy. For example, directors and some women are involved in practices beyond the shelter, including local politics, international human rights conferences, and the opening of a school. For other women, their engagement remains within the shelter walls - advocates volunteer their skills, time, energy, and spirit to maintain specific shelter projects that enhance the lives of women and child survivors of domestic violence.

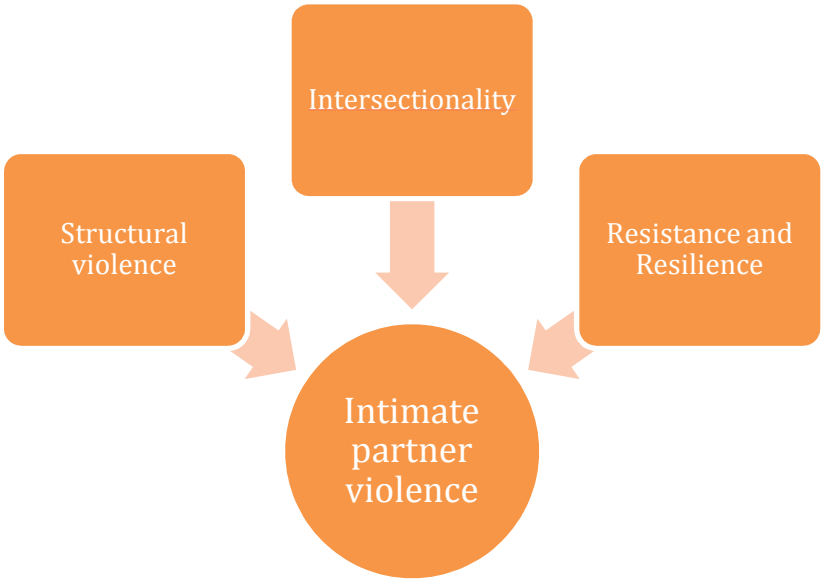

Figure 7: General Theoretical Framework

Approaching Domestic Violence Scholarship: General Overview

As violence against women emerged as a social problem, debates over how to name and frame the issue flourished. Different names emphasized different dimensions of the problem and framed public understanding of what counts as violence, who or what is offended against or violated, and the meaning and consequences of events for those who experience them (Kelly and Radford 1998).

Early research on domestic violence was based on two distinct perspectives known as Violence Against Women (VAW) and Family Violence (FV) (Dobash 1992). The FV approach defines domestic violence as any act of violence, including the threat of violence, by a member of a family or household against another member of the family or household that is intended to result in harm or injury. FV links child and elder abuse and neglect to domestic violence, and

acknowledges violent acts carried out by women on male intimate partners. The FV approach, however, does not account for different types of violence that arise out particular tensions and politics that reside within families. It also fails to take gender into consideration and ultimately views the home as a safe place.

In contrast, the VAW approach places gender and power at the center of its analysis. Proponents argues that overwhelmingly, it is women and not men who are the victims of violence, with women sustaining more injuries than men in conflicts among intimate partners (Kurz 1997). The VAW perspective also proposes that institutions like the law, family, and health care condone male dominance and reinforce violence against women. My examination of the factors that influence Peruvian women's experiences of intimate violence takes a VAW approach and uses an ecological framework (Heise 1998) to investigate how intersecting forms of violence impact the lives and health status of women

The Ecological Framework

Much like the VAW perspective, an ecological framework emerged out of a response to theories of violence that were narrow in nature and either emphasized individual explanations for violence (e.g., male violence against women is a result of psychopathology) or social/political explanations (battering is a result of gender-power inequalities and the historical construction of the patriarchal family structure).

According to Heise (1998), the ecological framework identifies factors that contribute to women's experience of violence in at least four overlapping dimensions in an individual's life: personal history, microsystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. "Personal history" refers to factors that inform an individual's developmental experience or personality, which each individual

brings to his or her behavior and relationships. Factors such as witnessing domestic violence as a child and experiencing physical or sexual abuse in turn shape his or her response to microsystem and exosystem stresses. "Microsystem" represents the immediate context in which abuse takes place – frequently the family or other intimate relationship. "Exosystem" includes institutions and social structures, both formal and informal, within the community that determine a person's ability to respond to violence, including neighborhood resources and social networks. "Macrosystem" represents societal and cultural norms and policies that permeate and inform the other three layers of the social ecology.

While the ecological framework of violence against women is by no means definitive or complete, it does provide a comprehensive analytical tool for approaching violence. Most useful to anthropology, is the framework's versatility, meaning that it can be applied either at the level of the individual to develop a profile of those men most at risk for exercising violence against women, or at the level of the community, as a means to better understand why rates of abuse vary by setting.

While it is incorrect to assume that ethnographic data will neatly fit into an ecological model, the model does allow for the inclusion of elements in the broader cultural, social, economic, and political contexts that inform the lives of both women and men. As a result, the ecological model is more inclusive of the complex realities in which violence against women unfolds. As Heise explains, "a nested ecological approach to violence help[s] activists and researchers grapple with the complexity of real life" (1998: 285). It is important to note, however, that by acknowledging the (many factors that lead to violence relationships) the model does not exculpate violence against women or the perpetrator of these acts and it does not ignore

the significance of macrolevel factors, such as notions of masculinity and male hegemony that result in women being the primary victims of violence.

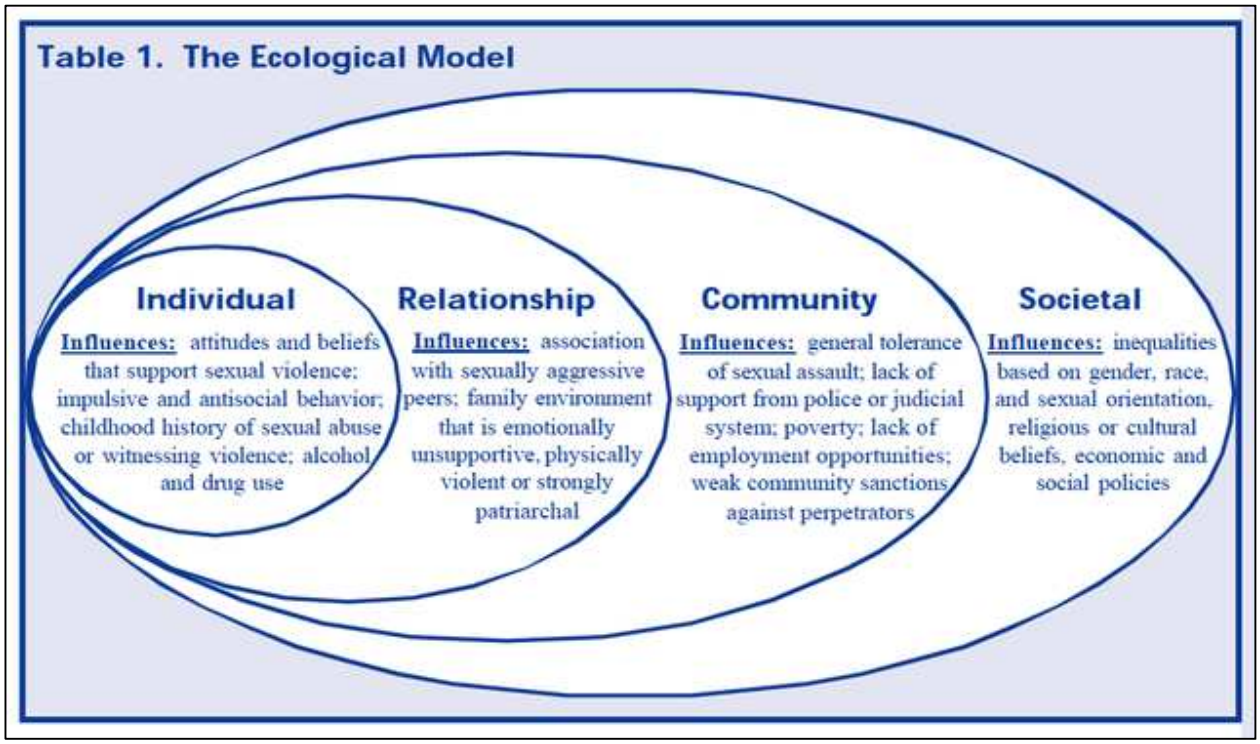

Figure 8: Ecological Model (Source: preventconnect.org)

Anthropologies of Domestic Violence

While anthropology historically has rarely studied domestic violence, anthropologists have long studied violence and conflict (Fortune 1939; Gillin 1955; Hadlock 1974; Malinowski 1959; Skinner 1911; Williams 1941). Early anthropological scholarship examined acts of violence as defined by warfare, cultural ethos, conflicts over material resources, and cultural rituals related to rites of passage (Boddy 1982; Harrington 1969; Hayes 1975; Herdt 1982; Otterbein 1999; Rafti 1979; Singer and Desole 1967). More recently, anthropologists have focused on intergroup violence, human rights violations, and genocide in the Americas and beyond (Gill 2004; Goldstein 2003; Green 1994; Hinton 2002; Nordstrom and Robben 1995;

Robben and Suarez Orozco 2000; Scheper-Hughes 1995; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004; Schmidt and Schroeder 2001; Sluka 2000; Tishkov 2004).

Ethnographies set in Latin America have documented the abuses of states against indigenous populations and posing issues related to land struggles and rights, autonomy and self-determination, and social economic inequalities. Feminists of color have examined gender inequality and human rights issues across cultures, shedding light on the different forms of violence and oppression women face. Yet, it is only recently that anthropology has begun to examine violence in the home as well as how broader forms of violence impact women's experiences of domestic violence.

Anthropology's lack of engagement with domestic violence as an area of study is perplexing, given the discipline's focus on participant observation. The presumed nature of the discipline and its dominant methodologies that demand for the ethnographer to become integrated into the everyday lives of people, results in anthropologists encountering various forms of violence, even if this is not the main focus of their research. Although anthropologists often live with families during fieldwork, historically, very few analyze the existence of conflicts resulting in violence within families.

Here, I am concerned with an overview of the various ways anthropology has engaged with the issue of domestic violence and other forms of gender violence. I refer to and summarize Madelaine Adelman's (2010) analysis of anthropology's approach to domestic violence, which she describes as: invisible, indirect, inductive, and intentional.

Invisible

The invisibility and decentering of women's experiences with violence in early anthropological scholarship is not too surprising. Anthropology's roots in colonialism informed the social issues as aspects of the human condition that were given precedence in the research. Topics such as kinship, human evolution, and comparative linguistics dominated the discipline and highlighted its preoccupation with documenting cultural diversity in other, remote, and so-called exotic cultures. As a result, family structures, gendered roles, and women's experiences in the United States and in Europe were ignored by researchers.

White males dominated early anthropology whose research focus did not include critical analysis of women's lived experiences. When women were included in the research, experiences of socialization and coming of age were given precedence. Hidden sites of violence, mostly intimate partner violence and sexual assault within marriages were neglected as research problems and thus undertheorized. Additionally, academic training in anthropology failed to integrate issues of gender violence in the intellectual development of graduate students and junior scholars. This resulted in major intellectual gaps and paucity in the literature on gender roles and family structures.

Another reason for anthropology's limited engagement with domestic violence and other forms of gender violence was the discipline's investment in cultural relativity (Wiese and Haldane 2011). This limited anthropology's engagement with domestic violence, and bounded its understanding of violence to the individual level, rather than identifying structural factors that shape and sustain violence. Scheper-Hughes and others have challenged the notion that anthropology's preoccupation with cultural relativism means that anthropologists should remain silent when witnessing act of injustice and in the presence of human suffering. She explains that as anthropologists we can hardly help becoming intricately involved in the "lives of the people

we have chosen to be our teachers" and must offer the often-limited, but meaningful, resources we have at hand – "our ability to listen and observe carefully, empathetically, and compassionately," thereby bearing witness (1992: 24 and 28).

Indirect

In the 1980s, anthropologists began to engage with gender violence indirectly. This was a result of various factors including, the rise of women's movements, feminisms, and the increasing presence of women and scholars in the academy and women leaders in communities worldwide. At this time, anthropologists began looking back to data collected in previous studies and reexamined their field notes, as well as those of others. In 1989, David Levinson challenged the established practice among anthropologists of writing about violence in culturally specific terms by beginning to interrogate violence in universal terms. In *Family Violence in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Levinson conducted a secondary analysis of the Human Relations Area Files, which investigated family violence in 90 non-Western societies. Incorporating various family forms and types of violence into his analysis, Levinson found that although wife beating was rarely considered culturally appropriate, it was present in 27 percent of the 90 societies. Levinson concluded that violence is a primary tool by which men maintain control over women and argued that gendered economic inequality, the social acceptance of violence conflict resolution, male domestic authority, and restricted divorce for women are the strongest predictors of wife battering.

In 1992, Dorothy Ayers and Judith K. Brown published *Sanctions and Sanctuary: Cultural Perspectives on the Beating of Wives*, a collection of essays on wife battering based on ethnographic accounts observed during fieldwork that has previously been unpublished. Most

notably in this work, Ayers and Brown established the foundation for the language and method anthropologists needed to address the specific topic of domestic violence.

Inductive

The 1990s saw the emergence of ethnographies by anthropologists who inductively identified domestic violence related data, and those who intentionally designed studies that placed domestic violence at the center of inquiry. The most immediate example of an inductive approach to domestic violence is Scheper-Hughes' *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (1995). While Scheper-Hughes primarily focuses on the every day violence of scarcity, sickness, and death that shapes the lives of women and children of Bom Jesus de Mata, it includes brief accounts of women's experiences of violence at the hands of male partners and relatives. In his ethnography that documented the cultural and economic affects of the Sandinista revolution on Nicaraguan society, Lancaster (1992) argued that domestic violence is a problem of men's socialization to abuse women and not a class issue. He also raised methodological concerns about anthropologist's awareness of domestic violence in the field, marking a point in the discipline's approach to domestic violence (Adelman 2010: 190).

Intentional

By the 1990s, anthropologists began to intentionally study domestic violence. Anthropology's intentional approach to domestic violence paralleled that of other disciplines, including sociology, criminology, social work, law, and psychology, among others. In the edited

volume, *Pacific Studies: Domestic Violence in Oceania* (1990), Dorothy Counts and colleagues presented an extensive analysis of domestic violence by addressing issues of gender equality, alcohol consumption, changing political-economic contexts, and the impact of "modernity" on people and communities who were rapidly being incorporated into a wage-labor mode of production (Weise and Haldane 2011). During this period, Harvey and Gow (1994) published a collection of anthropological and cultural studies research on domestic violence that considered how language, representation, and popular culture construct the concepts of sexuality and violence. A primary focus of the collection included politics of ethnography and representation.

Conclusion

I began this chapter with a discussion of the bodies of scholarship and theoretical frameworks – Structural Violence, Intersectionality, and Resistance and Resilience – that inform the overall analysis I present in the dissertation. This chapter also includes discussion and analysis of key conceptual approaches to domestic violence, including Family Violence, Violence Against Women, and Ecological Model. Finally, to situate the study of domestic violence within the discipline of anthropology, I present an overview of the changing ways that anthropologists have overlooked, engaged, and centered domestic violence.

Chapter Three/Tercera Flor:
Mapping Peru's Historical and Persistent Inequalities

Introduction

To situate the arguments I propose throughout the dissertation, an overview of key historical moments in Peruvian history that directly impact the lives of indigenous displaced and migrant women living in Lima's domestic violence shelters is necessary. In this chapter I discuss how colonization disrupted – and continues to alter - aspects of Andean women's lives, particularly gender and race relations. I also investigate how displacement and internal migration from rural to urban centers has been influenced by economic inequality, decades of political violence, and neoliberal reforms and policies. While there are countless other social, political, and economic processes that affect indigenous Peruvian women's livelihoods, from women's narratives included in this dissertation, it is clear that these are critical factors shaping how indigenous Peruvian women living in Lima's domestic violence shelters experience and cope with multiple forms of violence.

Gender in Pre-Colonial Peru

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish and ensuing colonization, indigenous populations of Peru were thriving nations. With an estimated population of nine to sixteen million prior to European contact, there was significant diversity among Peru's highland, jungle, and coastal

indigenous populations. Because nearly all of the women I interviewed for this study originated from Peru's Andean regions, my discussion of pre-colonial life and gender roles primarily draws on oral histories and scholarship collected from the Andean highlands. Most of the scholarship that places gender and indigenous women at the center of its analysis focuses on the Inca.

Similar to previous cultures and first civilizations of the Andes, women played an important role in Inca life (Kellogg 2005; Cohen Suarez and George 2011; Silverblatt 1995). For both the Inca and their ancestors, at the center of spiritual life rested the belief that all of creation is endowed with both female and male energy. Reverence for this duality – the union of female and male energy – was integral to everyday life. While the Inca understood women and men as belonging to separate but different parallel female and male lines and thus embodying distinct qualities, when joined together women and men were believed to create profound balance and unity (Cohen Suarez and George 2011). To the Inca, balance and unity were necessary for everyday life and for upholding fundamental principles of Andean life such as a deep reverence and care for the natural world and spiritual beings, a determined work ethic, reciprocity, solidarity, honor, hospitality, spirituality, sensitivity, communality, and respect.

Inca iconography as represented on textile, ceramic, and stone, as well as documented in oral histories and written sources reveals not only a deep reverence for gender complementarity, but also the importance of female prominence (Kellogg 2005). Elements such as the moon, the earth, water, metals, clay, and specific crops including maize, potatoes, and coca all share an association with feminine energy (Rostworowski 1998). Andean cosmology and spirituality also reiterate the prominence of the feminine. Indeed, in Inca creation, Mama Huaco, daughter of Sun and Moon and sower of the first maize, is the founding mother of the Inca (Kellogg 2005). Mama Ocllo, as the sister of Manco Capac, the first Inca leader, held a complimentary role as the

first *quya*, or female leader. The Inca nation was organized in a similar manner, with a male and female – a brother and a sister – serving as leaders. While the male was considered the primary leader, the female presided over women's spiritual organizations and ceremonies such as those in honor of the moon and the beginning of the new agricultural cycle and rain season. The *quya* also had the authority over her brother's domain in his absence and thus played a prominent role in preserving order (Kellogg 2005).

Gender complementarity also informed the division of labor in Andean households. Tasks performed by Inca women and men were understood as having been given – or taught – to them by their spiritual beings. For the most part, women were responsible for weaving, food production, childcare, and preparing the field for cultivation. Women were also responsible for the preparation of *chicha* (corn beer), a central element in Andean ceremony and ritual. On the other hand, men were responsible for plowing fields, harvesting crops, herding llamas and alpacas, and participating in combat. Yet, both women and men performed a version of shared tasks, including farming, weaving, and mining. Such organization and "sharing" of activities performed by women and men were embedded in the conception of complementarity, and expressed the necessary interdependence of women and men to not only realize certain tasks, but to also maintain balance and unity in the household as well as in the community (Silverblatt 1978). While an oral and aural tradition people, Andean women were also responsible for maintaining historical records through intricate weaving designs on belts, ponchos, and shawls that represented both everyday incidents in household life and political status and duties of villagers, as well as recorded critical events of one year, and recorded accounts of their community's entire history (ibid).

Although many scholars argue that land distribution in pre-colonial times primarily benefitted men, with each married man receiving one measure of land for himself and wife, and one for each son and for each daughter one half, others propose that women had independent rights to land which were not abrogated by marriage (Silverblatt 1978). When a woman was about to enter into union with a man, she was given land and rights to particular fields that would facilitate and maintain the establishment of a new household.

Colonial Paradigms and Women's Subjugation

The arrival of the Europeans, introduction of colonial paradigms, and the consequences of genocide altered the very fabric of life among indigenous populations in Peru. As Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski (2004) explain:

> Contact with the colonizers changed everything for indigenous people. The epidemics caused severe social disorganization for indigenous societies. Traditional social structures, alliances, and kinship ties were disrupted. Confidence in traditional leaders and healers was undermined. Those left alive in the aftermath of war and disease lost hope and social disintegration followed (4).

In the years following the arrival of Pizarro in 1532, an estimated eight million indigenous women, men, and children had died as a result of warfare and disease, including smallpox, measles, malaria, and typhus. As a result of various epidemics in places such as Arequipa and Cuzco as late as the 1700s, population loss continued to an estimated 50 percent of the indigenous population prior to contact. Such devastating population loss accelerated conquest and the process of settling and colonizing indigenous territory. Within the span of mere decades, Spanish systems of governance, religion, and social organization overtook their Inca antecedents (Cohen Suarez and George 2011). The colonial administration was structured on two primary objectives: the extraction of wealth through exploitation of natural resources and the mass

conversion of indigenous people to Catholicism. While the quest to achieve these objectives widely devastated indigenous populations and livelihoods across Peru, my interest lies in how colonization radically altered indigenous women's lives.

The subjugation of indigenous women in Peru and in the majority of indigenous nations across the Americas was fundamental for colonization (Federici 2004). Colonizers realized that as long as women held unquestioned power and influence in indigenous society, attempts at conquest were bound to fail (Gunn Allen 1986; Smith 2005). In Andean societies, the subjugation of indigenous women took multiple forms. For example, women's labor underwent intense devaluation and simultaneous intensification, as new commodities were demanded by European colonizing nations and new markets opened (Vergara Ormeño 1997). Weaving, which in pre-colonial times was understood as a sacred act by which women documented important historical events, was transformed as the Spanish appetite for textiles for clothing increased and women weavers struggled to meet these new labor demands (Kellogg 2005). Declining indigenous populations due to disease and warfare also contributed to the intensification of women's labor, as women were forced to take up weaving and textile production, as well as household tasks in light of husbands and sons' participation in the wars of conquest. At this time, domestic service also became an established labor sector, one that was marked by abusive treatment and violence towards Andean women who worked for urban families and Spanish officials and priests (Vergara Ormeño 1997). It was not unlikely for *encomendaros* (holders of encomienda grants of tribute and labor) to rent out women as domestic laborers to sailors sailing from Central America to Peru for months at a time (Kellogg 2005). Women employed in this capacity often were expected to provide both domestic and sexual services.

Just as the colonial labor system disadvantaged Andean women in a variety of ways, changes to property ownership, especially land, also adversely affected women. For Andean women, the loss of rights to land, which in pre-colonial times were inherited, reinforced a sense of loss authority and status. Women's loss of rights to land was reinforced with the elimination of the parallel female political hierarchy, the most important means through which women inherited land (Silverblatt 1978, 1987).

Additionally, the introduction of patriarchal colonial beliefs about marriage, purity, and the proper conduct of women increased indigenous women's exposure to violence. While violence against women in pre-colonial times has been documented primarily in the use of women to create or solidify kin groups and political alliance, colonial demands for labor and the introduction of new gender ideologies – especially expressed through religion and the law – significantly changed family life and negatively impacted women (Kellogg 2005). From the arrival of the Spanish and during the colonial era, the dominant pattern of interethnic affairs was characterized by intimate relationships – whether consensual or forced – between an upper or middle class white man and an indigenous or *mestiza* woman (Alcalde 2003). However, because these intimate encounters between prominent white men and subaltern women did not enhance the prestige of Spanish men, they very rarely resulted in marriage (Mannarelli 1993). In fact, it was widely common for Spanish men to have affairs with indigenous women and later marry a Spanish woman.

The Catholic Church did not necessarily look down upon these affairs, as priests were also known to have affairs with indigenous domestic workers employed by the Church. Ironically, the Church did direct rhetoric that associated women's chastity to purity and honor towards indigenous populations, and even encouraged the surveillance of indigenous households

as a way to monitor women's sexual activities (Kellogg 2005; Silverblatt 1987). By the eighteenth century, this rhetoric was widely common and Andean men/husbands "repeated declarations of concern over the faithfulness of their wives [and] expressed the notion of wives as female guardians of their rectitude and honor. Husbands' concern about honor served as a cause of violence against wives…" (Kellogg 2005: 74). Yet, the Church's rhetoric that linked women's chastity to purity and honor increased indigenous women's exposure to intimate partner violence while also causing violence in the lives of indigenous men. It did so by imposing different gender ideologies upon indigenous men, which demanded for them to take on the more patriarchal masculine role of the colonizers. Discrimination against indigenous populations made adopting this new role difficult for indigenous men and "expressions of concern about the sexual behavior of daughters and wives were only one way that native men tried to recover their self-esteem; physical violence was another" (Kellogg 2005: 74-75).

Despite the devastating impact that colonization has posed on indigenous populations, particularly on women's lives, women have actively rebelled. As early as 1560, women organized in resistance in the form of the *Taki Onqoy*, or "dancing sickness" against the Spanish presence in their lands and the right to continue cultural and spiritual practices that revered their most sacred beings, which the church admonished as idolatry (Stern 1993). Despite the devaluation and intensification of their labor and the limitations placed on them by colonial frameworks which categorized them as backwards and impediments to progress and modernity, Andean women who had migrated to Lima in the eighteenth century drew on multiple sources of income in the informal economy to survive, subsequently achieving financial independence as well as the protection of property and their children's testamentary rights (Graubart 2007). As women's presence in rural-to-urban migratory streams grew in the 1990s as a result of upheaval

in the agricultural sector and the growth of industry in urban centers that initially provided jobs for migrants and later relegated them to the informal sector, indigenous women organized in Lima to demand social services to reach their families living in the capital city's growing shantytowns (Barrig 1982; Stephen 1997). By organizing communal soup kitchens and food centers, indigenous women met their family and community subsistence needs (Starn, Degregori, and Kirk 1995).

Gender and Economic Inequality

In contemporary Peru, women's increasing participation in the workforce, education, and politics has influenced significant changes in their gender identity. However, male identity in general continues to be associated with patriarchal norms such as control of the public sphere and authority in the domestic domain, particularly in intimate relationships (Fuller 2001, 2005). Scholars attribute the imbalance in change to the idea that these arrangements are so deeply engrained in the Peruvian social order that alternative representations and practices have failed to replace these rigid categories (Campos 2013; Fuller 2001, 2005). As a result, such gender arrangements, coupled with intersecting race- and class-based inequalities, manifest in limited opportunities, increased exposure to exploitation and violence, and poverty in Peruvian women's lives.

For example, indigenous women have disparate access to education and high-paying jobs than their *mestiza* and white counterparts (Boesten 2010). The rate of illiteracy among women in Andean highland communities is disproportionately high – one in two women cannot read (Zavaleta 2010). In major urban centers like Lima, the informal labor sphere such as street vending and domestic work is predominately occupied by indigenous and recent rural-to-urban

migrant women and children (Beneria 2007). Women in the informal labor sector are especially vulnerable to varied forms of violence, including wage theft and sexual assault. Further, women involved in domestic work in Peru are considered by many as the country's most exploited source of labor.

There are additional factors that contribute to Peruvian women's continual vulnerability. For one, structural reform policies significantly contributed to the growth of the informal labor market. In addition to street vending and domestic work, women have been forced to participate in drug and sex trafficking as a way to supplement their limited earnings. In her study on incarcerated Peruvian women, Campos (2013) found that the cocaine commodity chain specifically recruits women from the informal labor sector and takes advantage of its highly gendered division of labor. She writes:

> The informal sector positions women at lower wage levels with higher job insecurity. The drug market utilizes these workers because they are already exploitable…because women work at the lowest sections of this chain, they are most manipulated, carry the most risk and are therefore the most likely to be incarcerated (2013: 41).

Secondly, neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s affected already impoverished women in gender-specific and multidimensional ways. As a result of globalization and neoliberal policies, Peruvian women have experienced increased migration, lack of employment opportunities and exploitation by employers, lack of access to basic services, and inability to provide basic material needs for their children. The growing presence of women in migratory streams has changed the division of labor between families. When women migrate to urban centers, they often find themselves as the head of household responsible for the day-to-day decisions of raising a family, yet they have limited access to resources that would allow them to thrive in this position. For example, in comparison to their male counterparts, migrant women have less access to high

paying jobs. Generally, women hold jobs that are considered extensions of their domestic work, which is not valued or remunerated (Fuller 2001). Today, women comprise 17.3 percent of heads of household in Peru. Yet, women-led households are twice as likely to live in absolute poverty – defined as a family of four surviving on $1 a day – than households headed by men (Zavaleta 2010).

Race Matters: The Historic Reproduction of Race and Racism in Peru

Race contributes to social inequality in Peru. As Boesten (2012) asserts in Peru, "the intersection of race, class and gender informs structural violence…and determines individual's and groups' access to resources, services, political voice and justice" (366 as quoted in Campos 2013). For the women I interviewed in grassroots domestic violence shelters in Lima, the intersection of race, class, and gender informs the structural violence that shapes their everyday life.

Similar to other Latin American countries, the Peruvian racial structure is a legacy of Spanish colonization. As a result of colonization, countries in Latin America saw the development of strict racial hierarchies, in which groups of people were assigned to specific racial categories. In the Peruvian context, this racial hierarchy emerged in the form of a caste-like system. An individual's place within this system was determined by the amount of Spanish blood they were able to claim. As a result, Spaniards were located at the top of the hierarchy while Andean populations and other groups were ranked below. In this way, the Peruvian caste-like system was a tool deliberately used by the Spanish to maintain power over the large Andean

population that survived the conquest and African slaves who were brought to the country as an exploited source of labor[9].

As a result of extensive sexual violence against indigenous and African women, an increasing number of children were born who did not clearly fit into the caste designations established at that time (Mannarelli 1993). New caste designations such as *mestizo* and *mulatto* were consequently developed to account for people with Spanish and indigenous blood and those with Spanish and African parents[10]. Yet, the caste system eventually became obsolete, as the mixed-race population in Peru continued to increase and it became too difficult to determine a person's ancestry (O'Toole 2012).

After Peru gained its independence from Spain in 1821, the nation's politics and economy were predominately controlled by *criollos* – whites of Spanish descent born in Peru – who were situated above mestizos and mulattos in caste designations (Scarritt 2012). Efforts to build Peru as a new unified nation were troubled by this racial divide in power and what came to be known as the "Indian problem". The presence and lack of integration of a very large indigenous population gnawed at intellectuals and politicians intent on determining the place of indigenous populations within the nation's social, economic, and political life (de la Cadena 2000; Scarritt 2012). As a result, a number of state-directed civilizing projects aimed at cultural

[9] The arrival of Africans in Peru dates back to the appearance of Pizarro and the earliest Spanish conquistadores. Between 1528 and 1821, more than 100,000 African slaves were brought to Peru via other Spanish colonies, such as Panama. African slaves were brought to Peru to meet labor needs in coastal agricultural (Golash-Boza 2012).

[10] In the Peruvian context, *mestizaje* is described as the process by which indigenous populations can be included in the nation through an abandonment of indigenous cultural forms (De la Cadena 2000). Yet, there has been very little analysis of Afro-Peruvian's participation in this process (Golash-Boza 2012). For a critical analysis of the distinction between black and indigenous participation in mestizaje, see Golash-Boza (2012).

mestizaje[11] were developed. These projects included the establishment of schools in the highlands in order that indigenous children would learn Spanish and adopt modern ways (Garcia 2010; Larson 2004). In fact, Peru's investment in rural education increased 16.5 times between 1900 and 1929 in efforts to incorporate indigenous populations and *mestizos* into the national community (Golash-Boza 2012).

Another strategy implemented to combat Peru's "Indian problem" became the privatization of indigenous land. With the privatization of native landholdings, a massive growth of haciendas emerged and became the primarily means to control indigenous labor. Under this new system, much of the landholdings rested in the hands of highland elites who had personal and military power. As a result, white landowners had almost complete control of indigenous people through labor and tribute and "used their power to perpetuate the racial division of labor that relegated natives to the most grueling agricultural work" (Scarritt 2012: 30).

Peru's defeat in the War of the Pacific with Chile (1879-1883) again brought attention to regional and ethnic differences in Peru (Bonilla 1978). Intellectuals and politicians alike argued that Peru had lost the war because it was not a unified nation. Manuel González Prada, Peruvian intellectual and social analyst of the late 19th century, argued that the lack of national unity was a reflection of the lack of national consciousness among the indigenous population because of its historical marginalization and oppression. For González Prada, the "national problem" (lack of political, cultural, and economic integration) was connected to the "Indian problem", and thus anticipated the intellectual cultural movement known as *indigenismo* (Garcia 2010).

[11] Peruvian scholar (De la Cadena 2000) describes cultural mestizaje as the process by which indigenous populations can be included in the nation through an abandonment of indigenous cultural forms. That is, through education and socialization, indigenous people can become Peruvian.

There were several distinct versions of *indigenismo*. One version portrayed romantic visions of indigenous people through novels poetry, paintings, and music. A second version presented indigenous communities as living in the ahistoric past as natural agriculturalist. In this version, efforts to transform indigenous people to *mestizos* were considered in vain. However, another version held that indigenous communities had improved as a result of civilizing projects, such as Spanish language acquisition. *Mestizos* in the provinces were therefore seen as a class above their indigenous counterparts (Campos 2013).

While primarily a literary and artistic movement, *indigenista* ideology informed political discourse in 20th century Peru. Many *indigenista* intellectuals advocated for the political and economic emancipation of indigenous peoples. Perhaps one of the most well-known Peruvian intellectuals of their time, Jose Carlos Mariategui proposed that socialism was the solution to the oppression of the country's indigenous populations. For Mariategui, the historical and ongoing oppression of indigenous peoples was rooted in the development of the system of land tenure, in which criollo society claimed ownership of indigenous land and resources (Marzal 1981).

Much like Mariategui, novelist and anthropologist Jose Maria Arguedas brought attention to the oppression of indigenous communities through his work. Arguedas focused on the cultural ramifications of civilizing projects and advocated for the promotion of the Quechua language both within highland communities and among intellectuals and bureaucrats in Lima (Escobar 1984).

The agrarian reform of 1969 led by the left leaning military dictator, Juan Velasco, marked a turning point in Peruvian history. On June 24, 1969, the national "day of the Indian", Velasco declared the hand-over of haciendas by landowners to their former serfs and employees (Turino 1993). Velasco's government redistributed the land to workers' cooperatives. However,

the agrarian reform did not achieve many of the goals set by Velasco and his government (Mallon 1995). While it effectively ended feudal relationships between indigenous people and hacienda landowners, it also intensified tensions between highland peasants and indigenous peoples on the one hand, and the criollo middle-and-upper-classes on the other. Additionally, the agrarian reform intensified the devasting effects of *mestizaje* (Scarritt 2012).

First, the discourse of the agrarian reform resulted in the "peasant-ization" of indigenous peoples. In doing so, the government effectively replaced indigenous populations' patrimonial land rights with class rights to work the soil. This process, Scarritt argues, "successfully reoriented the struggle away from an indigenous liberatory ideas of transforming the state and towards the exploitative atrocities of local landlords" (2012: 34). Secondly, *mestizos* benefitted both economically and politically when the workers' cooperatives were dismantled and members distributed land among themselves. Neoliberal policies of land privatization in the highlands further benefitted mestizos by reinforcing their status over indigenous peoples (Campos 2013).

Following the agrarian reforms, the Peruvian civil war between the guerrilla group *Sendero Luminoso* and the Peruvian military (1980-1992) highlighted the nation's growing racial oppression.

In the Time of Political Violence: *Sendero Luminoso* and the Peruvian Government

Between 1980 and 2000, Peru experienced vast political violence as a result of conflict between the government and the guerilla groups *Sendero Luminoso* and *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru*. Founded in Ayacucho in 1960 by university professor Abimael Guzman, *Sendero* advocated for armed struggle and proclaimed itself the agent of change that would destroy the old regime and create a new more just Maoist society. By the 1980s, *Sendero*

had grown both in territory, members, and in support, as it strategically filed the political void left by the Peruvian government and provided popular justice to impoverished indigenous communities. The largely indigenous departments of Ayacucho, Huancavelica, and Apurimac were the areas that suffered the most political violence, with 79 percent of the documented 69,280 deaths that occurred between 1980 and 2000 taking place in rural indigenous areas (Theidon 2013). Despite this level of violence, *Sendero's* early acts of violence went unnoticed – or were ignored – by the Peruvian government. It was only when *Sendero* activity reached Lima that the government took notice, prompting debate about the government's lack of interest in saving indigenous lives.

In 1982, the government finally began paying attention to the increasing violence in the Andean highlands and responded by deploying counterinsurgency police - the *sinchis* - and military personnel to the regions where *Sendero* was believed to be most active. Yet, the arrival of the police and the military personnel escalated the violence and Peru quickly found itself in a civil war. Unable to identify Senderistas frequently thought to be hidden among indigenous in highland communities, members of the armed forces equated Quechua-speaking women and men with terrorists. As a result, thousands were killed or disappeared in efforts to eliminate the opposition (Garcia 2000). Furthermore, entire villages were burned to the ground if members of the community were believed to be affiliated with *Sendero*.

Military forces routinely raided communities and beat and tortured men and children, and raped women. In order to avoid accusations against military abuse, the armed forced would kill all inhabitants of the villages they raided. *Sendero* also targeted indigenous communities, forcing men and children to join their ranks and severely punishing those they accused of dissent. Targeted by both the armed forces and *Sendero*, indigenous communities organized into *ronda*

campesinas or peasant patrol units (Theidon 2013). By the early 1990s, more than 3,500 villages had organized into *rondas campesinas* that sought to protect their community and fight against *Sendero* (Starn 1998). These peasant patrol units played a significant role in the eventual defeat of *Sendero* (Degregori 1998, 1999).

For indigenous women, the years of the armed conflict ushered in unprecedented levels of violence that altered every aspect of their lives. Reports from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) estimate that 75 percent of the sexual violence victims were Quechua speakers (Falcon 2005). The torture, rape, and sexual violence that women experienced at the hands of the armed forces is inextricably linked to issues of ethnic discrimination and racism (Theidon 2013). While the majority of soldiers were indigenous or of indigenous descent themselves, their participation in raping women not unlike themselves can be understood as an attempt to "whiten" themselves by transferring ethnic humiliation to their victims. Indeed, women's accounts of sexual violence found in the TRC report describe being called derogatory terms such as "*india"* and *"sucia"* and *"serrana."* The militarization of daily life also resulted in subsequent changes in gender relations, which led to an increase in domestic violence (Theidon 2013).

Migration, Displacement, and New Settlements

Migration has remade Lima into an Andean city, with the world's largest population of Quechua speakers (Starn, Degregori, and Kirk 1995). In the last decades, Lima's population has increased dramatically from 640,000 inhabitants in 1940 to 7.6 million in 2007, with a significant rise the mid 1980s from 5.4 million to 6.5 million by the mid 1990s (Morales 2007). The 1969 Agrarian Reform, enforced by President Juan Velasco and carried out by decree by a

military junta, resulted in changes to land tenure and uneven distribution of reform benefits that propelled migration to Lima. By 1970s, an estimated 100,000 migrants arrived in Lima as a result of the agrarian reforms (Isbell 2005). Just a decade later, internal migration increased exponentially as thousands of people were displaced by the ensuing armed conflict. Today, years after the armed conflict officially came to an end, internal migration steadily persists as failed attempts to reboot local economies in Peru's rural regions through mining projects, for example, continue to displace families while creating very few direct jobs (Morales 2007). Because of its persistent growth, internal migration has been characterized as the most important social problem in contemporary Peruvian society, one that has reorganized the economy, social structure, political system, and culture.

Upon arriving to Lima, the majority of migrants settle in *barriadas*, also commonly known as shantytowns, pueblos jovenes, and human settlements. In 1955, ten percent of the population in Lima lived in *barriadas*, 25 percent in 1970, and today, an estimated 50 percent. The majority of people living in *barriadas* are migrants and internally displaced people. The two shelters in which most of my data was collected are located in *barriadas* and all of the women interviewed lived in *barriadas*, both within Lima and on the city's outskirts.

Life in *barriadas* is characterized by significant material inequality attributed to the state's neglect and abandonment of its citizens (Davis 2006). In Lima's *barriadas*, neglect and abandonment is measured in limited access to water, electricity, and healthy and nutritious food. In fact, over one million of Lima's eight million citizens have no access to clean water, and families living in *barriadas* are most impacted by this scarcity. Additionally, having been pushed out of the city center by population density (Morales 2007), migrants have nowhere else to go

but to the most "undesired" regions of the city, which often are landfills, nearly crumbling hills, and highly contaminated areas. Indeed, migrants are

> Forced to settle on hazardous and otherwise unbuildable terrains- over-steep hill slopes, river banks, and floodplains. Likewise they squat in the deadly shadows of refineries, chemical factories, toxic dumps, or in the margins of railroads and highways. Poverty, as a result, has 'constructed' an urban disaster of unprecedented frequency and scope (Davis 2006:16).

Employment opportunities for rural-to-urban migrants are limited in Lima. The majority of migrants find work in the informal economy, primarily street vending, one of the lowest income generating occupations. Indeed, in the last 15 years, four out of every five new jobs in Peru have been created in the informal sector (Aufseeser 2012). Migrant women's participation in the informal economy has increased more rapidly than their male counterparts, with more than 60 percent of the women workers in the Peru relying on the informal sector as their primary source of income (Asencios 2009). The shortage of formal employment in Lima, increasing internal migration, and the continual effects of the economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s all contribute to women's predominant presence in the informal economy (Asencios 2009). In addition, sexist, racist, and class-based oppression also push migrant women to the informal sector. For example, employment opportunities that offer more stability, higher wages, and benefits are often only available for women in their early twenties and with *buena presencia,* which in reality is a euphemism for *mestizo* physical characteristics, including so-called modern and urban clothing and dominance of the Spanish language (Alcalde 2006).

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism refers to an economic paradigm that is built upon the classical liberal ideal of the self-regulating market. Like its classical ancestor, liberalism, neoliberalism privileges the

individual and holds the market to be the guarantor of social good. Because neoliberalism comes in several strands and variations, it is constructive to conceptualize it as three intertwined manifestations: as an ideology, a mode of governance, and a policy framework (Steger and Roy 2010).

As an ideology, neoliberalism advances claims of global economic interdependence that are rooted in the principles of free-market capitalism, including global trade and financial markets, worldwide flows of goods, services, labor, transnational corporations, and so on. Neoliberalism also reproduces certain modes of governance, what Foucault called "governmentalities" – that are based on particular premises, logics, and power relations. Rather than operating for the public good and working towards advancing social justice and enhancing civil society, neoliberal governmentality promotes entrepreneurial values such as competitiveness, self-interest, and decentralization (Steger and Roy 2010). As a policy framework, neoliberalism is characterized by the deregulation of the economy, liberalization of trade and industry, and privatization of state-owned enterprises. While the reach of neoliberalism is extensive, impacting the lives of men, women, and children and exacerbating the destruction of the environment, neoliberal market-led strategies have had especially harsh impacts on indigenous populations the world over (Escarzaga 2004; Postero 2007; Speed 2008).

Neoliberalism in the Peruvian Context

In Latin America, neoliberalism takes varied shapes from country to country. There are three main ways in which neoliberalism has affected indigenous populations in Peru. The first involves political restructuring, which has changed relations between indigenous people and the state. A second consequence has been drastic economic crises caused by economic restructuring.

Finally, there has been increasing emphasis on resource extraction schemes, which has threatened indigenous lands and livelihoods.

As the data presented in this dissertation makes clear, these consequences shape how indigenous Peruvian women experience and cope with intersecting forms of violence, from intimate to institutional, state, and structural violence. For example, a central tenet of neoliberalism is the need to keep the state apparatus as efficient and lean as possible (Postero 2004). In Peru, this has been achieved through a radical restructuring of the state, resulting in the replacement of corporatist models, such as peasant unions and rural indigenous organizations by models based on individual citizenship, autonomy, and responsibility (Postero 2004; Segura-Ubiergo 2007;). The decline of corporatism and the subsequent rise of neoliberal policies adversely impacted indigenous populations (Garcia and Lucero 2004). In this transition, redistribution of land as a result of agrarian reforms, subsequent growing tensions between ethnic groups, and the dismantling of social and agricultural programs exacerbated poverty in rural regions and accelerated migration to Lima and other urban centers. A number of women I interviewed described their family's loss of land as an important factor that led them to both marry into families that were more economically secure, and remain in these marriages despite intimate partner violence.

In Peru, the economic crises of the 1980s severely impacted indigenous populations. Efforts to alleviate the economic crises resulted in debt rescheduling with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in exchange for a commitment to economic reform, development of new initiatives to attract foreign investment in mining and agriculture, privatization, and the removal of established trade barriers. With these shifts, an alarming one-third of Peru's export income went towards debt repayment, thereby eroding the government's ability to establish social safety

nets in place for those negatively affected by reforms, which disproportionately were indigenous populations in the country's rural provinces (Aufseeser 2013).

The rise of extraction industries in indigenous lands in Peru as a result of neoliberal policies is a leading reason for the continual flow of indigenous people from rural to urban regions. Extraction industries are characterized by economic activities that remove a natural resource from the environment, submit it to marginal or no processing, and then sell it on: industries such as oil, gas, and timber extraction (Bebbington 2012). In Peru, extraction industries have a long history, with the extraction of gold, silver, and copper in the Andean highlands and rubber production in the Amazonian regions being some of the earliest extraction projects in the Americas. Indeed, the "discovery" of Inca and Aztec silver and gold in the sixteenth century set in motion the beginning of extraction industries in Peru and Mexico (Garcia and Lucero 2004). Yet, the proliferation of extraction industries in Peru can be dated to the early 1990s, when under the direction of President Alberto Fuijimori, the country initiated a series of neoliberal economic and political reforms with the aim of integrating the country into the rapidly globalizing international economy. It sought to do this by opening all sectors of the economy to foreign direct investment (FDI), along with lifting restrictions on remittances of profits, dividends, royalties, access to domestic credit, and acquisition of supplies and technology abroad. The Peruvian government also offered investment incentives and tax stability packages to international investors and ratified bilateral and multilateral investment treaties, thereby eliminating competition from state-owned and domestic firms. Finally, the Fujimori administration privatized major sectors of the economy and radically reduced or eliminated government, health, education, and social service programs.

The reverberations of Fujimori's neoliberal reforms continue to be felt today. Peru has become one of the most open and liberal countries in Latin America and in the world, and boasts a growing economy that is dominated by the private sector, regulated by market forces, and connected to the global economy (Bury 2005). In addition, one significant element of Peru's neoliberal economic and political reforms has been the transformation of the country into one of Latin America's principal exporters of mineral resources (Arrellano-Yanguas 2008). Today, Peru is the leading silver producer of the world, and the second largest for copper and zinc production (Bebbington and Bury 2009). In addition, minerals account for 62 percent of the exports of Peru and a significant segment of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, as Peru's extraction industry has grown to unprecedented measures, the magnitude and quantity of environmental and social impacts related to global mining projects have rapidly increased (Bury 2009; Florez 2013).

Peru's Extraction Industry: Social Impacts and Consequences

One social impact related to Peru's extraction industry has been the rise of social conflict in areas where extraction projects are underway. The rise of social conflicts in relation to the extraction industry is due to the 1) the exploitation of indigenous peoples and indigenous land; 2) significant imbalances of power between extraction companies and indigenous communities; 3) issues of resource management and the impact of extraction industries on local livelihoods (Bebbington and Bury 2009). The exploitation of indigenous peoples and their lands due to a complete disregard for the health and wellbeing of indigenous people, along with the land, water, mountains, and other resources that are central to these communities. Such disregard is grounded in colonial frameworks that categorize indigenous people in Peru as inferior, backward, and a

permanent barrier to modernization. For the Peruvian government whose primary concern is the country's sustained inclusion in the global economy, the environmental and social impact of the extraction industry is a necessary price to pay.

One of the most recent and controversial acts of violence against indigenous people has be en the government's refusal to extend prior consultation rights to Quechua-speaking communities in the Andean highlands (Taj and Cespedes 2013). The decision to circumvent the protections afforded to indigenous people under the 2011 Law of Prior Consultation rested on the argument that Quechua-speaking communities cannot in fact be considered "indigenous" under the law due to extensive mixing with Spanish colonizers centuries ago, the presence of formal town assemblies in these communities, and living in relatively less isolation than indigenous people in Amazonian regions (Taj and Cespedes 2013). This new definition of indigenous, one that excludes Quechua-speaking communities despite the fact that they are one of the country's largest indigenous groups, reiterates a colonial mentality in which indigenous culture is static by nature and must remain in complete isolation in order to maintain an indigenous identity. Yet, the government's attempt to reinvent the definition of indigenous to consequently deny Quechua-speaking communities their rights, is also firmly grounded in the government's priority to increase foreign direct investment in the extraction industry.

As of May 2013, a total of 225 conflicts have been reported throughout Peru, with Anchash, Apurímac, and Puno experiencing the highest number of conflicts in their region. In these regions, as in Cajamarca, the site of the most important South American goldfield, the UN has reported that quality of life is well below standard. The lack of long-term development processes and improvement in the quality of life in regions where extractive industries are

present is primarily due to the fact that extraction royalties, while benefitting local governments, fail to benefit local communities.

Most extraction industries are located in or near areas inhabited by indigenous peoples, who are among Peru's most marginalized populations. Therefore, by denying local communities a set of tangible and long-term benefits from projects, extraction industries exacerbate existing social inequalities and create new divisions within communities (Misoczky and Bohm 2013). The reproduction of social inequalities is evidenced by the employment of highly skilled engineers, heavy machinery operators, and professionals from outside of the region (Bury 2004). When local people are hired to work in extraction industries, employment tends to be temporary and wages are meager. In Cajamarca where employees of Minera Yanacocha (MYSA) are primarily Peruvian, but from regions outside of Cajamarca, and from Australia, Canada, South Africa, and the United States, there have been significant increases in land prices in the community, as well as changes in land use (Bury 2004).

The extraction industry has initiated large-scale displacement of households and communities (Bury 2004). Mining operations in the Peruvian Andes have contributed to significant shifts in the movement of peoples from the highland to coastal regions. Indeed, the recent dramatic increase in mineral exploration and exploitation activities in the Andes coupled with massive internal displacement of indigenous people from the highlands as a result of decades of internal armed conflict has resulted in a growing rural-to-urban migrant population in Lima. It is estimated that over one-third of Peru's population lives in the Lima metropolitan area, of which the majority are recent migrants (Morales 2007). Large-scale displacement of households and communities as a result of the extraction industry has been so acute in the previous two decades that in addition to Lima, cities such as Chiclayo, Trujillo, and Pirua in the

northern portion of the country have become important destinations for migrants from the highland areas (Bury 2004).

Like the majority of neoliberal practices in Peru, the growing extraction industry has impacted indigenous women's lives in significant ways, including the unequal distribution of labor, exacerbation of domestic violence, health disparities, increase of sexual violence, loss of autonomy, spiritual imbalance, and socio-political violence. In addition to causing environmental pollution and the degradation of natural resources, extraction industries located in the territories of indigenous people in Peru lead to practices of work-related and sexual violence against women. The rupture that extraction industries create in indigenous women's lives has been compared to the devastation of war.

With extraction industries increasing the flow of displacement and migration from rural to urban regions, and the growing presence of women in these migratory streams, Lima and other large cities are transforming into what scholars refer to as "Andean cities" with the population of Quechua speaking surpassing that of Spanish speakers (Starn, Degregori, and Kirk 1995). Yet, upon arriving to cities, displaced and migrant indigenous populations encounter stark structural violence in the form of discrimination, lack of formal employment, material deprivation, and marginalized living conditions, lack of access to social services, among others. As data presented in this study shows, these factors shape women's experiences of intimate partner violence as well as the choices they make in attempting to escape this violence. While many of the women I interviewed originated from highland areas where extraction industries are prominent and their decision to leave their communities for Lima was often a result of extraction projects, other women arrived to Lima fleeing from the devastation caused by the internal armed conflict between the Shining Path and the Peruvian government.

Conclusion

In this chapter I presented an overview of key historical moments in Peruvian history that help make sense of the factors that directly impact the lives of study participants. More specifically, I discussed the impact that processes such as colonization, political violence, and neoliberal reform and policies impose on certain aspects of Andean women's lives. I argue that these processes are critical factors that shape and determine how Peruvian women living in domestic violence shelters in Lima experience and cope with varied intersecting forms of violence.

Chapter Four/Cuarta Flor:
Critical Ethnography in Peru's Grassroots Domestic Violence Shelters

Introduction

I was first introduced to *Venerable Mujer* in the spring of 2009 when I traveled to Lima as a research assistant for a University of Washington public health study that investigated women's knowledge of intimate partner violence intervention strategies. As a research assistant, I conducted focus group sessions with women who, in the past twelve months, had experienced violence from an intimate partner. Of the five focus group sessions, three of them took place in *Mujeres en Acción*, a grassroots domestic violence shelter in central Lima and the remaining two were conducted in health care settings. After the last focus group session in the shelter, Azalea (shelter director) asked to speak with me in private.

As the women who had participated in the focus groups chatted amongst each other, Azalea escorted me to an adjacent room where she thanked me for supporting *Venerable Mujer* and for being involved in the study. For Azalea, it was "inspiring" to see a young woman, a survivor of intimate partner violence rebuild her life and work on efforts to alleviate violence against women. As we talked and Azalea became aware that I was a novice anthropology graduate student who was interested in women's health but had yet to begin field research, she invited me to "pay her a visit" when I was in Lima again and "perhaps work on a project together." I took Azalea's words to heart and for the next couple of months, applied to countless research grants with hopes of returning to Lima as soon as possible.

While my introduction to *Venerable Mujer* did not specifically emerge from a community-based and collaborative approach to research, the study design and the development and implementation of intervention strategies have followed community-based participatory

action research (CBPR) principles. When I did return to Lima in July of 2009, Azalea was willing to work with me in designing a study that was both relevant and beneficial to *Venerable Mujer*. In conducting this study, I have relied on CBPR scholarship and the work of scholars who use critical ethnography to decolonize social science research and advance questions of social justice.

Critical Ethnography

Critical ethnography and CBPR stand in stark contrast to positivist approaches to social science research. Positivism is based on the notion that genuine knowledge is gained from objective interpretation of experiences and observations. As Patricia Hill Collins (1991) eloquently explains:

> Positivist approaches aim to create scientific descriptions of reality by producing objective generalizations. Because researchers have widely differing values, experiences, and emotions, genuine science is thought to be unattainable unless all human characteristics expect rationality are eliminated from the research process. By following strict methodological rules, scientists aim to distance themselves from the values, vested interests, and emotions generated by their class, race, sex, or unique situation. By decontextualizing themselves, they allegedly become detached observers and manipulators of nature. Moreover, this research decontextualization is paralleled by comparable efforts to remove the objects of study from their context. The result of this entire process is often the separation of informing from meaning.

In addition to objectivity and decontextualization, which as Collins notes limits researchers to simply informing about social phenomenon, Denzin (2001) notes that positivism assumes that the researcher: 1) can objectively interpret a specific reality; 2) must separate herself from any representation of the object researched; 3) can make universal generalizations about the object of research; 4) can explain all phenomenon using a cause and effect model; 5) can produce "value-free" and objective analyses. In contrast, post-positivism challenges the assumptions of

objectivity and value neutrality in positivist research, arguing instead that knowledge is shaped by *who* participates and *how* in the process of creating knowledge (Hall 1992). Additionally, post-positivism denounces the search for objective truth because it marginalizes experiential knowledge, reinforces passivity of the subjects, and obscures other voices (Gaventa & Cornwall 2008). Finally, post-positivist argue that research must be reconceptualized in order to correct the Eurocentric error that assumes that researchers have the "right" to intellectually know, interpret, and represent others (Cannella and Manuelito 2008; Harrison 1991)

With a focus on the ethnographer's "ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular *lived* domain," critical ethnography dispels positivist principles of objectivity and neutrality (Madison 2005: 5). In doing critical ethnography, the ethnographer has a "compelling sense of duty and commitment based on moral principles of human freedom and well-being, and hence a compassion for the suffering of living beings" (ibid). Advocating for reflexivity, or the practice of self-reflection through which as ethnographers, we become accountable to our analysis and representations, critical ethnography allows for a different field of anthropological inquiry. This approach to anthropology can be likened to Harrison's (1991) "anthropology of liberation," which calls for ethnographers to make conscious political choices about aligning ourselves with acts of transformation and social change. In order for ethnographers to understand what political choices must be made, the viewpoints of the "subaltern" (Rosaldo 1993) and "subjugated knowledges" (Harrison and Harrison 1999) must be valued because they both enrich and complicate anthropology's analysis of how social forces shape the lives of individuals and communities. By valuing and centering women's subaltern voices, it is my hope that this research will add to various critical anthropological projects that

problematize the boundaries and parameters that have historically demarcated and hierarchized anthropological inquiry and investigation.

Story as Methodology

"Story as methodology is decolonizing research" (Kovach 2010: 103).

Critical ethnography seeks to privilege the voice of those whose lives are at the center of analysis. To achieve this goal, I have relied on narrative and storytelling as a research methodology. My understanding of narrative and storytelling is informed by how scholars have articulated indigenous research methodologies. While acknowledging the diversity of indigenous peoples, and of scholarship and discussion around indigenous communities, scholars have identified common elements of indigenous research inquiry (Louis 2007). These include the recognition that 1) knowledge is subjective and emerges from interrelationships with the human world, the spirit, and the inanimate entities of the ecosystem (Battiste and Henderson 2000); 2) truth is not the outcome of tests and replications, but is bound in a sacred commitment (Kovach 2009); 3) receptivity and relationships are integral parts of the research process (Kovach 2005); and 4) knowledge is experiential and is shared through story (Qwul'sih'yah'mant 2005).

These elements are reflected in narrative and storytelling. For example, storytelling is a relational practice that involves the co-construction of story and the collective understanding of phenomena. As such, stories are never complete. They are always in constant transformation and in the process of becoming (Barton 2004). When people are called to witness, and therefore co-construct- a story, they are endowed with the sacred responsibility of respecting the storyteller's words and lives (Qwul'sih'yah'mant 2005). For listeners being called to witness a participant's story, respecting the storyteller's words and lives means that she must engage with both the

storyteller and the story with trust and respect. Additionally, "it is the responsibility of the listener to draw conclusions from oral testimonies, taking into account the circumstances for the telling and who the storyteller is, as well as the time, pace, and situation of the telling" (Iseke 2011: 320).

In critical ethnography, as in other approaches to research, for witnessing to become an act where the storyteller and the listener recognize that they "are not an individual but an individual connected with others" (Million 2009: 18), ethnographers must take on a relationship-approach to research. In her book *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Context* (2010), Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach explains that research conducted following a relationship-based approach draws on the following principles: trust, respect, and responsibility.

Trust

Trust can be nurtured in research relationships in different ways. One way is for the researcher to engage in collaborative research with people and or communities with whom she has pre-existing relationships. Because "such relationships hold a history of shared story with one another" this facilitates the development of collaboration within research frameworks (Kovach 2010: 98). For those of us who engage in research with communities that are not our own and with whom we do not share pre-existing relationships that would engender trust, the process of building relationships and nurturing trust is fundamentally important. We can do this by first acknowledging that in asking others to share stories, it is necessary that we share our own, starting with self-location. As Kovach explains, "the researcher's self-location provides an opportunity for the research participant to situate and assess the researcher's motivations for the

research, thus beginning the relationship that is elemental to story-based methodology" (2010: 98). Self-location involves naming the contexts from which our voice emanates, as a way to ensure that those who study, write, and participate in knowledge creation are accountable for our positionality. Yet, the simple observations of our location are not sufficient; rather we must engage in a congruent examination of the meanings attached to our social identities in historical moments that are of strategic significance (Mohanty 1988).

Respect

Respect, as Kovach articulates, is intimately connected to trust and is exemplified in how we ensure voice and representation. To allow for authentic and ethical representation, Kovach outlines specific practices that must be followed, including the sharing of transcripts with participants to ensure accuracy and approval, as well as giving participants an opportunity to review the format in which their story will be used. Additionally, reflexivity is also key to ensuring voice and representation. How the ethnographer represents herself informs the expectations that participants have on her, as well as the relationships that she can build with participants (Absolon and Willet 2005).

Responsibility

Kovach explains that in relationship-based research, responsibility is associated with the researcher's commitment to social engagement. Responsibility, Kovach observes is more than being reflexive about our observations and representations of the human condition. That is, responsibility involves an ethical commitment to *do something* to either ensure that the people and places that are part of our research thrive rather than suffer, benefit from our presence, and

that relationships are established in meaningful ways so that they are lasting and productive to those who are involved.

This ethical commitment and moral action to *do something* is particularly present in ethnography (Kleinman 1999). As Garcia (2000) notes, it is important to understand that our responsibilities as ethnographers extend beyond ethnographic representation to include responsibilities towards the individuals and groups of people with whom we live and work with. Reflecting on field research she conducted with Peruvian immigrants in the U.S. and Andean communities in Peru, Garcia describes how relationships with participants were enhanced once they were able to link her presence to a concrete social contribution. Similarly, in her ethnography of an elementary school garden in Michigan, Thorpe (2006) narrates how her relationship with teachers, weary of school district representatives and academics from a local university coming into their classrooms to investigate students' "underperformance," began to flourish only after there was tangible evidence that she was not just another "empty promise" and would write up garden lessons that the teachers could use for future endeavors (17).

In conducting research for this project, I was constantly held accountable to "do something" by Azalea, Hortensia, and other advocates and survivors with whom I established relationships. For example, Azalea often voiced her discontent with academics that in the past had visited the shelter only to collect data. For Azalea, whatever data was collected in this way was not necessarily beneficial to *Venerable Mujer* and it failed contribute to efforts to alleviate the multiple forms of violence that Peruvian women experience. From the onset of our relationship, Azalea was adamant that my research needed to always be paired and guided by a strong commitment to stand in solidarity with the women participating in my study.

My commitment to stand in solidarity with women living in *Venerable Mujer* shelters was put to test not too long after my study began when I met Azucena, a twenty-year old mother of one from Cuzco.

Azucena

When I met Azucena in 2009, she had recently ended an abusive relationship with a man and had been fired from her job as a domestic worker in one of Lima's affluent neighborhoods. With no family or support system in place in Lima, Azucena and her infant daughter, Rosita found themselves homeless. Azucena learned of Azalea's shelter from a woman she met in the *mercado* and when I met her, had been living there for a number of weeks. Azucena's primary concern at that time was to find steady employment and save enough money so she and Rosita could move out of the shelter. However, finding employment in domestic work with an infant daughter proved difficult. The majority of families who seek out domestic workers place strict stipulations on the young girls and women they hire, one of which is not having children.

After several weeks of unsuccessful job searches, Azucena explained that she felt she had no other alternative but to leave Rosita temporarily under her paternal grandparents' care. This decision made Azucena nervous. Her relationship with her in-laws was difficult – Azucena's mother-in-law frequently beat her. As Azucena explained, she feared there was a possibility her in-laws would overlook the fact that leaving Rosita under their care was a temporary arrangement and would refuse to return Rosita. She said:

> Azucena: The last thing I want to do is leave my daughter. Too many bad things can happen to her. If she's away from me in Iquitos, I won't be able to protect her. It's not possible. The distance is far too great. I also have to think about the money. Traveling to Iquitos is expensive, and if the trip is unplanned, if it's sudden because of an emergency, it's more money. And right now I don't have money to spare. Nothing. My pockets are empty.

I need a few months to work and save all the money I can. The problem is I can't work with my daughter. If they [employers] know you have children, they won't offer you a job. The close the doors in your face.

Damarys: Why don't they want women with children to work for them?

Azucena: What do I know? I imagine it has something to do with children being curious and breaking things. They don't mean to, but they play with whatever they find and sometimes they break things. Also, I don't know if this is a reason, but they [employers] are jealous of our time.

Damarys: What do you mean? Why are they jealous?

Azucena: They only want you to take care of them. When I'm working for a family, I can't go out and meet with friends or go rest in my room. All of my time, even the hours when I'm not supposed to be working, I have to dedicate to them.

Now imagine with a baby or with little ones running around? They're likely to tell you, "Let your baby cry. Don't feed her" because they want you for themselves.

Damarys: So, because you have Rosita and because working for a family requires so much of your labor, you feel you won't be able to find a job with a family? What will you do then?

Azucena: For now, I have to do what is best for my daughter. I need to work, but I can't when I have to take care of her. I know of some childcare centers that are on the way to La Molina.

When I first found out I was pregnant, I was worried of losing my job. I went to the center and they told me about the cost. It's expensive! More than I ever imagined. But if I can find work in La Molina again and they pay me what I was earning before, I can make the payments. Then my daughter will be happy. I need to work for a couple of months before I can pay the deposit and the other money they require. I don't know how many months, maybe six or seven months. Then I have to find a place where my daughter and I can live.

We have to buy everything again, everything for my daughter. She only has a blanket and one or two dresses. When I left her father, I left everything. I didn't care about those things. I only wanted to protect my daughter.

Damarys: Is there somebody who can help you with your daughter while you work and save? While you rebuild your life?

Azucena: I don't have anybody. I've always been alone [Azucena begins to sob]. The only family I have is Rosita's father and his parents. They're the only family I have and

they beat me! The way my life has been all these years, I feel I was brought to this world to suffer.

Life has to be different for my daughter. The only thing I can do for her right now is to send her to live with her grandparents in Iquitos. She can stay with them these months I need to work and save money. After, I can go to Iquitos and bring her back with me to Lima. It's my plan and I have to do it quickly, this week or next. I'm scared to take her there. There's danger.

Damarys: What type of danger?

Azucena: That I'll never see her again. They can keep her from me. They can even say I abandoned her. The truth is, I'm trapped. I don't want to send her there. I don't know what else to do. His family treats me with indifference. They insult me. Before, my mother-in-law would hit me too, just like her son. But with my daughter, she's a different person. She has love for her. If it was up to her, my daughter would be hers and I would be gone. She's said that before, many times. She doesn't care for me because I'm poor and in their minds, they're better than me.

I don't have family who can defend me, you see? I can't sleep at night thinking what is going to happen to my daughter. Will they take her away from me? It's a trap, there's no way out.

Damarys: Can the shelter help you in any way? And if they can't, maybe we can find help for you elsewhere.

Azucena: I think about who can help me. It's all I think about. The shelter can help me now, but my daughter needs a different environment. Here there is too much suffering and chaos. The women in the shelter are here because they've lived through the unimaginable and they survived. I'm here because I lived like this too.

We're all still suffering, even if we've left the men who tortured us. We lost everything in our lives. Whatever it was – a humble house, merchandise to sell – it's lost now. And now we're here living in a house with other women and children. There's no time or privacy to be alone or to be with our children and connect with them. Our children can't play here. There's too much going on all at once.

Damarys: Are there other places where you can get help?

Azucena: So many bad things have happened to me in my life. When those things were happening to me, nobody helped me. Only Azalea.

Before I came to the shelter, I went everywhere in search of help. I went to the police because a neighbor told me I needed to file a report or else nobody would believe what Rosita's father did to me. I went to the police and I went to the hospital. I also went to another shelter. In the end, nobody did anything. The police said I needed witnesses to

> step forward. Well, it was my word against his. Nobody wanted to get involved. One time, a man who lived near us saw his wife talking to me and later that day, he beat her. He didn't want his wife to get ideas about going to the police to file a report against him. He knew he was wrong to beat her.
>
> Had I had money to pay the police officer to write the report, he would have. That's how the police work. But I didn't have money. All my money went to paying for Rosita's father's vices. It wasn't my choice. It's what he did. He'd beat me and steal my money. The truth is he stole from his daughter because all my money was for her. For her milk and her clothes. I was beat so often, I couldn't produce milk. I would hold my daughter to my breast, but I didn't have milk. I was dry.
>
> Then I went to the doctor. He said I could die from another beating. That time my head was swollen three, four times the size it is now. I started crying then, in front of the doctor. He said, "Señora, go to the police. They'll resolve your family problems. We can't do anything here for you."

As my interview with Azucena makes clear, lack of institutional and social support were primary factors that influenced Azucena's need to leave Rosita in the care of others so she could find employment and provide for her daughter. Azucena's experiences of unsuccessfully trying to access services that are mandated by Peru's family violence legal frameworks were informed by gender and socio-economic inequalities. As Azucena notes, she was unable to access social support from her neighbors because the men in her neighborhood feared that their wives would also report their violence to the police. Further, Azucena attributes the lack of attention she received from the police to her socio-economic position, particularly her inability to pay police officers to do their job and protect survivors of intimate partner violence. Finally, Azucena's socio-economic position also informed the interpersonal violence she suffered from another woman, her mother-in-law.

In the weeks following our first interview, Azucena and I discussed the issue of leaving Rosita with her paternal grandparents at length. At Azalea's urging, Azucena decided that she needed to find a way to protect her parental rights in the case that her in-laws would refuse to

return Rosita. Azalea believed that this could best be accomplished with official documentation that clearly stated Azucena's intention to give temporary guardianship of Rosita to her in-laws, and not to permanently relinquish all parental rights. Further, Azalea believed I was the person who could help Azucena in this matter.

For Azalea and Azucena alike, any documentation that I could provide, which included a detailed notarized letter outlining the agreement between Azucena and Rosita's paternal grandparents for a temporary, though extended visit and letter of support from Azalea and *Venerable Mujer,* were necessary to protect Azucena's parental rights in the case that the grandparents would attempt to exert custody over the child. While I confessed that I did not know the legal framework for child guardianship and custody and therefore could not assert that a letter from a graduate student from the U.S. would suffice, Azalea explained that a letter from me was all that they had access to given the quick turn around and the fact that the shelter did not count with the resources to cover any expenses associated with the process of having a lawyer advise them on the matter. At one point, sensing my confusion as to what I could contribute to Azucena's dilemma, Azalea commented, "There's no time to think about every detail. We need to act quickly. In the time we think about what to do, or not to do, and why, we lose the opportunity to help a woman. If we don't help her, who will?" For Azalea, it was clearly more important to *do something* for Azucena, even if the only thing that we could do at the time was to hope that a notarized letter by an anthropology student would suffice.

Self-Location

My personal experience with intimate partner violence facilitated the process of building meaningful relationships with women in the shelters. At the time when I began collaborating

with Azalea in designing the study, I had recently left an abusive partner whom I had lived with for six years, from the time I was eighteen years-old to twenty-four. When I was finally able to leave the abusive relationship, I found myself without a home and entering into a domestic violence shelter was a possibility. Six months after leaving the relationship, an opportunity arose to participate in the public health study on intimate partner violence in Lima. I was hesitant at first to accept the position, not trusting that I could witness others stories of violence when I was still learning how to make sense of my own. When I first arrived to *Mujeres en Acción* to facilitate the initial focus group sessions, however, I was surprised by how difficult, yet meaningful it was to share space with women who had lived through – or were living through – an experience that seemed similar to mine. I found women's words and reflections about their attempts to rebuild their lives after leaving an abusive partner particularly meaningful for they described a healing and recovery process that somehow felt tangible and real to me. This tangible truth was evident in their non-linear paths towards healing, which often included going back to the abusive partner, post-traumatic stress, mental health problems, suicide attempts, and establishing intimate relationships with new partners who were also abusive. More than any self-help book or counseling session, women's stories I witnessed in the focus group sessions aligned more with how I was experiencing life after an abusive relationship. The journal entry below, which I wrote after a focus group session in April 2009, speaks to this:

> *Every bone in my body aches. I'm exhausted and weak. Sleep remains elusive. All I can do is think about what the women have shared with me in the focus groups. Reflecting on their words, remembering how I responded, re-reading my notes. I feel this is the first time I've been able to meditate – stop, breathe, feel - on the meaning of this work, to reflect on the last few months of my life, and to map out, connect, and remember how, when, where, and why I – having barely turned eighteen, first kiss, first love – believed that humiliation, terror, and fear were the same as love and reverence. Stop. Breathe. Feel.*

Some of the women I've met in the last few days are making these connections, or at least are trying. Today, a few of the women stayed after the session. I sat with them, drinking Inka Kola from a plastic cup and eating the last of the pastries we provided. Two of the women brought their small children to the session. Their laughter and occasional cries, coupled with the distant echo of a Susana Baca bolero playing in the mercado filled the room.

Margarita, a woman in her late forties who lives with her mother and stepfather, elaborated on a comment she made in the focus group session about having been institutionalized in a mental health facility for attempting to commit suicide just weeks after she miscarried as a result of another one of her husband's beatings. Margarita wanted to make it clear that prior to the incident, she had never thought about suicide. She wanted us (me, the other two women who stayed behind, the public health researchers who were huddled in a corner debriefing about the session and appeared to be unaware of the conversation that was unfolding) to know that her attempted suicide did not mean she was "crazy" and that it was an "injustice" for her husband to "brainwash" their children into believing that she was. With tears streaming down her round cheeks, Margarita explained how the abuse she endured at the hands of her husband had "extinguished her desire to live."

She explained that to this day, years after she was sent to the mental health facility and her children, believing their father's lies had abandoned her, she continues to struggle with depression, panic attacks, and substance use. Looking me straight in the eye, an intentional cue, Margarita described how she has to remind herself every day, multiple times a day that she has to "continue being."

She asks me if I understand. I respond that I do. I do. As I'm writing this, my eyes catch a glimpse of the wrinkled and purplish slither of skin in the inside of my left arm. When I cut myself with a broken razor blade shortly after leaving my abusive partner the first time, I felt what Margarita described as the desire of life being extinguished. For the past six months, I've been rushing everything: graduate school, finding a home, even healing. I'm exhausted. Everybody – friends, family, court advocates, people I hardly know- say I need to move on, that I can't let the past six years define my life, "don't dwell on the past." Today, somebody finally said something that makes sense to me right now, in this moment: I have to remind myself every day that I have to continue being.

While my personal experience with intimate partner violence and my interest in focusing my dissertation study on women's health and wellbeing led Azalea to encourage me to return to Lima and conduct research with *Venerable Mujer* shelters, it was my aunt's murder in 2010 that further solidified my connection to Azalea and my relationships with participants.

In July 2010, I arrived in Lima to continue field research at *Venerable Mujer*. Soon after my arrival I received an urgent message from my family in the U.S., and consequently learned that my aunt had been found murdered in her home in Southern California and that my uncle, her husband of 38 years was the only person of interest in the case. The news of my aunt's death touched the core of my being and instantly changed my entire worldview. While my research focus emerged from my own personal experience of intimate violence and from the knowledge that much of my family shared varying experiences of violence, my aunt's death erased any boundary – real or imagined – I had established between the women whose lives breathed form to my research and myself. Being thousands of miles away from my family and established communities, the women in the shelter became my only source of support. This experience further connected me to Azalea:

It's past midnight, too late to call my family in California and ask for the latest news on my uncle's arrest. I searched online for more information, something I should never do again. Every news story I find is the same: a transitory mention of my aunt's life and a myopic focus on the details of her murder. How the police discovered her body, theories about what he did with the weapon, a timeline of events. I struggle to reconcile the reports I'm reading online, words written by somebody I don't know, with the memories I have of weekend visits to my aunt's and uncle's, playing lucha libre with my cousins while our parents reminisced about an entire lifetime together.

My parents, along with my aunt and uncle, met when they were teenagers, in Tijuana, Mexico. My aunt was my mom's cousin and they grew up living next door to each other. My uncle is a my dad's older brother and prior to being laid off in 2008, had worked side-by-side at an assembly plant for over twenty years. This tragedy, this pain is not distant or remote. It's intimate and it's making me come undone. When I received news of my aunt's death yesterday, everything stopped. Silence. How, I instantly thought, are we as a family ever going to make sense of this?

Today, as soon as I arrived to the shelter, Azalea noticed something was different and asked to speak with me in the kitchen. The entire commute to the shelter, I wondered if I should tell Azalea what had happened to my family. As I was arriving at the shelter, I decided it was best if I kept the news to myself. I didn't want to add to the general chaos of everyday life in the shelter, which is so often intertwined with some kind of emergency – from having to accompany women, at the spur of the moment, to different service providers to document or follow-up on her case, to

making it through an entire day at the restaurant with only a handful of food items. Fortunately for me, Azalea had other plans.

We sat across from each other. Azalea, working her way through a small mountain of boiled potatoes, fingers peeling with precision said, "Tell me. Some things are too heavy for one person to carry on their own." The question alone was enough for me to let go of any false expectations of remaining composed, "professional," and distant. I talked and Azalea listened. So many times before, I've been witness to this exact exchange: Azalea offering her counsel to a woman who needs to know at that very moment that somebody will help them carry whatever weight they're carrying upon their shoulders, a burden to heavy to hold alone.

Community-Based Participatory Research

Often erroneously referred to as a research method, community-based participatory research (CBPR) and other participatory approaches are not methods at all but *orientations to research* (Minkler and Wallerstein 2003). That is, what is distinctive of CBPR is not necessarily the methods but the methodologically context of their application, which is informed by an integration of research and action for community change (Gaventa and Cornwall 2006). CBPR aims to transform the paradigm in which research is conceived and practiced (Chavez et al. 2003). Central to CBPR are commitments to consciously blur the lines between the "researcher" and the "researched" and to enhance the community's awareness of their own capabilities as both researchers and agents of change (Minkler and Wallerstein 2003). Barbara Israel (1998) articulates six fundamental characteristics of CBPR: 1) it is participatory; 2) it is cooperative and engages community members and researchers in a joint process in which both contribute equally; 3) it is a co-learning process; 4) it involves local community capacity building; 5) it aims to create opportunities for participants to increase control over their lives; 6) it achieves balance between research and action.

CBPR principles have guided this study, from field research to the dissertation writing process. These include: 1) reevaluating the concept of community; 2) building on strengths and

resources within the community to address communal health concerns; 3) co-learning and capacity building among all partners; and 4) emphasizing local relevance of the study.

Reevaluating the concept of community

Reevaluating the concept of community is central to CBPR. Prior to my first visit to *Venerable Mujer* in 2009, I had never set foot in a domestic violence shelter. My minimal knowledge of domestic violence shelters was based on a few readings I had done for a medical anthropology class, and from informational pamphlets I received when I left an abusive relationship and found myself without a home and with minimal financial resources. From these sources, I gathered that in general, domestic violence shelters followed strict guidelines that determined the services provided to their residents. In my case, guidelines such as mandatory participation in programs and strict curfew schedules did not fit well with my responsibilities as a graduate student with a full-time job, and it was one of the primary reasons why in the end, I decided not to enter into a shelter.

When I began conducting research and volunteering at Azalea's shelter, I was taken aback by what I initially considered a lack of organization and structure. There appeared to be no distinct guidelines or protocol, and this made me feel out of place, like I couldn't participate in everyday activities because I didn't quite know what was going on. It took a couple of significant mistakes on my part to begin to understand Azalea's approach to community work. For example, on one occasion when I was working with Azalea in the restaurant she had recently opened in the shelter, I inadvertently served a customer less meat than she had expected, which she promptly brought to Azalea's attention. Azalea quickly apologized and after serving the woman a new plate, she explained to me that the woman had lived in the shelter years before, was now the

owner of a local shop, and often donated food items to the shelter. While Azalea observed that the woman often ate more food at the restaurant than she actually donated, she found it important to maintain the collaborative relationship on good terms: "I don't know when I'll need her help," Azalea said. She went on to explain:

> There are days when we don't have food to eat in the shelter, much less food to sell. Those days, I know I can send one of the women over to her shop and she'll donate what she can. A bag of rice, oil, even if it's only a bottle of yogurt. Whatever it is, it helps keep the shelter open one more day.
>
> When she comes to eat here, I don't charge her the full price. I give her more rice, more chicken. Sometimes that means we are only left with rice and potatoes to eat. It's how it is.

From this experience and others, I began to understand Azalea's approach to community work as flexible and fluid, one that adapted to the persistent need of keeping the shelter going, despite barriers of material inequality. While I was witness to many conversations between Azalea and shelter advocates and residents about food rationing when food was limited, these conversations were put aside when Azalea needed to ensure that relationships with community supporters were maintained. As Azalea explained in one of our many interviews, at times, negotiating relationships with community partners proved the most demanding task she performed:

> Working with the women is hard at times. You have to be patient. You have to talk to them with beautiful words. When a woman who has been abused all her life comes to the shelter, she's afraid of everything. She doesn't want to talk and prefers to be asleep.
>
> But if every day you talk to her with beautiful words and you take care of her, soon she will start to trust you. And you will see her once again bloom like a flower. That's the most difficult part of working with women, patience.
>
> She might be crying for days because she misses the man who beat her. And you want to tell her, "Why do you want to go back to a man who disfigured your face?" but you can't, you have to have patience. She has to understand. And I have to give her time because at the end of the day, there are a million things I have to do to help her. I have to find food

> for her and her children, if she has any. The children have to go to school, they can't stop learning. I have to help her find work so that she can become independent.
>
> But I can't do any of that on my own. I have to rely on what resources I can gather from people in the community who support the shelter. I go up and down the street, knocking on people's doors. I explain to them that a new woman arrived at the shelter. Most of the time, the people who stand in solidarity with the shelter, offer whatever they can. Whatever they give, comes from their heart because they believe in helping women. Sometimes when people help, they expect something in return. That's the way it works. I'm happy to help whoever helps me…That's how the shelter was built. This community as well.
>
> Sometimes how I can help is not enough, they want more. What they want in return, I don't have or they think that I have more than I can give. When they see people like you visit the shelter…Because they know you're not from here…they think you're giving me money or gifts. When I see them, I have to defend myself and explain everything to them. It's too much work! I prefer to be in the shelter with the women.

The flexibility and fluidity of Azalea's approach to community work was also evident in the shelter's service provision. While the size of the building and the amount of resources available onsite meant that only a handful of women were living in the shelter at any given time, the "community" which the shelter served was much broader than I initially imagined. In Azalea's shelter, the distinction between resident and advocate was fluid and constantly changing. For some women, one week they were advocates, volunteering their time and energy in cooking meals, cleaning, and caring for children and the next week they themselves were residents in the shelter. Additionally, the shelter often provided services – from free meals, to public transportation fares and housing - to women who were not survivors of family and sexual violence, yet could not rely on the support of family, friends, or institutions to improve their situation.

During my time at the shelter, I also witnessed a handful of men come to Azalea for various services, including advice and counseling, free meals, and temporary housing in exchange for manual labor in the shelter, among other tasks. The majority of these men were

recovering substance users, gay or transgender individuals who experienced violence from homophobic male relatives, and homeless individuals. For Azalea, in addition to working directly with women and child survivors of family and sexual violence, providing services to members of the community who experienced marginalization and varying forms of violence was critical to her work.

> The truth is, it's very difficult for me to not want to help any person who is suffering. Since I was a young girl, I've always wanted to help and care for people and animals. I was born with that spirit. My entire life I've dedicated to helping women and children because I believe that in this world, we as women suffer more. I don't know how it is in Mexico or in the United States, but in Peru, women suffer every day.
>
> Every newspaper you read, you'll find a story or two, three, I don't know…A woman murdered by a taxi driver, a woman's nipples being burned off. Even that little girl who was raped by those men. It's a grave injustice. It's impossible to be alive in this country, read the newspapers, walk down the street and not notice that women are suffering.
>
> I consider myself a feminist because I believe women deserve to live with dignity. But I would be a hypocrite if I said that all men in this country live with dignity. I know many men who are suffering and nobody cares about them. Just think about the boys who live in the shelter and the ones that go to the children's workshop. What future do you think awaits them? If their families abandon them, they're going to struggle because nobody else is going to look after them.
>
> The government doesn't care that we're poor, and our houses are crumbling and our young people are turning to drugs and crime. I've always said, as long as I have a house that is standing, there will always be a shelter and my doors will be open to people who are in need.

Early in the research process, I was faced with the challenge of understanding what "community" meant to Azalea and by extension, the community that needed to be included in the study. My limited knowledge of domestic violence shelters led me to belief that in Azalea's shelter there would be clear definitions of "survivors" and "advocates." Instead, through collaboration with Azalea, I was made aware that a central element of her activism was grounded in her commitment to provide services not only to women and child survivors of family and sexual violence, but also to individuals who are marginalized because of their social status. With

this inclusive definition of "community," I was able to understand Azalea's activism as a radical effort to undo structural violence both in women's lives *and* in the lives of entire families and communities. In recognizing this, I was able to work with Azalea in sharing the skills and resources that I brought to the research process with community partners as a way to strengthen a sense of community action through collective engagement (Israel 2003; Minkler 2004).

Strengths and Resources Present in the Community

The second principle of CBPR – which calls for researchers to draw on the strengths and resources already present in the community to address communal health concerns – was difficult to apply. Because *Venerable Mujer* includes seventeen shelters throughout Peru and I was constricted by limited funding and limited time as a graduate student, I was unable to visit and to establish a collaborative relationship with all of the shelters. Instead, I focused my attention on a handful of *Venerable Mujer* shelters, all of which were located in central Lima or in surrounding areas. While I interviewed women and advocates in these shelters, the opportunity to develop a collaborative research partnership was present in only two: Azalea's shelter (*Mujeres en Acción*) in central Lima and Hortensia's shelter (*Mujeres Para la Salud y la Justicia*) in Huaycán. Both Azalea and Hortensia were willing, in a sense, to "take me under their wing" and dedicated tremendous amount of time to discussing the premise of the study, helping me design research questions, introducing me to numerous community partners, and working with me in making sense of initial findings, among other tasks.

While my collaboration with Azalea and Hortensia was similar in many respects, in others, it was drastically different. For example, in Azalea's perspective, the concern that was most important for her and the shelter at the time of the study was the construction of a major

roadway that would displace thousands of families in Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro, where her shelter is located. To respond to this social issue, Azalea found it would be important for the study to document the services that her shelter provided to women from Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro, as well as women from other areas that were either referred to the shelter by state institutions and NGOS or arrived at the shelter on their own.

By documenting the work that the shelter provides to the community – the strengths and resources already present in the community – Azalea felt it would raise public awareness to the broad consequences of displacing thousands of families and essentially, shutting down the shelter. One of the ways in which we worked towards raising awareness of the threat of displacement and ongoing structural violence experienced by residents of Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro was by partnering with community leaders throughout Lima who were willing to contribute to the shelter's efforts to organize against the construction project. One of these partnerships included students from local universities who hosted a multimedia fundraising event in Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro, which generated funds both for the shelter and for the community's organizing efforts.

While the plan for the roadway construction is still underway and recently Lima's mayor Susan Villarán approved a proposal that would relocate displaced families to Patio Union, a newly constructed housing complex, efforts by community leaders and organizations like Azalea and the shelter have resulted in major changes to process. For example, initially it was stated that families who were forced to relocate would be "compensated" an amount equivalent to six thousand dollars. That amount has now been raised to thirty thousand dollars as a result of protests and action taken by community leaders in Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro and surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, while Villarán proposed that Patio Union, with its

modern architecture and green spaces, would improve the living conditions of families while maintaining community cohesion and social relationships (RPP 2013), Azalea and advocates argued that relocation would drastically impact the community life and relationships. According to Azalea:

> People know the work that we do in the shelter. If they know of a woman…Their cousin, daughter, neighbor, or a sister whose life is being threatened by violence, they will tell her to come see me. It's the same, if I know somebody who needs to feed their family, I tell them to go to the community kitchen.
>
> It's a constant exchange of information and resources. It happens because we know each other, and we have lived in solidarity for many years. If we know of an injustice that has been done to somebody, quickly we organize, we demand justice.

In Hortensia's shelter, *Mujeres Para la Salud y la Justicia* the task of drawing on strengths and resources already present in the community to address a communal problem included relying on existing knowledge and projects that the women in the shelter and Hortensia had been developing prior to my participation. From interviews and conversations with Hortensia, advocates, and survivors, it became evident that one of the primary barriers for women to build a life independently of an abusive partner was the vast material inequality that marked their lives. These included lack of housing, limited opportunities for work due to discrimination based on gender, race, and class status, and limited support from family and social networks as a result recent migration from rural areas to Lima.

To address this barrier, women in the shelter had been involved in several projects, such as accepting contract work from local food vendors and restaurant owners who would pay them less than one Sol per every kilo of *aji panca* (Peruvian red pepper) they seeded. This type of work was appealing to some of the women in the shelter like Violeta, who after working most of the day selling candy on the streets of in La Molina, one of Lima's most affluent areas, found it

useful to continue working on her "off time" when she was taking care of her two young sons. As I helped Violeta seed a towering pile of *aji panca* on a cold winter night, my fingers raw and burning from having seeded nearly a kilo of red peppers on my own, she explained:

> I make very little money with the *panca*. It's only enough for my bus fare and the money I have to give my son because his school is too far away. I alone pay for everything that my sons need. I feed them, I buy them clothes, sometimes they ask for a treat.
>
> I have to give them that too because they're boys and what they see, they want. It's not good for me to always say, "No, you can't have it." I think they'll get tired of hearing me say "no" and they'll start taking things. It's not much what we earn with the *panca*. It's just enough.

Yet, as Hortensia and the women in the shelter explained, while projects like the *aji panca* provided some benefits (e.g., working from home meant that women could care for their children), it was also temporary and dependent on the whims of the people who contracted their labor. It thus became important for the women in the shelter to establish their own projects - based on their own knowledge and resources – that would provide the opportunity to generate funds on a more sustainable level. After many conversations with Hortensia, advocates, and survivors it was decided that they wanted to establish a textile and artisan collective. The women organized themselves into a collective that also involved women from the community who were not necessarily involved with the shelter but who were skillful artisans. Since I was unable to participate as an artisan and weaver, the collective agreed that the best way I could participate was to provide the initial capital for the project that would enable the women to buy necessary materials and equipment and to establish an online catalogue of their items, which to this date include bags, *chullos*, leg warmers, among other items.

Figure 9: Purse Made by the Women's Weavers Collective (Source: Author)

As a result of the women's creativity and collective action – strengths and resources that were already present in the shelter - the project was successfully developed and has helped survivors and advocates learn and refine a skillset that can contribute to efforts of gaining economic independence, establishing a small business, and strengthening collective action projects in the shelters.

Co-Learning and Capacity Building Among Partners

In reexamining the notion of community and in focusing on strengths and resources that were already present in the community to address social problems, this study also advanced two additional principles of CBPR: co-learning and capacity building among all partners, in addition

to emphasizing local relevance of the study. As I was working with Azalea in documenting how displacement would further marginalize the families of Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro by limiting the services that the shelter can provide both to women in the community and to those from other areas in Lima, I was learning about community organizing and the critical role that Azalea and the shelter have played in advancing social justice. Additionally, as I was collaborating with women living in Hortensia's shelter establish a community-based project that would generate funds and expand on existing resources and knowledge, I was co-creating a space for capacity building. By allocating time, energy, and resources (for example, the limited funding that I could provide as a graduate student) to supporting women's efforts of creating more sustainable ways to generate funds that would keep the shelter open, my hope was to have the study be relevant to the needs of those who were a part of the study.

Limitations to CBPAR

While I have strived for my study to follow and enhance participatory approaches to research, I am aware of their limitations. One of the primary limitations is that the inclusion of community members in the research process can be challenging and require specific mechanisms of implementation (Fisher and Ball 2003). This proved to be a significant barrier that I encountered and one of the reasons that in the end, it became more conducive to collaborate directly with only two shelters, when there are seventeen *Venerable Mujer* shelters in Peru. From the beginning, Azalea and Hortensia were interested and supportive in developing a collaborative project with me, and they did their best to include me into many aspects of their professional and personal life. Directors from other *Venerable Mujer* shelters, however, were unable (or unwilling) to engage in this level of collaboration due to varying factors, including health

problems and participation in additional projects that limited the amount of time and energy they could devote to my study. A researcher's "outsider" position can also pose limitations to establishing relationships with community members that foster cross-cultural understanding (Letiecq and Bailey 2004). While my personal experience with intimate partner violence granted me some rapport with participants that eventually led to building long-term relationships, my "outsider" position as someone who entered the shelter as a volunteer and not as a resident, on some level, shaped my relationships with participants.

Methods

The field research phase of this study extended from 2009 to 2012. During these three years, I spent a cumulative twelve months in Lima. The following three methods have guided me through the field research and dissertation writing phases: archival research, participant observation, and interviews. Below I describe in detail my use of these three methods.

Archival Research

I conducted archival research to historically contextualize the data I collected through participant observation and interviews. Archival research gave me the opportunity to draw connections between policy and demographic shifts, and the data I collected throughout twelve months of field research. I conducted a significant amount of archival research for primary and secondary sources using university and public library archives from both U.S. and Peruvian libraries. I also collected archival research from public collections and libraries in Peru, these included feminist NGOs, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, Ministry of Health, Women's Emergency Centers, and *Venerable Mujer* among others.

In Hortensia's shelter (*Mujeres Para la Salud y la Justicia*), I was given access to the shelter's archives, including budgets, reports, and general client information. To best understand the data collected from the shelter's archives, I relied on the assistance of research-assistant, Peonía, a young woman from Chiclayo who was a living in the shelter during the course of my study. I also searched for relevant reports and studies using the online archives of Peruvian and international institutions. Gathering these sources has aided my understanding of the broader patterns of violence against women in Lima, throughout Peru, and globally. It has also added to my understanding of the multiple factors that contribute to Peruvian women's vulnerability to intimate partner violence, as well as local and national resources they, in theory, should be able to access.

Participant Observation

In examining how violence shapes the lives of Peruvian women and how these women cope with, resist, and heal from these experiences, my understanding of participant observation is informed by the belief that participant-observer ethnographic techniques are:

> Better suited than exclusively quantitative methodologies for documenting the lives of people who live on the margins of a society that is hostile to them. Only establishing long-term relationships based on trust can one begin to ask provocative personal questions, and expect thoughtful, serious answers (Bourgois 1995: 12-13).

My attempts to build long-term relationships based on trust and reciprocity with participants involved immersing myself in the everyday life and activities of the shelter. While I did not permanently live in the shelters[12], I volunteered in the shelters six days of the week. I

[12] The reason why I lived in other areas of Lima and not in the shelters was due to lack of available rooms. It was difficult for shelter directors to offer me room and board for an extended stay because rooms were limited and housing me would mean they would not be able to provide

participated in every aspect of daily life in the shelter that I could, from helping directors and advocates manage women's individual cases to cooking, cleaning, caring for children, and helping women in whatever fund generating projects they were involved. Outside of the shelter, I attended meetings in the community that were relevant to the work being done in the shelter, from meetings with community partners, political rallies, to neighborhood celebrations. I was often invited to family gatherings, weddings and birthday parties. Being asked to participate in some of these activities, for example caring for children, took considerable time and effort and when I was asked, I understood it as an indication that both the directors and women living in the shelters viewed me as somebody who they trust.

My relationship with Azalea and Hortensia continues to this day. Communication, though facilitated through email and social media, is at times difficult to achieve given the incredible task of running the shelter, being active leaders in their communities, and caring for their families. Azalea has been incredibly helpful throughout the dissertation writing stage and has made every effort to respond to any questions or requests for clarification that have emerged. I am still in contact with advocates and residents, though many of them have left the shelter and the contact information I had on file for them has changed. For those who I am still in contact with, it has been beautiful to witness how they have continued with their education, become mothers, and are moving forward with their lives.

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refuge to women who needed their service. Directors of the shelters in which I volunteered and conducted interviews extended an invitation to live in the shelter, in a room of my own and rent free. Offering me a room of my own would mean that directors would have to ask the women currently living in the shelter to double up and share sleeping areas, which I knew from conversations with directors and residents alike, was not an ideal situation since a sense of privacy was necessary for women to regain their health and bond with their children. After discussing these points with directors, we agreed that it would be best if I stayed for multi-day and often week-long visits when women traveled back to their home communities to visit relatives or for agricultural planting and harvesting practices.

Interviews

Interviews for this study were organized in a semi-structured format. To follow a participatory approach to research, interview questions for shelter residents were composed in consultation with Azalea and Hortensia, who provided feedback on several draft research questions. Their feedback was instrumental in designing research questions that were composed in a way that was relevant, appropriate, and meaningful to the women I interviewed. For interviews with Azalea, Hortensia and other *Venerable Mujer* shelter directors, I relied on a separate set of questions.

I interviewed 35 women from four different *Venerable Mujer* shelters from 2009 to 2012. Of those 35 women, four (11.4%)of them were shelter directors, five (14.3%) of them were longtime shelter advocates (who had never been shelter residents) and the remaining 26 (74.3%) were women who at one time had been a resident at a *Venerable Mujer* shelter. Of these 26 women, fourteen (53.8%) were living in a *Venerable Mujer* shelter at the time that I interviewed them and twelve (46.2%) were living away from the shelter at the time of the interview but continued to access the shelter for multiple reasons, including eating daily meals at the shelter in exchange for cooking and cleaning duties, seeking the counsel of the shelter directors on personal issues and participating in economy generating projects such as community fundraisers and textiles. All the women that I interviewed had been involved in heterosexual relationships with male partners.

Of the 35 participants, 26 (74.3%) women were from the Andean highlands, most prominently from the Departments of Ayacucho, Ancash, Apurimac, Junín and Huancavelica. Three (8.6%) women were from Amazonian jungle regions, including Iquitos and Pucallpa. Four (11.4%) participants were also migrants to Lima from other coastal regions, including two from

Piura, one from Trujillo and 1 from Chiclayo. Two (5.7%) of the women interviewed were born in Lima from families originally from the highlands.

The average age of women interviewed was 35 years old, and their ages ranged from nineteen to 68. Women had an average of 2.34 children. With a few exceptions, participants were native Quechua speakers, the most widely spoken indigenous language in the Andes. All of the participants spoke Spanish, though there was variation in the knowledge of the language.

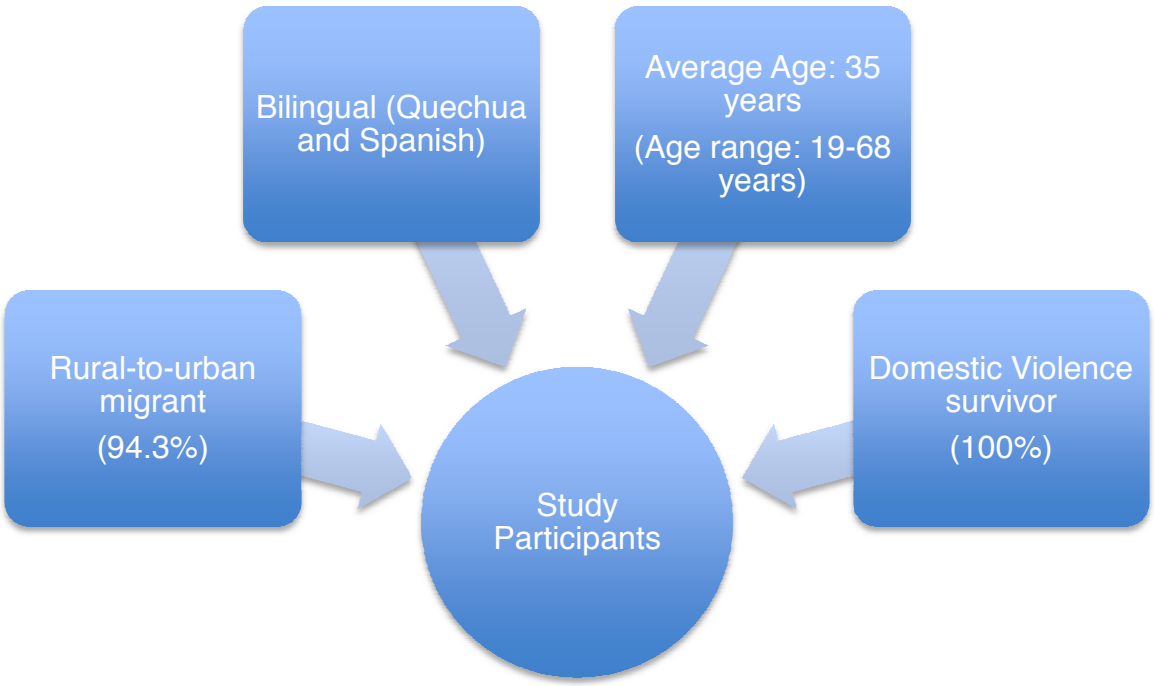

Figure 10: General Characteristics of Study Participants

Interviews were conducted in Spanish and lasted anywhere from one hour to four hours. For the most part, interviews were conducted in the shelters, in a private room. A handful of interviews, however, were conducted in women's homes or in my home. At times, interviews were spread out across several days to accommodate the women's schedule. In the cases where the women stayed in the shelter on a long-term basis, I was able to interview them on more than one occasion. This was immensely beneficial as I was able to verify information, ask for

elaboration on some points raised in the interview, and most importantly, was able to nurture a relationship with the women. Follow-up interviews also allowed for women to reflect on their narratives and add or clarify details they believed were important to my understanding of their experiences. With a few exceptions, all interviews were audio recorded. When I was unable to audio record the interview (e.g., due to noise pollution), I took extensive notes. After each interview, I would spend anywhere from ten to twenty minutes journaling about the interview process. Documenting my experience of witnessing a participant's story immediately after the interview helped to capture nuances and subtleties of the interview that could not be captured in the audio recording.

This dissertation also draws from five focus group sessions with women who experience intimate partner violence and interviews with social service providers that were conducted for a 2009 University of Washington School of Public Health study on women's use and knowledge of family violence social services in Peru. Focus group sessions were held in three different settings in metropolitan Lima, including Azalea's shelter and two hospitals, Hospital Dos de Mayo, Hospital Edguardo Rebagliati Martins. A total of 30 women participated in the five focus groups. Approximately one-third of participants were under 30 years of age and over one-third were 35 years and older. The majority (86%) of participants had fewer than 13 years of formal education and 60% of the women were employed. Approximately 76% of participants were unmarried and 70% had fewer than three children. Slightly more than half of participants were currently living with an abusive partner. Twenty-eight service providers were interviewed for the study, including psychologists, doctors, lawyers, police officers, social workers, health care providers, and shelter directors.

Table 1: Characteristics of Focus Group Participants, *N = 30*

Characteristic	*n*	%
Age (years)		
≤ 24	6	20.0
25 - 29	4	13.3
30 - 34	8	26.7
≥ 35	12	40.0
Years of formal education		
> 12	4	13.3
7 - 12	22	73.3
≤ 6	4	13.3
Marital status		
Married, living with partner	7	23.3
Single, living with partner	13	43.3
Separated	10	33.3
Employment status		
Employed	18	60.0
Not employed	12	40.0
Number of living children		
1	12	40.0
2	9	30.0
≥3	9	30.0
Currently living with abusive partner		
Yes	17	56.7
No	13	43.3
Length of relationship with abuse partner (years)		
< 7	16	53.3
≥ 7	14	46.7
Length of abuse (years)		
< 3	17	56.7
≥ 3	12	40.0

All interviews and focus group sessions were transcribed verbatim and translated into English. Transcripts were then coded for thematic content, and emerging key themes were reviewed to ensure consistency. When possible, interview transcripts were shared with participants.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed how critical ethnography and participatory approaches to research have informed this study. I have described the principles of critical ethnography and CBPR, and have explained the ways in which they differ from positivist approaches to research. In identifying these differences, I have argued that critical ethnography and participatory research frameworks, with their focus on privileging the voices of participants, dispelling notions of objectivity, and advocating for collaboration with participants in addressing social problems that impact community health, have allowed me to connect my research with action.

Chapter Five/Quinta Flor:
"Señora, These are Innocent Burns": Persistent Flaws and Contradictions in Peru's Family Violence Law

"I showed the doctor the burn marks on my thighs, where he [her partner] threw the hot water. He glanced at them only for a minute and asked me if there were other injuries on my body that I could show him. I didn't understand. He said, "*Señora*, these are innocent burns. You must have burned yourself cooking."
- Tulipán, woman living in shelter

"We meet women who have a tendency for hysterics."
-Doctor, Lima

Introduction

When Peru adopted the Family Violence Law in 1993, it became the first country in Latin America to advance a legal framework to address domestic violence. Yet, twenty years later, domestic violence continues to be prevalent in Peru. This chapter explores this contradiction by presenting a critical analysis of policy and legislation designed to diminish violence against women in Peru. I identify three primary reasons why, despite state intervention, Peruvian women continue to experience high rates of violence: 1) policies lack a clear legal framework 2) lack of institutional resources, and 3) failure of policies to address the underlying causes of domestic violence. I ground my analysis in ethnographic data, including the voices of women living in *Venerable Mujer* shelters as well as perspectives from social service providers. In the latter half of the chapter, Dalia's story makes visible the role that the state plays in producing and reproducing violence and oppression that shape the lives of domestic violence survivors.

Peru's Family Violence Law: Adoption and Design

State intervention in the area of violence against women was made official, through legislation, in the 1990s, when President Alberto Fujimori seemingly began advocating for women's emancipation and development in efforts to gain political support from national and international critics who opposed his increasingly authoritarian rule (Ewig 2010). Fujimori's agenda to promote women and women's issues was meant to regain the country's support after the macro-economic stabilization program known as Fujishock, which included structural adjustment through neoliberal economic policies and privatization of state-held enterprises, and disproportionately impacted those already living in the margins of society.

While Peru had already formally recognized violence against women as a form of discrimination and as a human rights violation, with the 1982 ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)[13], Fujimori's "women-friendly" regime was designed to coincide with international momentum created by the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 (Rousseau 2005). After the conference in Beijing, Fujimori announced the creation of the Ministry of Women's Advancement and Human Development (MIMDES)[14] also known as PROMUDEH (Promoción de la Mujer y Desarrollo Humano) in 1996. It was one of only a handful of ministries worldwide at the time dedicated to the promotion of women's issues. This was followed by a national policy on family planning that

[13] In addition to CEDAW, Peru's obligations to eliminate violence against women are enumerated in the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (The Convention de Belém fo Pará, ratified in 1996). The Peruvian government is also a signatory nation to all major human rights conventions. Peru's treaty obligations include the American Convention on Human Rights (ratified in 1978); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified in 1990); the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ratified in 1978); and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified in 1978). See McKinley (2012) for a more detailed discussion of the impact of laws and conventions on Peru's national legal systems.

[14] Now called the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP)

introduced for the first time a range of reproductive health options for women within services offered by public health clinics. In addition, feminist and women politicians began work on designing and adopting the Family Violence Law.

The law was presented as an example of women's democratic decision-making and collaboration, with women politicians belonging to Fujimori's party repeatedly stressing the unanimous nature with which the law was designed and adopted, and essentially creating an ideal vision of women working together (Boesten 2006). Yet, controlled by "authoritarian women with unconditional loyalty to the president" (Ewig 2010: 112), the process was far from democratic. As Boesten (2006) notes, the image of women democratically working together for social change fails to account for how power and privilege among the different women involved in designing and adopting the law played out, and overlooks those women who were not officially part of the decision making process but who work directly with survivors of violence.

When the Family Violence Law was adopted in 1993, its primary focus was to expand on existing domestic violence interventions, one of which was women's police stations. Following the model set forth by Brazil, in 1988 Peru opened the first women's police station in Lima (Nelson 1996; Santos 2004). Staffed only by female police officers, women's police stations were designed to specifically focus on issues of domestic violence. Increased complaints filed by women suggested the intervention was a success and soon, more women's police stations were opened throughout Peru. As of 2010, there were 27 women's police stations throughout Peru, with the majority located in Lima and other urban areas.

Following the expansion of women's police stations, in 2002 MIMDES and four other ministries (Education, Justice, Interior, and Health) formed the Inter-Ministerial Committee on violence against women and worked together to create the National Program to Combat Family

and Sexual Violence (PNCVFS). The program mandated the development of protocols for an integrated response to women who experience violence. The plan guaranteed domestic violence shelters, offices to address children's needs, as well as the centralization of social, medical, and legal services in women's emergency centers (CEM)[15] to build a society in which 1) women, regardless of their age, socioeconomic status, education, ethnicity, ability, profession, or sexual orientation, among other identity markers, are guaranteed to live without the threat of violence; 2) there is gender equality; and 3) human rights are upheld through the elimination of sociocultural patterns that promote discrimination (MIMP 2013).

To achieve these goals, the PNCVFS depends on collaboration between the state and broader society to ensure that policies relevant to addressing violence against women are developed and implemented, women who experience violence have access to quality public social services, and social change that promotes equitable relationships between men and women is achieved.

[15] There are currently 183 CEMs throughout Peru, though current President Ollanta Humala has publicly stated that he is committed to opening 25 new CEMs per year.

Figure 11: Family Violence Hotline Promotional Material Issued by MIMDES/MIMP (source: http://infanciahoy.com)

Modifications to the Family Violence Law

Since its adoption, there have been a number of modifications to Peru's Family Violence Law. The first modification to the law happened in 1997 and saw the definition of family violence expanded to include violence perpetrated by extended family relations. Modifications also sought to improve victims' access to forensic medical examinations, and to further clarify procedures that the police had to follow. In 2000 the law was amended to overturn the obligatory conciliation hearings. However, conciliation continues to be promoted by police officers, prosecutors and judges (Alcalde 2010: 160). Peruvian organizations such as Movimiento Manuela Ramos and Flora Tristan criticize the state's continual promotion for conciliation, arguing that it reproduces the inequality of power between a woman and her abuser. As a lawyer from Flora Tristan explained, the process of conciliation is one in which the woman suffering the abuse is further burdened with societal and familial pressures to "forgive" her abuser and to keep the family in tact:

> When a woman takes the first steps to leave an abusive relationship, she should be worried about her safety and that of her children. The last thing she needs to hear in that moment is that she is betraying her husband or the person who is harming her.
>
> There is absolutely no betrayal on her part. The betrayal is the violence. That's what a woman needs to hear when she's being brave enough to take that first step, she needs to hear that she's doing the best she can for herself and if she has children, for her children as well.
>
> Unfortunately, it's more than likely she'll never hear those words from the police or the doctor. Most of the cases I know, the woman has barely spoken a word about what she's lived through and the police are already saying they can't do anything and she should forgive what he's done to her because in the end, she has to think of everybody else before she thinks of herself. What will her family say? What will happen to the children?
>
> She even has to think about her husband or partner! It's unbelievable! It does happen, women are told, "You shouldn't go to the police," or "Don't follow through with the report" because if the husband or partner has a job, that's going to be over. And if he likes to drink, all of a sudden he's going to become an alcoholic.
>
> In the end, these things, if they happen or not, are the woman's fault. Why? Because she feels empowered to do something about the violence. Of course, the message the woman is receiving is that nobody cares about what happens to her. She can be beat, raped, humiliated, enslaved, or even killed.

In her study on violence against women in Mexico, Frias Martinez (2008) similarly argues that the general and widespread devaluation of women, and consequent violence against women, in the Mexican context results in abused women being pressured by service providers to reconcile with abusive partners. Frias Martinez asserts that within the patriarchal nature of Mexican society, where familial ideology is valued over women's bodies, service providers "take advantage of the conciliation process, which is open ended as to the separation or the return of the woman to the shared domestic space, to promote only one outcome, the reconciliation of the couple" (2008: 254). Rondon (2003) argues that a similar familial ideology, one that is deeply rooted in patriarchy, permeates Peruvian society as well. This ideology constructs women in relation to men (wives) and dependents (mothers and caretakers), and categorizes them as

passive and self-sacrificing. To echo Amaranto, a former shelter resident turned advocate, "without a husband, a woman is invisible in the eyes of society. If she doesn't have one baby at her breast and another one on her back, she's something strange."

In Peru, women who attempt to report the violence they experience in the home often receive two general responses from the police or other service providers they come in contact with: 1) there is not enough evidence that domestic violence is taking place and 2) family unity is a women's responsibility (Movimiento Manuela Ramos 2009). A vast majority of the women I interviewed who sought help from the police or a medical doctor after a serious injury were told that it was in their family's benefit not to report the violence and reconcile with the abusive partner. In other words, women were told to forgive and tolerate intimate partner violence for the sake of their family's *bienestar* (wellbeing).

Years after conciliation stopped being mandatory under the Family Violence Law, many service providers continue to view conciliation as the most effective method for addressing domestic violence. A male family prosecutor explained:

> Some women need to escape their home because she's raped or nearly killed. There should be shelters for extreme cases like that. But most of the women in the shelters are there because their husbands raised their voice or disciplined the children.
>
> The husband does one little thing they don't agree with and they say, "He's violent, he dominates me. This is gender violence." But most of these women don't know what gender violence encompasses as a concept. There have to be patterns of power and control. If a man raises his voice, even if he hits a woman once, can we say it is gender violence? Perhaps your opinion is different than mine. The best way to work with women in these situations is to encourage them to reconcile with their husbands or partners.
>
> Most of the time a man and woman clash because they don't know how to communicate. Once they learn how to talk to each other, they can live peacefully. A woman is not going to learn how to communicate with her husband if she's in a shelter with ten other women who are all in the same position.

> Then you have the director and the others, and for the most part, these women have never experienced violence in their own lives, telling women they should be feminists. Soon everything that has happened in their life is because of patriarchy.
>
> So, what I think is that it is more beneficial for a woman to learn how to communicate with her husband. This way she can explain what she needs without blaming the man. This is skill that all women should have.
>
> As professionals, we need to encourage women to do this. We need to value and aid reconciliation. It is easier to send a woman to a shelter, it's more work for us to work with the couple. When a woman goes to a shelter, nobody wins. In fact, the family disintegrates. When there's reconciliation the family unit is strengthened.

As the family prosecutor's statement illustrates, conciliation is perceived as a guaranteed method for eliminating intimate partner violence, despite significant power inequalities between men and women in Peruvian society. While a couple can reconcile in the presence of service providers and professionals, there is no guarantee that the couple will adhere to the terms of the conciliation once they return home. In other words, there is no accountability or case management embedded into conciliation processes. In fact, for conciliation hearings to take place, a woman must report the violence to the police, which often escalates the violence she experiences at home. In Peru, as in other countries worldwide, women are at higher risk of serious injury or death after they report their partner to the police or file for divorce.

For Zinia, a forty-six-year-old mother of three, a conciliation hearing did little to curb her husband's violence. On the contrary, after a brief "honeymoon period" (Walker 1979) where there was no physical violence, Zinia's husband began to beat her again. The beatings, as Zinia described were increasingly more severe.

> [Before] he hit me with his hands. He slapped me and would push me down to the ground. I would fall and cover myself so he wouldn't hurt me. Then when he started hitting me with bricks, sticks, anything he would find. He would say, "Now you'll have something to tell the police.

The belief that a conciliation hearing will undo deeply rooted patterns of behavior is significantly flawed. Just as women are at higher risk of being seriously harmed and murdered once they separate or divorce from partner or husband, women who report domestic violence.

Family Violence Law: Voicing Flaws and Contradictions

Despite expanding the number of women's police stations across the country, launching a national program to diminish family violence, and centralizing a three-tier approach to family violence composed of social, medical, and legal services in women's emergency centers, interventions to combat violence against women in Peru are laced with flaws and contradictions.

The Absence of a Clear Legal Framework

The law's definition of family violence, which encompasses any act or omission that causes physical or psychological harm, mistreatment without injury, including grave threats of coercion, that occur between spouses, co-inhabitants, and those who live in the same domicile, is incomplete and consequently excludes entire categories of women and particular forms of violence. Under the current legal framework, women who have been raped or sexually assaulted by their intimate partner cannot report the assault as an act of family violence (Human Rights Watch 2000)

In light of this, victims of rape and sexual assault at the hands of an intimate partner can either file a psychological abuse complaint under the Family Violence Law, or file a standard criminal rape complaint. However, women who decide on filing a standard criminal rape complaint do not have the option to secure an immediate protection order, which leaves them at

risk for future violence and retaliation efforts by their perpetrators. Furthermore, while forensic examinations for battered women are provided free of charge under the Family Violence Law, sexual violence forensic examinations or "rape kits" must be paid for by the victim herself.

The law's exclusion of marital rape as family violence highlights the Peruvian state's inability – or disinterest – to understand the complexity of violence against women. Indeed, it points to the fact that for many Peruvians, including those in charge of enforcing the Family Violence Law, martial rape is not yet accepted as "real rape" (Alcalde 2010:101). A recent multi-country study on gender violence conducted by the WHO (2008) found that Peruvian women experience high rates of sexual and physical violence at the hands of intimate partners and family relatives. The study specifically indicates that more often than not, women who experience physical violence in their lifetime also experience sexual violence. Despite such evidence, the state continues to mark a clear separation between physical violence and sexual violence against women. Consequently, intervention models put in place by the Family Violence Law fail to adequately serve victims of domestic violence who more often than not, need psychological treatment to manage the trauma of violence and sexual assaults, in addition to immediate protection from their perpetrators.

To understand why a law that was designed and adopted to curb domestic violence – at least in theory – excludes sexual assault and rape by an intimate partner, it is important to consider how the Peruvian state has historically interpreted and interfaced with sexual violence. During the colonial era, legal frameworks sanctioned men's violence against their wives. Spanish legal codes like the *Siete Partidas,* authorized men to rule over every aspect of his wife's life, including her body, sexual conduct, and any property she and her children possessed. The Catholic Church and other secular authorities further authorized a husband's rule over his wife

by retaining exclusive rights over marriage and divorce procedures, even in cases where domestic violence and marital rape were known to occur.

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that it was only until 1991 that sexual violence was included in the penal code as a criminal offense. Before then, sexual violence was considered a "crime against honor" (Boesten 2012). Yet, it was only in 1997 that Article 178, which allowed a rapist to escape criminal prosecuting by marrying the woman he raped, was changed to counter the popular belief that rape was an acceptable path to marriage (Alcalde 2010:102). And, in cases of gang rape, as long as one of the rapists married the woman, the rest of those involved in the assault, could escape criminal prosecution.

Generally, in Peruvian society, sexual violence continues to be understood in terms of patriarchal notions of women's honor and dignity and men's claims to women's bodies and sexuality (Henriquez-Ayan 2006). As such, sexual violence by an intimate partner is not considered a serious issue. Prosecutors and forensic doctors interviewed by Boesten (2012) indicated that rape could only be proven if the woman assaulted was a virgin, thereby virtually dismissing the possibility that adult women and married women could be the victims of sexual assault.

Practices at the family and community-level also reinforce patriarchal notions of women's honor and dignity. According to a report issued by Human Rights Watch (2000), even after the rape-marriage law (Article 178) was repealed, women's families, along with police and communities, in rural areas continued to force women to marry their rapist as a way to preserve the honor of women's families (Alcalde 2010; Kirk 1992). Such practices suggest that sexual violence is more of a violation of family honor than a violation of women's rights and that it can easily be absolved by an offer of marriage.

Another limitation imposed by the law's narrow definition of family violence is its focus on the physical manifestations of violence. Despite the law's expansion of the definition of family violence, domestic violence continues to be understood and addressed as purely a physical assault upon a woman's body. Left unaccounted for are the myriad ways in which women experience domestic violence, including psychological and spiritual wounding emanating from direct assaults upon our entire being, and not just our physical body.

Institutional Violence: Reproducing Oppressive Hierarchies

Unavailable Resources

Lack of institutional resources - in the form of funding, personnel, and training – is just one possible explanation for the state's failure to provide appropriate services to women who experience violence from an intimate partner. Women's police stations are designed to include a lawyer, a psychologist, and a social worker; however, insufficient funds result in some stations being unable to include one or more of these professionals (Alcalde 2010:164). The lack of necessary personnel means that service providers employed are often overworked, underpaid, and inadequately trained to deal with complex and multilayered issues such as domestic violence. The lack of necessary personnel also means that women receive fragmented and ineffective services. A male social worker I interviewed observed:

> We lose women. They stop coming to us… [because] we're understaffed. We have to work a high number of cases and this affects the quality of our services.
>
> If four women come to see me in one day, I have to see all four of them and I can have enough time to work with them and understand their situation. But if eight or ten women come to see me in one day, I can only dedicate fifteen minutes to their case because I have other cases to address.

This same social worker also spoke to the challenges that women who experience material inequality face:

> The organization she has gone to for help didn't help her [woman who is seeking services]. Her life is at risk and nobody helps her. She may also be financially dependent on her husband. Poor women are worried about having enough food to feed their children. It must be frustrating to have to sit and wait two hours to see a health provider...Because she could be working and finding resources for her children in those two hours. Daily survival is a priority for her.

While the social worker offers an insightful reading of how lack of institutional resources in the form of limited personnel and condensed in-take meetings deter women from following through with a complaint, they frame this problem as affecting "poor women," actually, "poor mothers" who they imagine are too preoccupied finding food for their children to navigate the bureaucracy inherent in the intervention strategies put forth by the Family Violence Law.

While in Peru, women who experience material inequality are more vulnerable to varying forms of violence, including violence from an intimate partner; it does not mean that women with a different class status do not experience violence in the household. In fact, in Peru as in the United States, women from privileged classes experience high rates of intimate partner violence but are less likely to report the violence (Fuller 2001). Different factors contribute to such underreporting, including shame, fear of social isolation, as well as broader access to financial and other resources that often make leaving an abusive relationship a more realistic endeavor for women who are financially independent.

Institutional Pathways and Roadblocks to Justice

In addition to lack of institutional resources, social service providers act as gatekeepers and have the power to influence how a case will unfold. The police, generally the first contact

and point of reference for women who are being abused, battered, and harassed, hold the responsibility of making an initial risk assessment of the complaint that will then be sent to medical doctors and prosecutors. A medical doctor must determine that the woman's injuries are serious enough to warrant an assault charge instead of a misdemeanor. This decision is often made arbitrarily, as the medical doctor must determine, based on his or her own interpretation, whether the injuries inflicted upon the woman filing a complaint require at least ten days of recovery time (Boesten 2012). However, not all women are given appointments for medical examinations for the same day or even week of the complaint, thereby affecting the diagnosis they receive from the medical doctor. This is particularly true in the case of bruises, lacerations, or burns that unlike broken bones might reduce in severity as days go by. If it is determined that the recovery time is less than ten days, the case is not considered an assault and does not warrant criminal proceedings.

With such a decision-making process in place, the majority of complaints received is generally considered misdemeanors and are handled by family courts. However, even when cases do get on the family court docket and the petitioner (the woman) is seeking divorce, a judge still has to determine whether the complaint is a credible claim of family violence (McKinley 2012). In the rare instance where a case is moved to criminal court, the judge can order jail terms ranging from three to five years. Yet most of these orders are annulled by a suspended sentence and thus, very few cases involve actual imprisonment of aggressors. This is particularly alarming since women are at higher risk of escalating violence - often leading to homicide - in the time immediately following a formal complaint with authorities or attempts to leave the abusive partner (DeKeseredy and Joseph 2006).

There are, of course, other measures available to the police and judiciary under the

current family violence intervention model. Yet, these measures are also subject to service providers' assessment of risk and injury, an arbitrary process as outlined above. Beyond the risk assessment conducted by the medical doctor, which determines whether a case is moved to criminal court or remains in family court, the police and judiciary, in theory, can offer protection to battered women by issuing restraining orders, withdrawing the perpetrator from the home and charging him with low fines (Boesten 2012). In practice, however, these measures are difficult to enact. For example, the police can only incarcerate perpetrators for 24 hours for the immediate protection of women, and only if there is a perceived threat of future violence. This means that the woman who is being battered must report violence "in the act" and wait for the police to respond to her complaint. The requirement to denounce violence "in the act" is counterintuitive to any sincere attempt to address violence against women, as studies show that survivors of intimate partner violence do not immediately share the intimate details of being victimized with family, friends, and peers, let alone officially report the act to authorities (Ritchie 2000; Sokoloff and Dupont 2005).

If it takes the police an extended period of time to respond or if they fail to respond at all, which is most often the case, then the possibility of incarcerating the aggressor is eliminated, and the woman must wait, endure another beating, and once again attempt to prove to the police that she is need of immediate protection from her aggressor. When perpetrators are incarcerated, it does not seem to improve the situation beyond the immediate need (Boesten 2012). Police officers consider the incarceration measure to do little more than to give perpetrators time to sober up, sleep off a hangover, and rest before being sent home.

Much like the measures discussed previously, restraining orders, temporal suspension of visits rights, and prohibition on owning and carrying firearms, the latest measure added in 2008,

are also marked by irreconcilable weaknesses. For example, there is no measure in place to make sure that perpetrators observe restraining orders. Other than signing the restraining order, perpetrators are not forced to interface with the order in the form of case management such as psychological treatment or anger management services and often do not pay the consequences of violating the order. For perpetrators and some police officers alike, a restraining order is simply a piece of paper.

The law's reliance on family courts is seen as an impediment to justice, mainly because of structural problems in the Peruvian judicial system, exemplified by prolonged pre-trial detention, excessive formalism, bureaucratic requirements, and corruption, all which render courts inaccessible to ordinary citizens (McKinley 2012). Given these structural problems, it has been argued that the Family Violence Law is in fact more relevant *outside* of the court: in women's complaints to the police, their appeals to the Municipal Defender's offices (DEMUNAS) and NGO legal clinics, their submission to forensic medical examinations, and their counseling sessions at conciliation centers.

Still, the pathways offered outside the court present barriers of their own, such as prolonged and unclear bureaucratic processes and lack of effective case management and corruption. These barriers deter women's ability to follow through with their attempts to leave abusive relationships. A psychologist elaborated on these barriers:

> I don't think institutions always make it clear what path, what processes women have to follow. This happens to women I have worked with personally, sometimes the process takes too long and they lose that spark, they become discouraged and start to downplay the violence because they don't want to involve themselves in the legal process because they don't know what the actual process looks like and they are afraid.

Scratching the Surface: Peru's Failure to Address the Underlying Causes of Domestic Violence

Lack of institutional resources and complicated institutional pathways are two possible explanations for the failure of the state to provide protection and services to women. Perhaps the most glaring explanation for such high levels of impunity in Peru is the normalization of violence against women, particularly indigenous women. Speed (2013) argues that violence that indigenous women from Mexico and Guatemala migrating to the US experience takes place on multiple registers, but "is permeated at every level by ideologies of race, class, and gender" (3). This is also true of indigenous women in Peru- indigenous women are constructed as racialized, gendered, and classed subjects by the state and society at large.

Violence against indigenous women is intimately bound to continuing legacies of colonialism and racism. Critical feminist scholarship shows that gendered violence against indigenous women was a fundamental part of the process of colonization and conquest (Smith 2005, Ross and Smith 2004). According to Smith (2005), the US, along with other colonizing countries are "engaged in a "permanent social war" against the bodies of women of color and indigenous women, which threaten their legitimacy" (33). Indeed, "the ideological construction of indigenous women as violate-able has underpinned genocidal policies against indigenous people from colony through the modern-state" (4).

In Peru, the construction of indigenous women as racialized, gendered, and classed subjects and thereby their devaluation as human beings, is most recently exemplified by documented cases of forced sterilization of primarily Quechua and Aymara women from 1996 to 2000. During this time, it is reported that 200,000 indigenous people were sterilized without consent in order to meet President Fujimori's family planning targets (Speed 2013). Many women died during sterilization operations due to non-hygienic conditions and because the

procedures were performed without anesthesia and without aftercare. With 200,000 indigenous Peruvians sterilized in four short years, not to mention the cases of sterilization before and after Fujimori's presidency, it is clear that the attacks on the reproductive rights of indigenous women are deliberate strategies to control indigenous nations.

Racialization and Devaluation of Indigenous Women in Peru

Alcalde (2010) argues that in the Peruvian national imagination, geographic regions – *costa, sierra,* and *selva* - are not created equal. Indeed, the popular division of Peru into three regions places Lima at the center as the most modern, progressive, educated, white(r), and powerful city on the coast and contrasts it with the less developed, poorer, and more indigenous highland and jungle regions. Just as this racist reading of the Peruvian map maintains regional dimensions of race and inequality, in intimate relationships some women are imagined to be inferior to others (e.g. their male partners) depending on their place of origin. Alcalde's rich ethnography, *The Woman in the Violence: Gender, Poverty, and Resistance in Peru* (2010) shows that ascriptions of specific identities associated with indigeneity, lack of formal education, and rurality inform the many ways in which women experience inequality and violence within abusive intimate relationships. Such identity markers also underscore women's experiences when attempting to access needed services to cope with or leave abusive partners.

The use of terror tactics of a gendered nature by the armed forces against civilians, especially women also indicate a deep irreverence and devaluation of women's bodies, particularly indigenous women's bodies. According to a report sponsored by Human Rights Watch (1992), the most commonly used terror tactic of a gendered nature was the rape of women by armed forces as a punishment for men who were suspected of "supporting" the opposing

group (Whitmer 2010). The raping of women, not for a personal transgression but as punishment for a perceived betrayal on the part of a husband, intimate partner, or male relative, was a tactic aimed to "dishonor" and shame the families of the raped women (ibid). In this way, we can argue that women's bodies did have value, yet this value was based on patriarchal ideals of virginity and sexuality (stripping women from their virginity through the act of rape made them less valuable) *and* was dependent on her value as a woman as interpreted by her husband, intimate partner, or male relative.

The devaluation of women, particularly indigenous women in Peruvian society helps us understand why of the 538 rapes cases reported in the TRC (of which the majority of victims were indigenous women), only 16 were investigated and presented for public prosecution. As of May 2012, one case awaits trial in Lima and another awaits trial at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, while the other cases show no progress.

Several factors inform the impunity by which the Peruvian state has responded to the prevalence of rape of indigenous women during the armed conflict. Though these factors are all different, they all reflect mainstream societal ideas about violence against women, particularly sexual violence. One major reason for a lack of substantial judicial action in documented cases of rape is that rape is often defined as a common crime instead of a human rights violation. When rape is defined as a common interpersonal crime, it is "decontextualized… from a situation of systemic violence and terror [and it] disallow[s] contextual arguments that can evidence the likelihood of sexual violence" (Boesten 2012: 368). Furthermore, when rape is defined as a common crime it is limited to a statute of limitations of nine years and only carry a sentence of approximately four years in prison. Since wartime rapes took place fifteen to thirty years ago, the statute of limitations has expired and judicial action is difficult to follow. Another reason is that

in Peru, as in other parts of the world, it is believed that one cannot prove that sex has or has not been coercive. This argument is really based on a skewed interpretation of what constitutes as evidence (for example, rape victim's narrative are not considered solid evidence). The emphasis on physical evidence to prove rape leaves the psychological and emotional trauma associated with sexual violence unaccounted for.

Dalia

Dalia's story makes visible the role that the state plays in producing and reproducing violence and oppression that shape the lives of domestic violence survivors.

It was in Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro where I first met Dalia, a forty-three-year-old Quechua-speaking woman from Ayacucho. She was living in a *Venerable Mujer* shelter in a rapidly growing semi-rural community two hours outside of Lima. The day of our meeting, Dalia had journeyed the two hours to downtown Lima to visit with Azalea in Villa Maria del Perpetuo Socorro. On that day, Dahlia had come to Azalea to ask for help: her husband Joel had recently kidnapped their three children and had taken them back to Ayacucho. Dalia was desperate to bring her children back to Lima but did not have the money to do so since she would have to pay transportation costs from Ayacucho to Lima for herself and her three children.

Over the course of a year, I had the opportunity to learn more about Dalia's experience with violence through several interviews and daily conversations. From the moment I met Dalia, I was instantly drawn to her energy. Her face - marked by two prominent scars: a long and deep ridge that crossed almost her entire forehead and one on her upper lip, which she was particularly embarrassed by and would cover with her hand whenever she smiled or laughed – was a reflection of kindness and strength. In her 40s, Dalia was older than most of the other women living in the shelter and perhaps because of this and the fact that her children were not with her at

the time, Dalia had taken up an active role in the shelter, often times acting as a part of the director's leadership council.

Dalia was born and raised in small rural town in Ayacucho that was populated by only four families. As an only child, Dalia remembers her childhood being lonely and made especially difficult when her father left home when Dalia was very young. While she didn't recall her parents' relationship being volatile or abusive, she explained that when her father left and she grew older, her mother would tell her about the time her father hit her pregnant belly so hard, she thought Dalia had died inside of her womb. When Dalia was three or four years old, her father left and while this provided a sense of temporary relief for Dalia mother, it also created a different kind of suffering for now Dalia's mother was solely responsible to provide and care for the family.

> My mother suffered greatly because my father left. She had to provide for me on her own. All those years of being mother and father and working from daybreak to night made her sick and now, she's still suffering all alone, sick and there's never enough money for all the medication she needs.

Dalia was married at an early age to Joel, a man who had once worked as a police officer in Ayacucho during the time of the armed conflict between the state and *Sendero Luminoso*. Soon after their marriage, Dalia became pregnant with her first child. Shortly after giving birth to her first child, a son, Joel began to beat her. In the consequent years, as Dalia gave birth to two more children and daily survival became a difficult task for their growing family, Joel's violence began to escalate and he began to sexually assault her.

The spread of political violence throughout the Andean highlands and the mass concentration of armed conflict in Ayacucho had caused incredible hardship to Dalia town. Her family, like many others, across the highlands, including her Joel's, had experienced widespread

poverty, loss of land, and a large number of deaths in the family due to political violence. As a member of the police force, Joel directly experienced and participated in political violence. Dalia explained Joel's exposure to high levels of brutal political violence as the reason why he would often be consumed by incredible bouts of anger, fear, and rage that would result in him beating her until she was unconscious, throwing stones at her, which is how the deep and prominent scar ran across her forehead, and on one occasion, biting off a portion of her upper lip.

Dalia also described how her husband was forced to swallow gunpowder at one point of his career as a means to squelch any fear he might have felt during the years of civil war. Dalia believed this to be a primary cause of what she referred to as his "sickness".

> I would ask him, "Why do you this to us? We're your family and you terrorize us!" "I am like this," he would say. It's because when he was with the police, they would make all the men swallow gunpowder so that they wouldn't be afraid to kill people. He would say that once that gunpowder was inside here [touches belly], he stopped being afraid about killing others.
>
> All the time I lived with him, I thought, "This man could kill me," it was a fear that was always there. Even now, that poor devil still makes me suffer, I'm afraid what he's doing to my children.

According to Dalia, Joel was never the same after swallowing the gunpowder and his violence reached unprecedented heights. Throughout the years of constant beatings, Dalia contemplated leaving Joel but her fear of his retaliation was too great and she endured the violence. It was only when Joel became increasingly violent towards their children that Dalia decided to leave him and escape from Ayacucho. Dalia did not tell anybody in her family of her plans to leave Ayacucho, for she feared Joel would harass and threaten her family for information about her whereabouts.

Without her Joel knowing, early one morning Dalia and her three young children escaped from their home and headed toward Lima. Dalia's escape was made possible by careful planning,

a sense of creativity, and incredible bravery. Faced with the difficulty of limited financial resources to fund her escape, Dalia sold all of the family's animals during one of Joel's drinking binges where he would disappear for days at a time.

> My children and I gathered all the little animals, the chickens, the pigs, all of them and sold them as fast as we could! We didn't sell them at top price because I was afraid he would come back from wherever he was drinking and find out and then it would be worse for all of us.
>
> So we just sold them at whatever price people would pay and all of sudden, I don't know how to explain it, we had enough money for all of our bus fares and we left. I thought, maybe I should save a chicken to bring along with us, if we ever needed more money, but we sold everything and we left on the bus with only the clothes we had on.

Joel's violence towards the children was one motive for her escape, but as Dalia explained, she knew she had to be strategic about when she left.

> All the time, I would think about leaving. I would be working in the *chakra*, or washing clothes, or caring for my children, even in my sleep, and I would be thinking about leaving. How will we live? What will my children eat? Where will I work? I would ask myself these questions and I didn't know how life would be.
>
> I knew it would be difficult to work and care for my children because they were young, I still had to keep an eye on them. Anyway, who will hire a woman with her children in her arms? Once they were older, eight, nine, ten, around that age, I knew they could take care of each other while I worked. That's why I left then.

In Lima, Dalia faced countless obstacles. As an indigenous woman from the highlands, with limited formal education, and three children to care for, a primary obstacle for Dalia was finding a good paying job. In Ayacucho Dalia had worked her family's land, which required a specific knowledge base, a precise skillset, and painstaking labor. However, in Lima, Dalia's skills were immediately devalued for she did not know how to access the labor markets most commonly designated for rural-to-urban migrant women, which include domestic labor and street vending.

> Nobody wants you to work here, they tell you "First, you have to get this document, then you have to get another one," and when you realize it, it's been days and weeks and you're still not working. Right now in this job they pay me 15 soles a day, it's nothing for a full day's work. I save it, I don't like to spend what I don't have to but you do to the store to get soap or something like that and you leave with almost nothing. One cannot live like this.

Soon after arriving in Lima, day-to-day survival became almost impossible for Dalia and her children. It was then that Dalia met Azalea and began living in *Mujeres en Acción*. Although Dalia learned how to make and sell print tee shirts while living in the shelter and this became her primary source of income, what she managed to earn was never enough and she continued to struggle to meet her family's needs.

> I would wander; I would walk and cry asking people for help because I couldn't feed my children. Somebody told me about a house, a shelter for women who needed help. That was Azalea's shelter. At that time there was only a few women living here, only one or two. I felt happy… we had our own room, and I could wash my children's clothes. After a while, we had to start living our lives again, you know, I had to go to the marketplace and start working and I suffered walking around the city thinking that my husband would find me.

Dalia continued to be fearful of Joel finding her and so Azalea relocated her to a shelter outside of the city limits. Yet, this did not deter Joel from finding Dalia. Once Dalia realized that Joel had tracked her down, she went to the police to report him for stalking, harassment, and threat of violence. Yet, since Joel was a police officer, the local police ignored Dalia's case. In fact, the police accepted a bribe from Joel in exchange for providing him with the address to the shelter. The police even escorted Joel to the shelter and waited nearby as he forced his way into the shelter and kidnapped their three children.

Dalia expressed a deep sadness about being separated from her children. She feared her children would learn how to be violent from their father and wanted to reunite with her children before they were made sick by the trauma Joel carried with him.

Dalia: When I eat good food, my tears fall. I don't know if my children have eaten or if they're hungry. What is he feeding them? Even if I'm tired of working, I can't and rest, I think of my children and how their lives must be with him.

Damarys: Do you know where they are? Can you get in touch with them?

Dalia: They're with him and his family. When I have money, I call his phone to talk to my children. He says, "They don't want to talk to you, they don't love you, they forgot about you." I hear my children in the background talking to each other or laughing and she says, "You see, they're happy because you're gone." I know my children are not laughing because they're happy to be with him, they're children and that's what they do, but I still cry because I want to talk to them.

He'll never let me get close to them, I know that. He does this to make me suffer, it's for revenge. He says the only way I can have them is if I go back and live with him. I tell him that will never happen and that I'm going to get my children to live my own life. He's told me more than once that if I do that, he'll find a way to kill me before I return to Lima. I've already decided and I prefer to die bringing them back.

Damarys: What do you fear the most about your children being with their father?

Dalia: He's sick, he's lived like this for years and years. How can I think he will be different with my children? All the death that was around…everything he saw and what he did those years as a police officer made him like that – sick, violent.

My children see him living with the sickness and I know he's beating them because if I'm not there, who else will he beat? No, no, I can't live knowing that my children are going to live with their father's sickness.

Several barriers hindered Dalia's attempts to recover her children. A primary barrier was that she did not have the money to pay for a round trip bus fare to Ayacucho for herself and bus fares to Lima for her three children. Bus fare from Lima to Ayacucho ranged from 60 to 100 soles, an amount that Dalia, who earned 15 doles a day, was unable to provide. Another barrier was that Dalia did not have anybody who was willing to accompany her to Ayacucho to retrieve her children. Dalia seemed to belief that Joel would not go after her and her children or retaliate against her for taking the children if somebody was by her side. Having heard countless stories of the physical and sexual violence Dalia experienced at the hands of her husband, as well as of

the beatings and humiliation her children had lived through, I questioned this belief, especially since Joel had already threatened Dalia with murder if she ever attempted to retrieve her children.

On more than one occasion Dalia asked me what I thought about her plan to return to Ayacucho to retrieve her children. I would commend Dalia for being a good mother and for loving, caring, and wanting to protect her children. I would share my sincere concern for her safety and that of her children, and I would remind her that I was working with advocates on finding a way to safely recover the children. My heart ached saying these words to Dalia, for I could see in her eyes that these options were not right for her. Yet, at the same time, I didn't know how else to help Dalia. One day, as Dalia and I were sitting in the kitchen, eating a bowl of white rice and potatoes, she asked me if I would travel with her to Ayacucho and help bring her children home.

I went to Azalea and advocates to discuss Dalia's case and possible ways in which we could collaboratively work together to help Dalia reunite with her children. Azalea and advocates thought it was too dangerous for us to go to Ayacucho on our own given the threat of violence and personal injury.

One approach that both directors and advocates believed would be appropriate was to ask national and international organizations that worked directly with children, women, and human rights to become involved. I wrote letters, reports documenting Dalia's story, and called, visited, and sent emails to numerous agencies. Many were upfront about their inability to assist, citing overwhelming case loads, temporary suspension of programming and services due to insufficient funding, and skepticism about being able to help Dalia since she was still married and that gave her husband grounds to claim parental rights. Others were quick to take up Dalia's case, invite

me to workshops, gatherings, and meetings only to not return my calls and emails when I inquired about how Dalia's case was moving along. In the end, nothing substantial was gained through these avenues.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the persistent flaws and gaps present in Peru's family violence policy and legislation. I argued that a significant reason for the country's prevalence of violence against women is due to the lack of a clear domestic violence legal framework, faulty and nonexistent institutional resources to uphold the service delivery model that is outlined by policy and legislation, and an utter failure of policies to address the underlying causes of domestic violence. In the latter part of the chapter I include Dalia's life story to provide a clear and compelling example of the role the Peruvian state plays in producing and reproducing violence and oppression in the lives of domestic violence survivors.

Chapter Six/ Sexta Flor
For Women, By Women: Peru's Grassroots Domestic Violence Shelters

Introduction

This chapter investigates the services that *Venerable Mujer* shelters manage to provide to battered women and their children despite lacking tangible and consistent support from the state. It is centered on a collection of voices from advocates and survivors. Cala's story reveals the complexity that survivors face in their attempts to transform their lives after an abusive relationship. Yet, from Cala's story we gain a deeper understanding of how in *Venerable Mujer* shelters, survivors and advocates exercise agency by practicing transformational survival strategies.

Institutionalization and Professionalization of Women's Shelters

"Beyond refuge is the rest of life." (Dobash and Dobash 1992: 92)

Women's movements of the 1970s defined violence against women and children as a form of illegitimate and illegal abuse, and provided alternatives such as shelters for women attempting to flee such violence. Prior to women's grassroots efforts around issues of violence against women and children, domestic violence had been kept hidden by the curtain of privacy drawn around the nuclear family (Weis 2008).

Almost immediately after women's efforts raised awareness of violence against women and children, domestic violence advocacy witnessed increased professionalization. At that time, in order to remain in operation, domestic violence organizations began to rely on external sponsors for financial support. In addition to providing funding, sponsors developed expectations of professional service provision that often did not coincide with the missions and ideologies of

domestic violence organizations. This resulted in formerly autonomous domestic violence shelters and centers being absorbed by larger institutions such as hospitals, community mental health centers, and district attorney's offices (Campbell and Martin 2001; Weis 2008). The merging of domestic violence organizations with larger institutions is seen as a departure from a social action-oriented, critical feminist ideology domestic violence social movement to a professional human service provision model (Koyama 2006; Richie and Kanuha 1993; Weis 2008).

The implications of this shift are largely contested. On the one hand, organizations providing domestic violence services experience benefits from the professionalization of their programs. Some argue that professionalizing services has helped to frame domestic violence as a serious social problem that needs to be given visibility and skilled attention if it is to be alleviated (Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1996). Others find that the shift to professionalization brought feminist concerns to established centers of political power (Markowitz and Tice 2004).

On the other hand, there are negative effects associated with the professionalization of domestic violence service provision. First, the shift to professionalization requires close collaboration with the police, courts, and social services agencies. With this forced collaboration, approaches to family violence shifted from a radical critique of patriarchy, racism, and other forms of inequality to a more therapeutic stance with a focus on changing the individual by making him or her get along better in their family and work lives, but not on changing society (Merry 2009). As a result, domestic violence became increasingly viewed as an aspect of family functioning and not a societal problem. Second, the creation of social hierarchies within and between women's organizations often results in unequal access and or distribution of resources that affects both clients and advocates. For example, for the first two decades of the domestic

violence shelter movement in the U.S., the domestic violence advocates were primarily survivors themselves who because of their personal experience were able to connect more deeply with women who came to the shelters.

Today, the expectation within institutionalized and professionalized domestic violence work is that advocates hold certain professional credentials, including education degrees, previous experience providing direct services to victims of domestic violence, and through the completion of certification and training programs (Weis 2008: 227). While it is understandable that training and direct experience working with women who have experienced violence is important, it is also important to consider how the strengths and knowledge that survivors-turned-advocates who might not have all the expected credentials in hand, but have specific insight to survivor's experiences, benefit services and programming (Koyama 2006).

One direct consequence of professionalization is the creation of what Weis (2008) calls "boundaries." Weis notes that boundaries – both physical and professional – are "a way for human service providers to create physical, social, and/or personal distance between themselves and their clients" (226). Physical boundaries manifest in living arrangements in shelters. For example, in one U.S. shelter where Weis conducted research, the advocates worked downstairs and the residents lived downstairs, creating an obvious distinction between the staff and the women. Weis explains, "the difference was not only in the occupation of physical space, but it was punctured by the recognition that the advocates working downstairs had more access to resources that the women living upstairs" (ibid).

Non-physical, professional boundaries were also present in the shelters included in the study. Professional boundaries make clear that advocates and women in the shelter follow a professional/client relationship, one that is based on unequal power relations. To create and

maintain this boundary, advocates worked hard to limit the amount of information about their personal life that they shared with the women. For advocates, this boundary allowed them to step back from the emotionally charged environment in which they work to determine best strategies and thus provide "professional" services to women. The fact that advocates have access to deeply personal information regarding shelter residents - via files, reports, and actual narratives – yet, they represent themselves as ahistorical individuals to shelter residents, is a clear marker of unequal power (Koyama 2006).

The idea that advocates must establish and maintain boundaries between themselves and the women they work for has become naturalized in mainstream dominant domestic violence advocacy. As a result, meaningful relationships between advocates and survivors are often difficult to develop. Further, advocates who have adopted a professionalization framework tend to look down at and criticize those who attempt to establish different kinds of relationships with the women, especially if these relationships allow for advocates to show emotions. It is difficult to imagine how a lack of emotion is possible, let alone necessary, when working with women who are experiencing incredible suffering, and how this translates to quality care and service provision. What is clear is that such expectations are rooted in a hegemonic business model approach to domestic violence, which is often supported by funders and donors.

Women's Shelters in Peru

In Peru, domestic violence advocacy has also undergone mass professionalization greatly influenced by the increased presence of international NGOs. *Venerable Mujer* offers survivors a different set of services than those provided by NGOs focused on women's rights and domestic violence. Central to the network's mission is a holistic understanding of the many factors that

contribute to violence against women and children, including issues of health disparities, poverty, environmental justice, housing, criminal justice, and human rights. For *Venerable Mujer*, approaching violence as a symptom of intersecting historical, social, political, economic, and environmental factors cannot be addressed through the rigid approaches that funders tend to impose on domestic violence shelters. Violence requires services that are responsive to a variety of everyday needs of women, their children, and their community, which can change from one day to the next and often requires long-term attention.

Venerable Mujer: The Challenges of Staying Grassroots

At times, *Venerable Mujer* operates as what it is: a network of shelters. The different shelters work together on issues on dealing with domestic violence, improve their services, secure grants and other forms of funding, and coordinate meetings of shelter advocates. Yet, each shelter is autonomous, meaning that each shelter director and staff organizes themselves in the best way possible to meet the needs of the women they serve and secure funds for maintaining the shelter open. For example, by the time I returned to Lima to conduct field research on my own in 2009, Azalea had opened up the shelter's kitchen to the public, selling lunch specials to factory workers and community members.

Though having the freedom to be creative in the ways each shelter secures funds is an important aspect of their autonomy, for Azalea autonomy is also about existing independently from state institutions and other organizations that would prevent the shelters from providing the kind of services they deem is necessary for the women and children living in the shelters. Autonomy in this sense is less about acting as individual actors, but as acting for the benefit of the collective in one local site tailored to local needs. For example, partnering with an NGO or

state institution, such as the Ministry of Health, might result in funding opportunities that would allow the shelters to provide different services, yet such a partnership would also mean that the shelters would have to adhere to strict program rules and regulations, including the amount of time residents are allowed to stay in the shelter, and the use of shelter space.

I was able to better understand Azalea's concerns regarding international funding in 2011 when, upon her request; I wrote a proposal for a grant offered by a religious-based German NGO in Lima. In the proposal, I included a budget for items Azalea found essential to maintaining the shelter in operation - a refrigerator, stove, repairs to the roof and windows, and a radio so Azalea could teach yoga and dance-based therapy to the women. Yet, none of these items were deemed essential by the NGO, who instead awarded the shelter a small grant to build an addition to the front of the house so as to increase the capacity of customers that could be served at the restaurant. The grant included strict stipulations. For example, Azalea had to hire a professional firm to complete the project. Additionally, the project had to be completed within a month or else the shelter had to repay the amount awarded.

In the end, the grant was more trouble than Azalea could afford. For one, the restaurant would have to remain close while the addition was being built. This meant that the shelter would be denied its only form of income. Second, Azalea believed the shelter's reputation would suffer because people would be angry with her for bringing in a professional firm from outside the community instead of hiring from within. This deeply concerned Azalea, for she knew that many of her neighbors were unemployed and often went without. Third, expanding the restaurant space would mean that more tables, chairs, light bulbs, and other items would be needed and these were expenses the shelter could not afford to make. As Azalea explained:

> We asked for a refrigerator because without it, we can't have a business. We asked for a stove because this stove right here is mine; I brought it here from my house.

> Tell me, without a stove, how can we serve food? But now they tell me I can't sell food for a month because there are going to be building new walls! I don't know how we're going to make it through this, you know.
>
> It's like instead of supporting the shelter, they're making us lose money and on top of that, pay money we just don't have.

Regulations around the use of the shelter space are a problem for Azalea, who often allows people from the community to stay in the shelter whose experiences and needs might not fit within the framework of a "battered woman" or "victim of family violence." For Azalea, violence is a complex issue, one that is not limited to a man assaulting or raping a woman.

> Violence is not caring for the wellbeing of another person, to know that they have nobody who loves them and to not offer them love.
>
> If their own families abandon them and they are turned away from the very state institutions that should be helping them, where else can they go?

For Azalea, not offering to help, not caring about the many factors that contributed to an individual's suffering, and not offering love, are all acts of violence. And they are acts that Azalea believes the Peruvian state commits every day against women and survivors of violence.

> The state has no shame. These experts working at the Ministry and those feminist organizations publish report after report about women's experiences of violence but they don't know what it's like for these women.
>
> They're not here at the shelters, they're not helping these women recover…they turn these women away, they say, go to the shelters, we can't help you…and they're still in their offices writing about what it's like for these women without caring to know.

In addition to taking in women who are referred by NGO and state institutions (receiving little or no financial assistance for taking on these cases), Azalea also takes in women, men, and children who might not be victims of family violence per se, but are victims of neglect, different forms of structural violence, and abandonment.

> We offer them a place to go when they are escaping from the death… we have opened up houses in poor regions because the State doesn't care that poor women are dying everyday.
>
> *Venerable Mujer* has been around for 27, 28 years now and I don't think NGO's would want to have to do what we do because its hard work and stressful because you have no money to help them.
>
> You have to be a magician and solve their problems and work 5 times as hard as somebody who just works 8 hour a day. We have to work from 3 in the morning and we don't have days off, unless you request them, but most to time we work day and night.
>
> We do everything here. When they're giving birth we're their nurses, their nanny. Shelters should have services for children… we stay wit them throughout the labor so that they can receive quality care. Everything is a struggle.
>
> The health system is shameless. They ignore those people who cant speak for themselves, who don't know… but they cant do that with me.

As a distinct entity with minimal ties to NGOs, international funding firms, and the state, *Venerable Mujer* shelters have the freedom to determine the services and programming they offer.

Cala

I met Cala, age 39 in 2011. At the time of our meeting, Cala and her two sons Cesar, age thirteen, and Ivan, age six, had been living in the shelter for six years. Cala, who was born and lived her entire life in Choco, a small township in Arequipa arrived at the shelter after leaving Felipe, her *conviviente*. In a matter of a few weeks, Cala who was pregnant with Ivan at the time and Cesar went from living in their own house on their own land to living in a small room in a shelter shared by multiple women and their children.

After seven years of living with Felipe, in which both Cala and Cesar endured a tremendous amount of violence, Cala decided to leave Felipe. Cala felt a deep sadness in leaving Choco, she knew it would be unlikely she would ever see her aging father again or work the land

and care for her animals. However, she also knew that she had to leave before the beatings intensified as they had during her first pregnancy. Cala explained:

> When I was pregnant with the first one and even when the baby was born, he would terrorize me, the baby too. It was as if he was under a spell. He's the only one of my town that's like that, the rest of them are good people.
>
> He would beat me and chase me around the house. I would have to hide from him. I would hide under the bed with the baby and I would hold the baby close to me so that he wouldn't hear him if he cried. We used to sleep all three of us in one bed and when the baby cried during the night, he would kick the baby and the baby would fly off the bed.
>
> I thought to myself, "He almost killed me when I was pregnant with the first one, I don't doubt he'll kill me this time," so when my sister who lives in Lima came to visit and said she would take care of us, I knew I had to leave.

Though Cala planned on living with her sister in Lima, Felipe soon appeared at her sister's house demanding that Cala and Cesar return with him to Arequipa. Seeing no other alternative, Cala decided to go to the police and file a complaint against Felipe. This was not the first time Cala had gone to the police to seek protection from Felipe. In the past she had gone to the police in Choco but no charges were brought upon Felipe. This was the case in Lima as well, but the police did refer Cala to the shelter, which soon became the only place where Cala and Cesar felt safe. Within a couple of months, Cala gave birth to Ivan, who has lived his entire life in the shelter.

Cala worked extensively in a variety of jobs since she first arrived at the shelter and with the help of shelter advocates was able to purchase a plot of land nearby soon after Ivan was born. However, Cala lacked the economic resources and familial support to live permanently on her own and was still living in the shelter when I met her. Because Cala was working only a few days of the week at her job in a restaurant, she was at the shelter more often than the other residents and was therefore one of the people I spent most of my time with.

My relationship with Cala began in the kitchen. Cala, who had worked as a cook in a restaurant for the past several years, was a natural at preparing delicious meals using the shelter's limited supply of food items. Though Cala encouraged me to sit at the table and read the newspaper or take notes of the story she was sharing with me, I gently insisted on helping her prepare meals and explained that it would be an honor for me to learn how to prepare Peruvian dishes from an expert chef. Our conversations, while peeling potatoes, slicing beets or making soup, always started with Cala sharing a memory or detail she thought I would find intriguing about her home in Choco.

Like the majority of families in Choco, Cala family's trade is agriculture. Along with her parents and sisters, Cala grew up working in the *chakra* (milpa) and caring for the cows and other animals. Cala has fond memories of her childhood but she also remembers how her mother's drinking and her parents' fighting brought chaos to the home. At the age of fifteen, Cala went to live with her sister to help care for her growing family. There Cala cared for her nephews, worked in the chakra, cooked and cleaned and went to school.

Soon after arriving at her sister's house, her 30 year-old brother in-law began to harass Cala. He would corner her in the house when nobody else was home, follow her as she worked in the chakra and would spy on her as she bathed and dressed. One morning when Cala was caring for the animals, her brother in-law raped her. Cala described the rape as "the moment when her life changed."

> All day I would cry, my tears would fall like this [motions how tears fell down her face and on her chest]. I didn't know how to tell my sister what he had done to me because we didn't talk about those things. After he did it the first time, he didn't stop. Every day he would take me.
>
> Looking back at all that's happened to me, how the man [her sons' father, Felipe] had rage for me and my son, how now I am alone with my sons, all of that is because of what my sister's husband did to me. He dirtied my life.

> After what he did to me, everything changed, everything. He dirtied me and the man [Felipe] knew it and would throw it in my face.

Cala's brother in-law continued to rape her and she soon became pregnant. Upon learning of Cala's pregnancy, her sister asked her to leave, claiming that Cala had forced herself onto her husband. Cala returned to live with her parents and gave birth to a boy who died of pneumonia soon after being born.

The rape, being blamed for the rape by her sister, the pregnancy and the death of her baby made Cala fall into a deep depression. She would spend her day out in the chakra, more interested in being with her animals than with other people because "with the animals, everything is peaceful. They walk with you, they see you as you are: a woman. With them, it's like you forget how alone you feel." It was this solitude that brought Cala and Felipe together.

> I used to see this man walking around and he was always by himself. He looked so lonely and I said to myself, "He's like me, alone. Together we won't be so alone." He started looking over at me and then talking to me and I listened. That's how we started walking together, I saw him and knew he was alone like me.

Soon after Cala and Felipe started living together and she became pregnant with Cesar, Felipe began to beat her. "It was like he didn't want anything to do with me because I was pregnant, he couldn't stand me or my pregnant belly," Cala explained. Felipe's discontent with Cala and the pregnancy was so grave that he abandoned her in the alfalfa fields when she began to feel birthing pains and was unable to walk on her own.

Cala: I had my pregnant belly like this [motions a half moon that extends from underneath her breasts to her stomach) but I still walked with the animals and would take them all the way to the alfalfa field so they could eat. I would walk slow, holding my belly but I still climbed high.

That day one of the animals ran away and the man [Felipe] yelled at me like this, "Stupid, you don't know how to do anything! Go and bring the animal back!" I had to get the animal back so I started running as fast as I could with my belly but had to stop because I felt pain in my belly. I dropped down right there, in front of him and do you know what he did? He kicked me and walked away!

I laid there thinking maybe he would come back for me but he didn't, I'm sure now he went straight home. I walked and walked, seemed like I walked all day because I could only walk like this [motions slow, wobbly steps]. When I got to the house, it was already dark and I open the door and do you know what I saw?! That man [Felipe] was sitting there eating and warming up the milk that I had brought home that morning! I said, "This baby is coming out" and he replied "That's your problem."

Thank God my mother, who was still alive at that time, and father helped me. My mother told the man [Felipe] that they had to prepare for the birth with herbs and a blanket because in the sierra, we have the tradition where we shake the blanket, this helps the baby come out.

Damarys: Did he help your mother prepare?

Cala: No, he just slept, like that, like nothing! I was crying and screaming all night because the baby wouldn't come out. My father tied the rope to the beam so that the baby would come, but nothing happened. My mother was worried and then my father told the man [Felipe] that they needed to take me to the clinic, over there in the town. I remember he yelled at me, "If you die, you die. I don't have money to spend and I'm not going to made a fool by you."

Damarys: Why did he think you were making a fool of him?

Cala: Oh, because his friends and family would tell him that I was too young to have a child. They would always say, "Why are you with her? She's not for you."

Damarys: Did you go to the clinic?

Cala: No, the baby came out there at the house. I felt like I was dead, I couldn't move but I remember it so clearly, like if it was happening right now. He [Felipe] never got up from where he was sleeping and when he saw the baby for the first time he said, "Throw him out, throw him out!"

After Cesar was born, Felipe continued to beat Cala and he also began to direct his violence toward the baby. While Cala would quietly endure Felipe's beatings, she refused to let him hurt the baby. When Felipe would attempt to hit or kick the baby, Cala would yell and throw things at him to redirect his aggression away from the baby. She would also hide with the baby under furniture and out in the chakra on those nights when Felipe's rage was uncontrollable. When I asked Cala why she thought Felipe was so angry with the baby, she explained:

> My son is dark-skinned, that's why he [Felipe] despised him. The man [Felipe] and his family thought they were white and that's why his family didn't like me. They were always saying something to him about how he was better than me because I was dark-skinned and the baby came out looking like me. All of them, the whole family thought they were white.

Although Felipe and his family were from the same town as Cala and also depended on their crops and harvest as their main source of income, one of Felipe's brothers had migrated to Lima and that connection to the capital city, albeit limited since neither Felipe or the rest of his family had ever visited Lima, made Felipe feel superior to Cala.

When Cala became pregnant for the second time, two events happened that changed the course of her life. First, during the rain season and before Cala had told Felipe that she was expecting, a number of cows died and Felipe blamed Cala for their deaths. Cala tried to explain to Felipe that the cows had died when their stomachs burst open from eating too much alfalfa but he refused to hear of it. Felipe was convinced that Cala had cursed the cows as revenge for the beatings and terror she and Cesar had endured throughout the years. He was determined to beat what he saw as defiant resistance out of her. The months that followed were marked with extreme violence and Felipe's beatings were intensified when he realized that Cala's belly was growing round.

Second, Cala's sister, who was also pregnant and lived in Lima, came to Choco to visit their parents. Upon seeing Cala's face and pregnant belly black and blue from the beatings, she insisted that Cala and Cesar return with her to Lima. Cala, believing that Felipe would soon beat her so badly that she and the baby would die, felt she had no other option but to leave.

> I didn't know what would happen to us. My belly was growing fast and my son was just a little one. I was afraid to leave, I knew I would be on my own there [in Lima]. My sister would say, "You'll live with us, we'll help you," but in my heart I knew that we would be alone.

Cala's intuition was right. Felipe soon showed up in Lima demanding that Cala and Cesar return home to Choco. When he realized that Cala was determined to stay in Lima, Felipe threatened to kill her sister. Cala knew that the only way to escape Felipe was to leave her sister's house and build a life of her own. She went to the police to file a formal complaint against Felipe, but Cala had no visible bruises or marks and the police refused to do much except to refer Cala to a shelter.

When Cala arrived at Hortensia's shelter (*Mujeres Para la Salud y la Justicia*), she was almost due to give birth to her second child, Ivan and was fearful of what the future had in store for her children.

> I was scared. The world is so big and the only person I had next to me was my son, Cesar. I would look down at my belly, I knew the baby was going to be born soon, and think, "How are we going to survive? It can't be done, it just can't be done" but then I would shake my head and tell myself, "That man [Felipe] was going to kill you. Perhaps you'll die because you don't have food to eat but you won't die because somebody will beat you to death."
>
> At the same time, I felt this shame, I can't explain it to you, but I felt shame in my heart because my son was without his father and the baby would never know his father. I thought I had taken their father's love away from them.

And when I asked her about her hopes and dreams, Cala explained:

> At first I didn't want to be there. Everything was crowded and there was dirt and bricks all around us. I wanted to go back to my land, I missed my house and my animals. And I would remember my father, old like he is now, I would feel sadness because I wasn't there to help him in the chakra.
>
> After the baby was born, I felt different. I started to imagine what it would be like to have a business, something small at first, selling food or something like that and then in the future, I don't know, something bigger like the store in the corner.

Connecting Cala's Story and *Venerable Mujer* Shelters

Cala's story is indicative of the ways that *Venerable Mujer's* different approaches to working with residents helps to improve the odds some women have of rebuilding their lives. With the assistance of shelter advocates for the past seven years, Cala was able to claim a small piece of property in the community as her own and consequently build a home for herself and her two young sons. Every aspect that made this accomplishment possible was mediated by the assistance and support of shelter advocates. The land title was made official with the help of Hortensia's husband who happens to be a lawyer. When a local food bank attempted to take Cala's piece of land and open a communal kitchen, Hortensia and advocates stopped this from happening by demanding to meet with the project manager and even calling upon other community members to help them barricade the plot of land.

Cala was able to save money for the construction of the home by living in the shelter for many years. Additionally, Cala was able to earn an income working in a restaurant while the other women and shelter advocates helped care for her sons. Childcare is an important resource Cala and other mothers find in the shelter. Without the assistance and support of others, women with children would not be able to work full-time and/or would be limited to the type of work they could undertake. Though managing motherhood and work responsibilities later became a critical issue for Cala, one that caused her much heartache and stress, she believed living in the shelter was the best choice because there her children were at the very least supervised and fed by the women and shelter advocates.

Disconnection From Life in the Shelter

Though Cala expressed appreciation for the support Hortensia and the other shelter advocates provided to her family, she also expressed feelings of disconnection from life in the

shelter and of frustration with her relationship with advocates and other residents. This disconnection was visible in her lack of relationships with other residents and advocates. While Luna and Ausencia, the other two women who lived in the shelter were friendly with each other and spent time sharing their day with the advocates, Cala was more reserved and kept to herself. Furthermore, while the other women (and myself) participated in collective tasks such as extracting seeds from chilies and textile work, Cala was hesitant to participate. She explained:

> You spend more time working your fingers until they bleed for such little money. I'd rather work in a restaurant. I have to save all that I can, I have my house to think about.
>
> One day the house will be for my two sons, I have to take care of my house.

With the responsibility of a new house to maintain, Cala's priorities were different than those of the other shelter residents. Cala had already achieved her immediate goal: secure land and build a house, and she was overwhelmed by having to navigate work responsibilities and caring for her growing children. For Cala, the immediate need was to save enough money working in a restaurant so that she could take time off working to dedicate herself to addressing her son's Cesar's recent difficult behavior (which I discuss below).

By prioritizing her children and work responsibilities over her presence in the shelter and participation in shelter activities, Cala was removing herself from the spaces that nurtured community, relationships, and emotional support. As a result, Cala explained that she felt a deep sense of loneliness in the shelter:

> I have too much to do to sit down and get to know the new women or talk with Hortensia the way we used to talk. I have to keep my eye on my children, they run off to the internet (cafes) if I'm not here.
>
> I come home from work and I'm already sleeping as I walk in here. I feel more alone now than I did when I first came here and I was all alone then, just me, Cesar, and my pregnant belly.

Unequal Relationships

Cala expressed that she often times felt that Hortensia and other shelter advocates criticized her parenting and associated her children's behavior with what they perceived as a lack of interest or conviction on her part.

> When you're living here and they know you have to stay because you don't have anywhere else to go, they use that…and criticize everything you do or don't do. Something goes missing in the shelter, they automatically say it's my son and if I try to explain to them that I know he didn't steal it because I asked him and he said no, they think I'm covering for him. They want me to punish him even when I know he didn't do it.

Throughout my relationship with Cala, parenting was a major theme emerging in most of our conversations. At that time, she was having a difficult time keeping her oldest son, Cesar out of trouble in the shelter, at school, and in the community. Cesar had recently taken to stealing money and had stolen a small amount of money that Hortensia kept hidden in the shelter. In addition, Cesar had also stolen a small amount of money from another shelter resident and from Cala. Although the amount of money Cesar stole was small and either he returned the money after it was made known that it had gone missing or Cala paid back the amount that was taken, Cala believed that her family had been ostracized.

Cala expressed feeling constant pressure from Hortensia to "do something" about Cesar's behavior. As a result, Cala agreed to take Cesar to a children's psychologist, who, only after a few sessions diagnosed Cesar with obsessive compulsive disorder and an addictive personality. According to the psychologist, this explained Cesar's desire to take money that was not his and to become extremely angry and hostile towards Cala when she refused or simply could not afford to give him money to go to the internet café and play violent war-based video games.

Cala, however, understood Cesar's actions differently yet felt that she could not voice her own maternal instinct because it would be interpreted as being non-compliant. For Cala, her maternal knowledge told her that Cesar's behavior was a reflection of the trauma he experienced early on in his life when he witnessed the violence that Cala suffered.

> He's struggling against his own history; everything he knew for the first few years of his life was violence and suffering.
>
> These wounds hidden before when he was younger, or I didn't see them. Now they're showing and he struggles to do good.

Cala believed Cesar needed intensive and long-term counseling. Yet, it was difficult for Cala to take Cesar to the psychologists on a regular basis, as the counseling center's business hours were in the middle of the day and she worked from morning to night. Cala struggled to balance work responsibilities and parenting, particularly because she felt advocates and residents ostracized her for not "choosing" to take Cesar to the psychologists. "I have no choice," Cala explained, "if I don't work I don't make money, I can't pay for school supplies, for our food, our transportation, I have nothing. If I don't take him then we no longer have a place to stay because they don't want thieves here."

I asked Cala if she ever shared her feelings about life in shelter with Hortensia or the other shelter advocates. Her response points to issues of unequal power relations:

> Hortensia might say that this shelter is for us women and our children, but this shelter is her house, the food is for her family too. We can't say much. She comes into our rooms whenever she wants, if we ask her "Why were you in my room?" she'll say, "What are you hiding? Why can't I go in your room?" We can't say much. She's the director.

In the end, Cala decided to leave her job in the city and stay at home and "supervise" her children. She also decided to start Cesar on medication for his OCD. According to Cala, these decisions made life in the shelter more bearable for her and her sons.

Conclusion

Cala's complicated experience provides a view of women's experiences in *Venerable Mujer* shelters. Despite the limitations of *Venerable Mujer* shelters ability to negotiate power dynamics between advocates and women (which is a limitation in all other shelters as well), *Venerable Mujer* offers a unique opportunity for women to begin rebuilding their lives in ways that empower them by fostering their ability to make strategic life choices (Kabeer 1999). For Cala, this meant being able to work outside of the shelter, which allowed her to save up money to acquire land and build a home her children can inherit.

Chapter Seven/Séptima Flor:
The Act of Reciprocity, A Conclusion

Introduction: Goals, Claims, and Implications

As I discussed in chapter one, my field research and the writing of this dissertation have been informed by a handful of overarching goals. One goal was to bring an ethnographically nuanced perspective to Peruvian women's experiences of domestic violence. Interviews with survivors and on-the-ground experience volunteering in shelters in Lima revealed that women's experiences of domestic violence is linked to broader forms of violence, including institutional, political and structural violence. Women's stories highlighted in chapters three and four made visible how power structures informed by racism, sexism and class bias influence women's experiences of intersecting forms of violence. Chapter five centered on Dalia's narrative and complicated the general understanding of domestic violence as a symptom of individual pathology. Dalia's explanation of her husband's rage and violence as stemming from his training as a police officer and his participation in violent acts during the armed conflict clearly articulates how political violence invades and is recreated in the most private and intimate of spaces. Additionally, Dalia's negative experiences with police officers who aided her husband in kidnapping their three children and with employers who refused to hire or fairly compensate her because of her indigenous identity, showed how multiple systems of power and oppression inform women's opportunities to leave an abusive relationship, protect their children and rebuild their lives.

Chapter five further showed how institutions and structures influence women's experiences of domestic violence, specifically their attempts to access available institutional resources. Women's narratives of discrimination and revictimization by police officers, medical

doctors, psychologists and other social service providers exposed the ubiquitous nature of institutional violence and its impact on women's efforts to address violence in their home.

For women who sought resources that would help them leave an abusive partner, negative treatment by social service providers resulted in women feeling further confined to a life of violence and suffering. In bringing to the fore the myriad ways in which multiple forms of violence intersect and inform women's lives, my goal was to challenge the notion that domestic violence is a private family matter, isolated from social processes and events.

Another goal was to bring an ethnographically nuanced perspective to how Peruvian women cope with, resist and heal from domestic violence. In Peru, a common belief is that domestic violence is an inherent cultural trait among indigenous Peruvians. Indeed, media representations of indigenous Peruvians generally include a dueling couple, a drunken husband and a wife who passively endures being beaten and humiliated. The saying, *"más me pegas, más the quiero"* (the more you beat me, the more I love you) popularly used across socioeconomic urban classes to refer to *amor serrano* (highland love) naturalizes domestic violence among indigenous men and women as customary and traditional (Alcalde 2010: 32). It also suggests that indigenous women accept violence as a form of affection. Women's narratives included in this dissertation contest the notion that indigenous and mestiza women in abusive relationships are submissive victims who fail to resist their oppression.

In chapter six, Cala's story made visible acts of resistance she strategically employed throughout the years she endured physical, psychological and sexual violence from her husband. From hitting back, redirecting her husband's violence from her children to herself, to secretly saving money and planning her escape, Cala's narrative speaks to women's options in coping with abusive relationships. By also including Cala's experiences of living in the shelter, my aim

was to bring ethnographic detail to her efforts to heal and rebuild her life. Cala's story makes clear that despite insurmountable obstacles, women in shelters exercise agency by practicing transformational survival strategies.

A third goal was to interrogate the contradictions arising from Peru's dependence upon shelters to assume its responsibility for the care and reproduction of its citizens and the simultaneous denial of resources that keeps women from receiving basic domestic violence services. In examining this contradiction, I aimed to bring to the fore the often overlooked contributions of grassroots domestic violence shelters. Chapter six provided ethnographically rich data on Peru's grassroots domestic violence shelters and focused on the experiences of shelter directors, advocates and residents to show the range of individual and collective practices of resistance, resilience, and healing from violence. In highlighting the critical work being done by grassroots shelters, my goal was to help document and establish principles for more inclusive approaches to domestic violence that transform strategies that 'serve' women into networking to 'empower' women to organize their own means of solidarity and healing.

A final goal was to contribute to the scarce but recently growing collection of anthropological text that focus directly on activist research in the field of domestic violence. In situating myself as a survivor of domestic violence and an activist scholar, my hope is that this dissertation makes visible contributions that anthropology can make in our collective effort to transform the world into a more peaceful and equitable place for women, children, and men.

Together these goals inform my central claims of this study: 1) displacement and migration, racialization, and class inequality are critical factors shaping the experience of intimate partner violence among women; 2) women respond to multiple forms of violence with strategic creativity and collective agency; 3) legal structures and policies in Peru perpetuate

intimate partner violence; 4) the collective nature of "healing" in shelters; and 5) the contradictions of shelter life in the absence of government and non-government resources, creating autonomy and flexibility to define shelter policies and programs on one hand, but gaps in resources create the potential for further exploitation within the shelters for residents.

These claims can have important teachings and implications. If structural factors such as displacement and migration, racialization, and class inequity shape the experience of intimate partner violence (IPV) among indigenous women and legal structures and policies perpetuate IPV, it has implications for the Peruvian governments' economic, socio-cultural, and political decision-making process. It also has implication for how decisions impact indigenous populations of Peru. At the local level, it has implications for service providers and the cultural relevancy of their practice and policies. This is particularly relevant considering that over 40 percent of the population in Peru is indigenous, with indigenous women being the majority. Situating domestic violence as intersecting with broader forms of violence, this dissertation allows scholars to move from individual pathology to social responsibility.

Women's strategic creativity, collective agency, and the collective nature of "healing" in shelters that I discuss in this dissertation provides evidence that battered women in general and indigenous women who endure intimate partner violence in particular are not passive, deserving, and willing victims. By acknowledging battered women's individual and collective agency, we move from viewing them as "clients" or "passive victims" to potential organizers in local, national, and global movements to eradicate violence against women. In addition, being aware of and fostering battered women's agency can also change the nature of domestic violence service provision, which as data presented in this dissertations shows, is informed and structured by

hierarchies based on race, class, and gender. In short, service agencies would have rethink on their views and biases of indigenous peoples.

Recommendations

Throughout the dissertation, I have made several claims about how indigenous women in Peru experience multiple forms of violence, from intimate partner violence to structural violence at the domestic, community, institutional, state, and global levels. Because it is not enough to simply advance claims without imagining action we might take to eradicate violence in the lives of indigenous Peruvian women, I propose several recommendations. In making these recommendations, however, I am aware that the time I have spent investigating intimate partner violence in the lives of indigenous Peruvian women has not necessarily provided me with clear answers as to how to diminish this violence.

In light of this, my first recommendation is that more research that investigates intimate partner violence through theories of intersectionality and structural violence is needed. By situating intimate partner violence within broader social processes rather than individual pathology, theories of intersectionality and structural violence allow researchers to bring to light not only the complex ways that women experience and respond to varying forms of violence as a result of their specific geo-social position, but also provide clearer directions for advocacy, policy change, and research. For example, in the U.S., feminists of color have drawn on similar critical theoretical approaches to argue that a heavy reliance on the criminal justice system is not an appropriate means for addressing violence against women in communities of color and have advocated for more community-based models grounded in social justice principles including restorative justice and transnational coalitions. Feminist scholarship on violence against women

in Latin America has shown that women's experiences of violence are embedded in broader historical, economic, political, and social processes, and that education and institutional services need to challenge notions of patriarchy while promoting women's reproductive and sexual rights. In addition, theoretical frameworks that account for the inextricable link between intimate partner violence and state, institutional, and structural violence lifts the burden of blame and responsibility off the shoulders of battered women and holds communities and states accountable for women's health and wellbeing.

My second recommendation is informed by woman's narratives included in this dissertation, which revealed the importance of providing services that support woman's' everyday needs. Drawing from multiple interviews from shelter staff, women, and other service providers, women need support in developing a positive sense of self, securing permanent housing and employment, supporting them in raising children as single mothers, legal advising, food, clothes for women and their children, and access to education for their children. These are basic needs that women and their children need to live and must be taken into account. It is also important to nurture women's self-empowerment by encouraging their participation in grassroots efforts to address the various forms of oppression that inform their everyday life from advocating for the eradication of domestic violence to organizing against development projects that would displace thousands of families in their community.

My third recommendation speaks to this need for broader forms of resistance. I propose that grassroots domestic violence advocacy in Peru like *Venerable Mujer* explicitly and intentionally align itself with broader national and global indigenous struggles. While *Venerable Mujer* shelters provide necessary and meaningful services to battered women, its ability to initiate and sustain social change beyond the local level is restricted by the absence of consistent

funding, personnel, programming, among other resources. The need to bridge the claims for women's autonomy and anti-violence that *Venerable Mujer* and other women-centered organizations advance with the broader objectives of indigenous struggles in Peru and Latin America is critical for two reasons. First, doing so would highlight the undeniable link between the violence that indigenous women experience within intimate relationships and the violence that indigenous people are exposed to as a result of social, legal, and cultural colonialisms. Drawing clear connections between indigenous women's experiences of intimate partner violence and the institutional, state, and structural violence that impacts the lives of indigenous people in Peru in general would mean that the state would have to make changes to family violence policies and legal frameworks that are currently in place.

As I have discussed in this dissertation, Peru's Family Violence Law was in part adopted as a result of mainstream feminists demands that centered on a strict critique of patriarchy and called for gender equality, while diminishing the role that the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation has on women's vulnerability and experience of domestic violence. As a result, intervention models implemented through the Family Violence Law, while in practice do very little to challenge patriarchy and promote gender equality, do absolutely nothing to address the structural violence that colors women's lives and in turn increases their vulnerability to intimate partner violence. Policies and legal frameworks informed by an intersectional approach to domestic violence would have to advocate not only for gender justice, but also for social justice at large, with an emphasis on how historical, economic, political, and social processes informs the levels of violence that shape the lives of specific women, children, *and* men. In Peru, an intersectional approach to violence against women has been taken up by indigenous organizations like Chiripaq, whose approach to indigenous women's health considers how

broader social and environmental factors such as climate change, extractive industries, food sovereignty, and racism and discrimination impact indigenous women's health status. While *Venerable Mujer* collaborates with Chiripaq on projects that promote indigenous women's health, from data collected through interviews with shelter directors and advocates, it is clear that this collaboration is important and needs to flourish. CONACAMI, a national indigenous organization that mobilizes against mining in the Peruvian highlands and advances a gendered analysis of the consequences of extraction industries in Andean communities also advocates for an intersectional examination of how neoliberal policies exacerbate violence against indigenous women. Because a large majority of the women I interviewed migrated from some of the Andean regions most impacted by mining and other extraction projects, I propose that examining the prevalence of intimate partner violence among indigenous women against the backdrop of neoliberal capitalist policies is necessary. The connection between extraction industries, displacement, and experiences of intersecting forms of violence in indigenous Peruvian women's lives is a critical topic that while this dissertation has discussed to some degree, I believe it is an area of study that needs to be further researched.

Second, having violence against women be a central concern for indigenous Peruvian struggles would open up spaces for indigenous women and entire communities to draw from, strengthen, or revitalize cultural practices that promote balance, dignity, and healing. One example of this would be the movement towards recovering elements of Peacemaking or restorative justice in indigenous communities in the U.S., particularly among the Navajo. A Navajo Peacemaking approach to violence against women is grounded in the notion that everyone – the victim, perpetrator, family, friends, community members, and service providers – is involved in developing a healing contract. For example, domestic violence programs that are

based on a tradition of Peacemaking provide women with an alternative to separation-focused social and legal interventions as well as material and social support that help them regain a sense of power and agency (Coker 2006). Programs also provide a forum for the woman's family to intervene on her behalf while also challenging the social and familiar supports for battering. Finally, programs also focus on rehabilitating and changing the behavior of abusers via substance abuse treatment and participation in traditional healing ceremonies. Peacemaking programs are firmly rooted in the belief that the community as a whole is involved in promoting justice and healing. As Smith (2005) concludes, because of its strong foundation in collective action and community solidarity, Peacemaking and restorative justice seems to have a "much greater potential for dealing with "crime" effectively because, if we want perpetrators of violence to live in society peaceably, it makes sense to develop justice models in which the community is involved in holding him or her accountable" (422).

In the indigenous Peruvian context, a reaffirming of cultural practices and knowledge that holds complementarity, and reverence for relationships could indeed help promote balance, dignity, and healing in intimate relationships. This is not to say that the reaffirmation of cultural practices and knowledge around relationality will diminish all variables that inform the prevalence of intimate partner violence among indigenous men and women. As I have argued throughout the dissertation, these variables are produced and reproduced by stark structural violence at the domestic, community, institutional, state, and global levels. What is important, however, is that drawing on cultural practices, values, and knowledge preserves community cohesion, fosters individual accountability to the community, and strengthens our spirit.

While I propose these recommendations with the conviction that these actions are important to efforts that aim to eradicate violence and suffering in indigenous communities at

large, and in the lives of indigenous Peruvian women specifically, I do so while acknowledging my positionality as an indigenous Chicana women whose home is not in Peru's highland, jungle, or coastal regions, and as an anthropologist who was born, raised, and educated in the U.S.

While I have gathered these recommendations based on the data collected for this study, there are a number of questions that remain. One question is: beyond documenting, analyzing, and making sense of how intersecting forms of violence impact the lives of indigenous women in Peru and how these women respond to, cope with, challenge, resist, and heal from this violence, what contributions can anthropologist and their research offer to transformative social change that helps to diminish violence and suffering? This is a question that concerns me the most. In the time that I spent living and working with women in *Venerable Mujer* shelters, I became aware of the urgency of meeting the daily needs of women and children in the shelters. Consistently, safety, food, clean water, and economic resources – money for transportation, for children's school supplies, and for material and goods for income generating tasks such as selling food on street corners, textile production, among others – were important daily needs that required tremendous time, labor, and energy to secure. With shelter directors, advocates, and residents consumed by these daily tasks, how can grassroots domestic violence advocacy move from reactive service provision to sustained political action?

Another question I am left with is informed by my recommendation for community accountability: with displacement and migration being critical factors in indigenous communities, how can we develop accountability structures for intimate partner violence when relationships and social networks are altered by constant mobility? In light of displacement and migration, perhaps part of establishing community accountability processes may involve addressing other critical issues within communities. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to

address these questions. What these questions do make clear, however, is the need for more research that challenges prevailing simplistic analysis of domestic violence, and makes visible how structural arrangements seriously complicate individual options for women who are marginalized.

Limitations

There are several key limitations to this study. The first one is that while this is a study about how women cope with, resist, survive and attempt to heal from a constellation of violence, most notably intimate partner violence, the voices of male intimate partners are not included. The absence of men's voices was not a deliberate decision on my part. Instead, it is the consequence of several factors.

My exclusive focus on women is not unique to anthropological studies on domestic violence. Indeed, the very few anthropological studies that have primarily focused on domestic violence have relied on the perspectives and experiences of women. This is not to say that anthropologists have not attempted to engage men in dialogue and reflection about the violence that they direct onto those closest to them, including intimate partners. Instead, the lack of men's voices in anthropological studies on domestic violence is informed by an overall reluctance from men to discuss their violence against the women with whom they live. While men's silence on the issue of violence against their female intimate partner might be informed by the fact that women have conducted the majority of anthropological studies on domestic violence, men remain silent even when the ethnographer is male (Gutmann 1996).

In the past few years, domestic violence organizations across the globe have developed digital media projects such as digital storytelling and documentary shorts that often include men

discussing their violence. However, the majority of these men are now involved in domestic violence advocacy and have in theory, not directed their violence towards an intimate partner. While these digital media projects create spaces for dialogue, self-reflection and community building for men who feel ready to take significant action to address their violence, they do not speak to the experiences of men who continue to engage in violence and have not reached the point when they are ready to stop the suffering they bring into their most intimate of relationships.

In order to include men in this study, I would have had to recruit men who were willing and able to discuss their violence with me. While it would make sense to include the perspectives of men whose wives and intimate partner partners were living in the shelter and who had already been interviewed, asking these men to be part of this study would have been both unethical and would have compromised the safety and wellbeing of women and children in the shelter. Many of the women who were living the shelters and whose stories give life to this project had literally escaped from their home in the middle of night, afraid of their partner's retaliation. Women described living with a constant fear of their partner finding out where they were staying and breaking into the shelter to kill them for leaving with the children. As I detail in a previous chapter, for Dalia this fear was actualized when her husband bribed the local police to not only give him the location of the shelter but to accompany him there and stand idle while he kidnapped their three children. Additionally, some of the women that I interviewed described situations in which their partner attempted to kill them by stabbing, poisoning, shooting or pushing them down concrete stairs. Given these stories of men's extreme violence, I felt it would significantly compromise the integrity of the study to ask for men's participation.

Another method of including men in this project would have been to recruit men with no relational ties with the women I interviewed. At one point, I felt this would be an important contribution this study could offer to the discipline since to date, there are no anthropological studies that focus directly on men and domestic violence.

Interviewing men from the communities where shelters were located turned out not to be a viable option. The only location where I could have access to privacy and a quiet area to conduct an interview was at the shelter, and I felt bringing a man who self-identified as somebody that enacts violence against women would compromise the safety standards the shelters worked hard to established. When conducting interviews with police officers from various women's police stations, I came across posters and brochures for a program for men who wanted to stop the violence they committed against their wives and girlfriends. I asked several police officers in each station that had a poster or brochure for the program but nobody seemed to know too much about the program other than it was a program to teach men about gender relations, patriarchy, and power and control. They also revealed that they had never referred anybody to the program before. After several attempts of calling the number provided in the brochures and being told the number was no longer in service, I did some research on the program and discovered it was run by a Peruvian scholar who has published widely on men and domestic violence. When I eventually managed to contact this individual via email and expressed my interest in learning more about the program and potentially interviewing some of the members, he let me know that the program had closed several years before and that the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations was in the process of developing a similar program.

Coming upon this information took weeks and many phone calls to various agencies beyond the police stations that claimed to refer men to the program. I had to dig deep for

information and was confronted with service providers' complete ignorance about a program they advertised to battered women. As a result, I came to the realization that institutions like police stations and the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations were referring people to a ghost-program, and this made me aware of the incredible barriers preventing me and others from conducting meaningful research on the issue of men and domestic violence.

Finally, a significant reason that deterred me from including men in this study is due to my experience with intimate partner violence and consequent post-traumatic stress. I believed my experiences would make it difficult for me to sit in a room with men who are violent to the women they live with and listen to their stories.

The second limitation informing this study is that while many of the women who participated in this study entered the shelters with young children, I did not interview children. Because women's experience of violence is at the center of this project and I approached this work from a community-based participatory action framework, building meaningful relationships with women in the shelters was of paramount importance to me. Keeping these relationships blossoming meant that I needed to channel all my energy and resources in volunteering at the shelters and in assisting women on an individual basis. This left little time to fully engage in building meaningful relationships with all of the children in the shelter, which often totaled to more than five considering that each woman on average had more than two children.

While I did not specifically focus on how domestic violence informs the lives and health status of children, in interviewing and establishing relationships with women, children were an ever-present topic women brought up in our conversations and I did my best to assist mothers in the everyday struggle of raising children as single parents. I did this by babysitting, cooking

meals, donating clothing, shoes and school supplies, as well as writing letters to social service providers on behalf of mothers requesting counseling services for children. Additionally, in the tail-end of the study my partner Toxtli, a social worker who has worked with children and youth for over a decade, lived with me in Lima for an extended period of time and kindly accepted requests from shelters to facilitate workshops with children.

A third limitation of this study is its geographical focus on Lima. With the exception of three women that I interviewed, all of the women had recently migrated to Lima from primarily rural Andean regions. As I have documented throughout this dissertation, women's identity as Andean women and as migrants shaped their experience of different forms of violence in Lima, from intimate partner violence to institutional and structural violence. While I did not visit every Andean, Coastal, and Amazonian region outside of Lima, women interviewed spoke of life in their home communities and these details became central to their story. In relating Dalia's and Cala's story, for example, I privilege memories of their home community.

In focusing on primarily Andean women's experiences in Peru's capital city, I envision this project contributing to the anthropology of Andean populations in urban locations. In doing so, I hope to push the boundaries of the discipline's tendency to primarily study Andean populations in Andean regions as if rural-to-urban migration and internal displacement has not been a growing phenomenon in recent past decades.

Future directions

The topics and themes I have explored throughout my fieldwork research and the dissertation are close to my heart and I intend to build off this work in the years to come. I plan to expand my dissertation research on primarily indigenous Peruvian rural-to-urban migrant

women and domestic violence into a multi-sited and comparative study that will explore the intersection of domestic violence and Latino immigration to the U.S. Specifically, I propose to study domestic violence among Latino/a immigrants in the U.S. to determine how immigration policies, immigrant Latino/a's resulting undocumented status and shifting constructions of gender in response to migration, contribute to or maintain such violence. I envision this new line of research complimenting my dissertation study in three important ways. First, it will add layers to my analysis of how displacement and migration inform the incidence of domestic violence by broadening my scope of inquiry from internal migration to transnational migration. Second, it will contribute to the limited ethnographic data available on how migrant women in urban Peruvian cities and in the U.S. struggle simultaneously around being migrants, racialized bodies and experiencing a continuum of violence. As a multi-sited and comparative ethnography, my hope is that this study will contribute to emerging research that examines the mutually constitutive relationship between structural violence, migration, violence against women and community resiliency (Salcido and Adelman 2004; Falcon 2005).

The Act of Reciprocity

A central tenet of community-based work is to help build lasting projects that will continue to benefit the community long after the study is complete. Throughout the time I spent working in the shelters, a common story that I heard from shelter directors, advocates and residents alike spoke of the need to develop projects that would generate income for both the women and the shelter, as well as provide women with specific skillsets. To some extent, the four shelters that I worked at were already engaged in projects such as these, including making and selling print t-shirts, converting the shelter's kitchen into a small restaurant, textile work, and

partnering with local businesses. While some of these projects were consistent, particularly the partnership with local businesses, others were dependent on the shelter allocating funds to help sustain the projects. This was the case with the restaurant business that required the shelter to invest in kitchen equipment such as stoves and buy natural gas for cooking which since 2009 has become too expensive for most working-class and cash-poor families to purchase. The fact that the shelters lacked formal and consistent support and funding from the state as well as national and international organizations meant that they were often unable to sustain the projects in the long-term.

After many conversations with shelter directors, advocates and residents in the shelter in Huaycán, it was decided that they wanted to establish a textile and artisan collective and I agreed to help them begin the project. The women organized themselves into a collective that included survivors, advocates well skilled weavers in the broader community. Since I was unable to participate as an artisan and weaver, the collective agreed that the best way I could participate was to provide the initial capital for the project that would enable the women to buy necessary materials and equipment. I was also charged with the responsibility of establishing an online catalogue of their items.

As a result of the women's creativity and collective action, the project was successfully developed and continues to prosper with a growing number of participants. Additionally, my relatives and peers across the United States have supported this cause by purchasing items from the collective. This project has helped shelter residents and advocates learn and refine a skillset in weaving that can contribute to efforts of gaining economic independence, establishing a small business, and strengthening collective action projects in the shelters.

Another concrete contribution I was able to offer participants was to work with Azalea in developing a set of reports, documents, grant proposals and conference presentation files that document the history of *Venerable Mujer*. Azalea felt this contribution would be particularly significant to efforts aimed at allocating funding for *Venerable Mujer*. I was in agreement with her and I must say that completing this task proved to be both deeply exhausting and one of the most rewarding experiences of my time in Peru. For example, the shelter did not have a working computer on site, let alone a designated office space, so most of the documents Azalea had for me to work from had been printed at the local Internet café and tucked away in the most unusual of places throughout the shelter. This meant that every day that I showed up with my laptop ready to work with Azalea, we would spend the first few hours searching for whatever document she remembered saving. Yet, I found meaning to this chaos as it allowed me to spend long hours with Azalea, listening to countless stories of decades of experience as a community leader and advocate for women and social justice. In the end, developing this set of documents and materials helped Azalea secure a grant from an international agency for the expansion of the restaurant business she had recently opened in the shelter.

To follow a community-based model, a main goal of mine is to verify, share and disseminate the study's findings with both participants and larger communities. To do so, I plan to return to Peru to deliver an in-depth summary report in Spanish of the findings presented in this dissertation to the shelters. As Azalea explained to me, this data will provide an up-to-date overview of the work the shelters do to promote and ensure the health and wellbeing of women in Peru. Azalea plans on using the data and findings captured in the study along with her own personal narrative based on more than thirty years of providing services to women and families in her community and presenting this at conferences.

Like Azalea, I too am committed to sharing the findings of this study with my various communities. Since returning to Seattle to write the dissertation, I have done this by partnering with nonprofit organizations in the area that provide domestic violence services to Latina/o immigrants. Recently, I participated in roundtable presentation on the Violence Against Women Act with service providers from a local nonprofit that provides direct services to Latina survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and researchers from the University of Washington. For this engagement, I was asked to draw connections between the barriers that rural-to-urban migrant Peruvian women, survivors of domestic violence face in Lima based on their status as recent migrants and the obstacles that undocumented Latina survivors encounter in the U.S.

Teachings

Recently a conversation unfolded via email in my academic department at University of Washington about the importance of including acknowledgements in a research presentation and manuscript. A majority of the people who offered their opinion on the topic were of the idea that acknowledgements are only necessary when the research is funded by well-known agencies whose names and logos on presentation slides and publications would add credibility to the anthropologist and the research study. I deeply disagree with this. For me, it is necessary to acknowledge both the contributions of study participants and the teachings that I have gathered from my relationships with the people who have made this research study possible by giving of themselves in the form of storytelling, welcoming me into the intimacy of family and community spaces, and caring for me and the integrity of this work.

Coming to this work in the wake of loss and trauma as a survivor of domestic violence, one of the earliest and profoundly significant teachings I gathered from my relationships with

study participants was the realization that I alone could not achieve a true sense of self-recovery and healing. Witnessing, documenting, and supporting efforts of collective action by women in the shelters restored a sense of balance and purpose in my life that had been lost in the years I lived with domestic violence. Through these acts of reciprocity, I was reminded that just as in ceremony, in research relationships and relationality are guiding principles.

The link that connected my healing and the healing of the women with whom I worked with can perhaps best be explained by Meyer's (2008) articulation of the Native Hawaiian notion of "Self Through Other", which centers on an individual's capacity to be changed by the connection she has with all relations. The idea of "Self Through Other" is shaped by "the ancient idea to heal with all relations" (221). For my people, the Mexica this interconnection is expressed through teachings on duality, balance and relationality. Indeed, our teachings explain that we are reflections of others just as others are reflections of us. I was changed by my relationship with the women who participated in this study and in witnessing and carrying their suffering, strength and healing, I was able to initiate my self-recovering and healing.

Like many of the women who participated in this study, I have encountered countless obstacles along the path of rebuilding my life after the trauma of domestic violence. One of those obstacles has been my experience with post-traumatic stress. The death of my aunt in 2010 triggered a trauma response and ensuing deep depression, which I carried with me through the last phases of fieldwork research. My ability to cope and learn from the pain, loss and anger that fed my depression was shaped by witnessing the resilience of the women who participated in the study.

From my relationship with the women in the shelters, I also gathered important teachings on activism and community-based work. Having started the doctoral program at the age of

twenty-two, working with shelter advocates has been one of my primary opportunities to witness and participate in grassroots efforts. I am grateful to Azalea, Hortensia, and countless survivors and advocates for allowing me to walk besides them these last few years. From them I have learned of the spirit, beauty, complexity and contradictions inherent in community-based work. These teachings will continue to guide my work.

The teachings and gifts that this work has bestowed upon me have also brought healing to my family. Recently, my uncle was sentenced to serve twenty-five years to life for taking my aunt's life. A guilty verdict and the fact that my uncle will die inside prison walls have done little to alleviate my family's suffering. We continue to mourn the absence of my aunt in our everyday lives. Our hearts ache to know that my cousins have lost their mother and father. Yet, in the midst of this loss, there is a healing. In two weeks, my family will gather to celebrate the completion of this dissertation and will see me graduate with a doctoral degree. Now more than ever the fact that my work is centered on women's experience of domestic violence and their unwavering efforts to cope with, survive and heal from trauma is particularly meaningful for my family. I know that my family's spirit will be made strong by bearing witness to the women's stories of survival. I know that in bearing witness to these stories my family will continue the difficult task of giving voice to how violence and trauma has shaped our family life and relationships for generations. In doing so, our efforts to undo these legacies will continue to flourish. As I complete this dissertation and as my family continues to find healing, I pray that the women in the shelters and my family continue to survive like flowers in the Andean highlands.

Figure 12: Flor De la Sierra (Source: Author)

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It is early morning and from my kitchen window, I see the first newspaper street vendor arrive at the corner with a green cart and two young children in tow. She quickly begins to set up for the day and unloads stacks of newspapers and magazines. As she hangs the daily newspapers to a clothesline attached to the cart, her sons sit on a blanket and take turns playing with a toy motorcycle. Across the street, another vendor is beginning to set up her juice stand for the day. With customers already standing by, she hurries to plug in her blender and begins to cut a perfectly ripe pineapple. The growing traffic noise outside my window signals that another hectic morning is well underway in Lima. I drink the last of my coca leaf tea and head out the door, making sure that my journal, tape recorder, and camera are in my *morál*.

The bus to downtown Lima pulls up just as I am arriving to the bus stop and I am surprised to find a vacant seat near the back. As the bus makes it way down crowded streets, the realization that this is my last morning in Lima makes my heart ache. In a few short hours, I will

catch a flight back to Seattle to begin writing the dissertation. Late last night, Hortensia called insisting on seeing me off at the airport today. Worried about Hortensia making the four-hour journey to the airport from the shelter in Huaycán on her own and late at night, I do my best to convince her to reconsider. Jokingly, Hortensia reminds me that in the years when families were starting to settle in Huaycán she would have had to walk most of the way to Lima. She insists that seeing me off was the least she could do for a good friend. After considerable negotiation, I convince Hortensia that I will make a final visit to the shelter before leaving Lima.

After two hours on the road and three buses, I arrive at the shelter. Hortensia's mother is sitting in the garden as usual. Today she is watering a mosaic of purple, red, and yellow flowers. I wave hello and make my way up the stairs to the shelter. Urpi, the newest shelter resident greets me half way up the long staircase. She is a two-month old puppy Hortensia and her children found wandering the streets, nearly starved to death and in dire need of a bath, and of course love.

I scoop Urpi up in one arm and as I reach the top of the stairs, I'm surprised to see the living room empty. I realize the shelter is uncharacteristically silent. Just then, I hear muffled laughter coming from the kitchen and as I push the nearly crumbling wood kitchen door, I hear a roar of laughter and am amazed to see a sea of familiar faces illuminated with joy and happiness. Amidst shouts of "*sorpresa!"* the women and children with whom I have worked and lived with for months pull me close to them and suddenly I am immersed in a massive collective embrace. Irís announces that along with Hortensia, shelter advocates and residents wanted to surprise me with a going away party and that everybody has contributed by donating food, cooking, making decorations, downloading music, baking a cake, and buying me gifts. My eyes fill with tears and as I say thank you and embrace every woman and child before me, I notice that others are crying

with me. With tears in her eyes, Hortensia announces that the food is nearly ready but before serving anybody the delicious *sopa de quinoa* and *papa la huancaina* they have prepared in honor of my vegetarian tendencies, she says there is an important announcement to be made. Hortensia walks across the room to me and takes my hand before saying:

> Damarys, this is a reflection of the love and affection we have for you. Every woman here did her part to celebrate the joy you brought to our lives, the shelter and our work. You reinvigorate our spirit! Now, we know that there are others – people like you – who worry about us, who defend us, who stand with us.

Outside, the morning sun moves across the sky and soon shades of lavender mark early evening. We sit in a circle, the women and I drinking *chicha morada,* children playing at our feet. Hortensia insists on walking with me to the town plaza where I need to catch the bus back home to gather my suitcases and head to the airport. She flags down a bus, takes my hand once again and says, "I know we will see each other again. That's how destiny works, our paths our joined. I say this to the women and I'll say it to you now: the shelter will always be your home." As the bus speeds away, I look back through the cracked window and see Hortensia standing there, waiting for the bus to disappear into the distance.

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