University of North Carolina at Asheville
Journal of Undergraduate Research
Asheville, North Carolina
May 2014

Women as a Weapon of War & Progress in Perú: A Look at the Perpetuation of Oppression in the Human Rights Violations Committed Against Indigenous Andean Women from 1980-2000

Rebecca G. Williams
Interdisciplinary Studies
The University of North Carolina at Asheville
One University Heights
Asheville, North Carolina 28804 USA

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Ameena Batada

Abstract

At the start of 1980, the Peruvian terrorist group, *Sendero Luminoso*, began its Maoist-inspired campaign based in the Southern Highlands of Perú. With the aim of overthrowing state infrastructure, they began in the most rural areas of the country, occupying highland villages while prohibiting markets and trade with the plan to starve cities in preparation for their conquest. Of the estimated 69,000 casualties, 75% were indigenous peoples of the highlands and Amazon basin. In an effort to eradicate the *Sendero Luminoso's* quest for power, then president, Alberto Fujimori, carried out response tactics that subsequently violated a variety of female reproductive rights. In using *Sendero Luminoso*'s actions as justifications for his own atrocities, Fujimori employed government funded initiatives that thereafter led to his 2009 incarceration. This paper evaluates the need to break the systemic discrimination against peasant indigenous women in times of struggle, war and peace through the exploration of the research question, to what extent progress in times of terror lends itself to the outright oppression and destruction of culturally vulnerable female communities. The paper concludes with an investigation of the further implications on the specific rights and roles of indigenous Andean women in their unique struggle during one of Perú's most painful and memorable eras of contemporary history.

1. Introduction

Spain's sixteenth century conquest forced Peruvian culture to adapt and develop among the diverging cultures of post-conquest modernity and traditional, indigenous roots and beliefs. As a result of the Spanish conquest and the subsequent attitudes toward race, gender and class that ensued, Peruvian society has been permanently tampered by a harsh division across ethnic groups and social classes. In regard to the indigenous women of the Andean highlands in particular, it is their identity that represents the most profoundly oppressed and stigmatized of all Peruvian communities.

Historic periods of both progress and instability have demonstrated the perpetual oppression of the indigenous female identity, as the most sexually violated and humiliated of all Peruvian men and women. During the period of conflict marked by the terrorist regime of *Sendero Luminoso* and the president most attributed to the abolishment of their power, Alberto Fujimori, extreme acts of abuse and violation of women were committed. The national investigation that ensued as a result of the events leading up to the incarceration of Fujimori and termination of *Sendero Luminoso* activity concluded that among the near 69,000 people killed in conflict, insurgent groups were responsible for 54% of deaths while state military forces accounted for 45%.[8] Among the casualties, 75% were indigenous peoples of both the highlands and the Amazon basin.[7] In regard to female reproductive rights violations, nearly 277,793 women were sterilized against their will under Fujimori's instruction and among the thousands of women raped and sexually abused, 75% were Quechua speakers of indigenous Incan descent.[6,7]

Considering the statistical evidence of human rights violations committed during this period, it must be underscored that such evidence reflects specific and intentional abuse of women who identify as members of indigenous Andean communities. In understanding this reality of a more contemporary Peruvian history, reference to the development and transformation of the indigenous female identity is key. In both past and present Perú, the consideration of the indigenous female as a threat to society is paramount. As the very embodiment of fertility and reproductive agency, indigenous women represent the opportunity for the roots of indigenous purity to maintain and assert its part of Peruvian identity. The modern Peruvian Diaspora is characterized by a varied *mestizo* (mixed race) ethnicity and racial hierarchy, positioning the survival of an authentic indigenous culture as a threat to the historical "development" of a post-colonized nation. Present divisions of class, race and gender within Peruvian society are harsh in effect as they ostracize indigenous women of the Andean highlands, further deepening their struggle to control and affirm rights to their own sexual health. The need for serious social reconstruction of equality and harmonious integration of the oppressed communities wealthy with vibrant cultural traditions are necessary for the healthy and just development of the indigenous female in her ability to assert agency in her Peruvian social environment. In looking at how this phenomenon of oppression originally began, this paper will begin with an analysis of how Spanish colonialism impacted and permanently altered traditional indigenous beliefs in regard to female significance and role in society.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Female Paradox of Traditional Indigenous Beliefs & Social Applications of Gender

Long before the Spanish conquest of Perú in the sixteenth century, by far the most powerful and sophisticated of ancient civilizations was the Incan Empire. This empire was originally expanded throughout various geographical regions of Perú and further into what is now Colombia and Ecuador and the Incan capital found itself nestled in the Southern Highlands of the Andes Mountains in Cusco. Quechua for *ombligo del mundo* or "belly button of the world," Cusco was the center of Incan discourse and ideology. Within traditional Incan society, gender was woven into nearly every aspect of life. "Andean peoples ordered the world around them through prisms of gender" whereby "each is incomplete without the other. Gender symbols, structured by a logic of mutuality, gave form to the ways in which Andean peoples constructed their universe."[1]

Integral to Incan philosophy is the duality of female and male representations in nature, social order and human responsibilities. As a people intrinsically inspired and driven by a cosmology ordered by natural forces, Incans worshipped the moon as a female divinity and the sun as her male counterpart. The most divine and overarching element of Incan life and purpose is the very *Pachamama* herself, mother earth. "The Pachamama would allow only those who worshipped her properly to receive the benefits of the earth's fertility."[1] Thus, the female identity fundamentally and most spiritually holds high power and relevance in Incan culture. To this day Cusqueñans and Incan descendants alike continue to pay gratitude to *Pachamama*, offering her gifts and recognition through various forms—the scattering of coca leaves on the earth floor, a spill of *chela* (Peruvian slang for beer) before taking the first sip or even baskets of handmade crafts and food left at ancient ruin sites in her honor.

Yet it still remains true that while both "native men and women gave offerings to the Pachamama, only women forged a sacred tie with her."[1] It is this special bond with *Pachamama* that only women are capable of securing that exemplifies the power of the female in both indigenous Peruvian roots and current social contexts. While "in the eyes of Andean men and women, their complementary activities were essential to reproduction of Andean society," it is unmistakably and always the woman who holds the power of fertility and reproduction, enabling the progression and evolution of the indigenous community. The female was never subjugated. The duality of male and female elements in Incan life "defined certain tasks as appropriate to men and others to women. But in any case, the division of labor was never so strict as to prohibit one sex from doing another's task if the need arose. Andean gender ideologies recognized that women's work and men's work complemented each other. Their interplay was essential for Andean life to continue."[1]

Present-day Perú still finds its most richly indigenous communities in and around the Andean city of Cusco, where Incan traditions still remain a present and important part of life. The evolution initiated by modernization, time and European imperialism has inevitably created distance from the most original and ancestral of Incan practices and social constructions of gender, yet the female still holds significant and meaningful power within familial structures and society. In the era of the Incan Empire, "women were the weavers of Andean society. Never idle, women were always spinning—on walks, during conversations with family, while watching over children. Women made sure that

their family was clothed."[1] This same female strength and endurance finds itself within Cusqueñan culture today where women as old as ninety are still found dressed in traditional garb, as they carry heavy loads of provisions for their families wrapped in hand woven tapestries upon their backs effortlessly climbing the cobblestone streets and *barrios* of this Andean city. It is these same women seen spending all hours of daylight selling hand-made crafts and food on street corners and still travel home to prepare meals and maintain the home for large families of often two, maybe even three generations large. Yet it cannot be underscored that while women in Andean life continue to hold paramount significance and responsibility, they are indefinitely deemed the lesser sex. *Machismo* influences decision-making within families, couples and public institutions. Men definitively hold greater power in all realms of Peruvian society, even in areas of indigenous habitation. The patriarchal power complex extends to these Andean lands of Perú, replacing the equitable gender roles of its deepest historical roots.

2.2. Post-Conquest Evolution of Belief Systems: Effects on Gender, Class & Race

As noted, present day divisions of power in Peruvian society are deeply rooted in the cultural imperialism following the Spanish conquest of the sixteenth century. As Spaniards entered Perú, the Andean highlands of the Incan Empire was the most pragmatic geographical territory to dominate—a land characterized by unprecedented mountainous beauty, but also one of remarkable fertility and opportunity for agricultural exploitation. Perú was desirable in its breadth of natural resources and it was Spanish *conquistadores* who felt they were more entitled to the benefits of the Andean highlands than the "Indians" who called them home.

When the Spanish entered the Andean highlands of the Incan Empire, most were bewildered by the spiritual beliefs of the indigenous communities they found. Believing "the devil had already visited the Andes," Spaniards were threatened by the Incans' unfamiliarity with Christ as they "worshipped the Sun as father and their dead kings as ancestor-heroes." But what of course was the most dumbfounding and disgusting to *conquistadores* was the "damning" fact that "women worshipped the Moon as mother while venerating Incan queens, her closest daughters, as founders of female dynasties. Confirmed! The devil must [have been] at work."[1]

Incan gender norms and religious practices were entirely deconstructed and replaced by the Spanish in the years immediately following Peruvian conquest. "Spanish expectations…assigned peculiar characteristics to women that presupposed their inherent impurity and their inferiority to men."[1] Changes to the political and social systems of colonized Peru meant new and discriminated roles for indigenous Incan women previously accustomed to equitable representation in society. Spanish "political models guiding colonial policy prohibited and prejudiced women from participating in legitimate structures of indigenous government,"[1] and subsequently separated females from all positions of power and authority in social sectors of influence. If the "gender parallelism [of Incan tradition] played with values of equality, another gender system, the 'conquest hierarchy' explicitly denied those values" and permanently paved the path for an unjust gender binary in future Peruvian life.

The "clash between Spanish law and indigenous custom led the ensuing process through which colonial institutions undermined the rights of peasant women," defining them as subordinate under Spanish law.[1] Thus the perpetuation of the oppressed female began, rendering the indigenous female in particular as inferior to her male counterpart, disproportionately vulnerable to the dispossession of resources, rights and privilege. Such division in gender roles of indigenous women, specifically in the Andean regions of Perú, is "inseparable from the profound transformations in political economy spurred by the formation of social class" and the subsequent racist identification of the indigenous people as low class, uneducated and animalistic. [1]

2.3. Sendero Luminoso & the "Peasant War"

Beginning in May of 1980, the most violent period in Perú's contemporary history began with *Sendero Luminoso*, the country's communist party. *Sendero Luminoso* announced their new campaign as a "popular war from the countryside to the city against the state." The party, led by Abimael Guzmán, organized its mission upon the "belief that so called armed struggle was the best way to attain power, destroy the 'old state' and 'class enemies' and impose a new political, economic and social order."[2] Guzmán organized his campaign of terrorism upon a fundamentalist, totalitarian ideology based on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism that developed a cult surrounding his leadership. Guzmán and *Sendero Luminoso* achieved success by exploiting the failures of the government to improve economic and social conditions of poverty and progress. Perú's economic environment of the 1980's "had widened the gap between rich and poor, particularly in rural Andean areas."[2]

Sendero Luminoso took advantage of the most impoverished rural communities, designating the "indigenous peasantry of the Andean highlands" as their territorial and social base.[3] Settling in the most underdeveloped and

indigenously inhabited areas of Perú, *Sendero Luminoso* strategically chose the "traumatized and desperate population, bewildered by the political nightmare they had lived, and which *Sendero Luminoso* had created in their name, as a project for their emancipation."[3] This region of the country in particular was and still is by far the most "segregated and subordinated among the country's population along ethnic lines." In an effort to overthrow the state, *Sendero Luminoso* chose to target these impoverished indigenous communities to forcibly recruit new members and in the process, practiced extreme acts of violence and terror among those who demonstrated resistance or lacked compliance. Turning these rural areas into the main setting of conflict, individual dissidence led to selective executions and assassinations and collective dissidence led to massacres and destruction affecting entire communities.[2]

The "peasant war" that *Sendero Luminoso* proposed was not a celebration or liberation of the indigenous communities that had been most deeply affected by the republican government *Sendero Luminoso* strived to destroy. Rather, the terrorist tactics employed under Guzmán deepened the economic and social divide between the elite bourgeoisie white European city dwellers and the indigenous "Indian" blooded peasants of the *sierra*. As *Sendero Luminoso* "won allegiance in different Andean and later jungle villages," they subsequently and "systematically destroyed their traditional structures and forms of authority."[3] Rather than truly accomplishing "emancipation" as the regime promised, *Sendero Luminoso* successfully "unleashed an existing accumulation of ethnic animosity and racist sentiment that began with the Spanish conquest…Perú is a country that still lives within the colonial cultural legacy, from the monuments to the conquistadores to television commercials that only portray light skinned people."[3]

Sendero Luminoso developed power because of the way it exploited the particularities of community and culture, but the attention and turbulence it brought to Andean rural communities only deepened those areas' vulnerability to militant forces, becoming once again the victims of both conflict and supposed "progress" initiated by state government. *Sendero Luminoso* did not culturally associate with the peasant communities they so claimed to liberate either, as the majority of individuals comprising the regime were not of indigenous heritage. They were "younger, higher-educated men and women from small cities of Perú or second-generation immigrants in the larger cities."[3] Yet these individuals did represent the profound division of race and class in Perú as they too were fighting for their own representation and identified as "direct victims of a social system that had first, repressed and ridiculed their Indian side, and second, failed to deliver on the promises of social mobility via education." In the process, they oppressed and discriminated their indigenous community counterparts in fear of racial association. But as they fought "for a new order that would reverse a system that had only brought false promises and suffering," they failed to establish this "new" and so-called "improved" order for those in most need of change, the indigenous communities of the Andean highlands. [4]

2.4. The State Response: Alberto Fujimori & the Eradication of Terrorism

In combating *Sendero Luminoso'*s campaign of armed violence and political overturn, President Alberto Fujimori the President most credited with the successful eradication of the terrorism that escalated into the 1990's. Elected to office in 1990, Fujimori began his Peruvian presidency amidst an environment plagued by *Sendero Luminoso* terrorism. Within just three short months of entering office, Fujimori began the implementation of harsh and radical policies to improve economic stability and social disparity. However, despite his responsibility in repairing inflation-related issues, his policies caused immediate layoffs and hardships among the poor.[5] In April of 1992, Fujimori staged an *autogolpe*, or self-administered coup, whereby the democratic government "acknowledged the militarization of the conflict and renouncing its control, placed the counterinsurgency struggle in the hands of the armed forces" and in the process, dissolved several powers of Congress.[2,5] The armed forces employed to terminate *Sendero Luminoso* control "initially implemented a strategy of indiscriminate repression against the population it suspected of belonging to *Sendero Luminoso*, making human rights violations, in certain areas and at certain periods of conflict, a generalized and/or systematic practice."[2] In his *autogolpe*, the president and his secret service increased their control over the judiciary system, the police and large parts of the media, and in the process caused terrible harm.[6]

To understand the extent to which Fujimori actually liberated and freed Peruvian society, a critical evaluation of the radical changes in elective office exercised must be assessed by the implications his political decisions posed upon the most vulnerable organizations of Peruvian communities. By suspending Peruvian order of law, Fujimori created a "state of emergency or exception in which prohibitions were lifted, 'permitting' the killing of those suspected of aiding the enemy."[7] In this widespread and blind permission of violence, the indigenous and poor communities where *Sendero Luminoso* concentrated their activity fell victim to military atrocity and victimization.

However, Fujimori was strategic in his tactics of national reform and gained the support of middle and upper class communities representing the least indigenous of all Peruvian society. As he "started his governing period with an economic shock, which stabilized the economy" and then in 1992 captured the *Sendero Luminoso* leader, Abimael Guzmán, his actions "earned him vast popular support."[6] Yet "popular" support silenced the realities and devastating fate of the Peruvian poor—those concentrated in the Andean highlands and responsible for active indigenous cultural preservation. In creating his own official version of the events of the conflict, Fujimori "obtained political credit in the alleged 'victory over terrorism'" and in doing so, created a regulatory framework that "established punishments and procedures that violated due process principles and ensured impunity."[2]

Following Fujimori's first term, he was re-elected in 1995 with the support of Peruvians who characterized him as a hero for the gains his presidency made in regard to *Sendero Luminoso*'s eradication, despite the illegal and corrupt practices he had administered. It is important to note, that it was not until Fujimori ended his second term that the truth behind his campaign practices were revealed to the public and opinions of his strategies and policies were seriously reconsidered and further condemned. However, once re-elected in 1995, Fujimori rode on the waves of popular public support to institute a variety of new policies aimed at reforming social and economic determinants of poverty. These policies contributed to several human rights violations that will be discussed in the following sections. It was not until 2000 when Fujimori unsuccessfully attempted to run for a third term that he was first suspected of unconstitutional and illegal practices. It was in the same year that Fujimori left Perú and fled to Japan where he announced his resignation.[5] Following his resignation, Perú began an extensive investigation of the illegal conduct performed under Fujimori's administration. He is currently imprisoned in Perú following his fourth (and most recent) trial since being extradited back to Perú in which he was sentenced to six additional years in prison after pleading guilty to charges of illegal wiretapping and bribery.[5] This evidence-based background sets the stage for the specific violations pertinent to the indigenous Andean female that the following sections expand upon through the analysis of original accounts of women affected.

3. Case Studies

3.1 Human Rights Violations of Female Indigenous Communities

In the discussion of women in particular, this paper argues that indigenous peasant women of the Andean highlands were the most affected by these two conflicting powers of insurgency and state. Throughout the 1980's and 1990's, both *Sendero Luminoso* and President Alberto Fujimori committed human rights violations. The shared accountability of such social injustice and oppression demonstrates a concerning truth of power when coupled with violence: that during both times of turmoil and progress, certain ethnic minorities are the victims of abuse and oppression. Regardless of where power stems from and how it is administered, violations of human rights and crimes against humanity are far too common. Involved in the investigation of Fujimori at the close of his Peruvian presidency, *La Comisión de Verdad y Reconciliación* or the "Commission of Truth and Reconciliation" formed and acted as the "first official attempt to record human rights violations suffered specifically by women and to acknowledge that the violence affected the Peruvian population in different ways according to social position and gender."[2] It was further recognized that "women were victims of a set of crimes and abuses against their dignity and their human rights that differed from those suffered by men."[2]

3.1.1. shared responsibility of insurgent & state forces

The Commission of Truth and Reconciliation estimates that the total number of people who died as the result of the conflict between insurgency and state from 1980-1992 is between 61,007 and 77,562 in addition to thousands of displaced persons.[8] *Sendero Luminoso* was recognized as the principal perpetrator of crimes and human rights violations, responsible for 54% of deaths. However, the state and military forces employed by its instruction were responsible for a close 45% of all deaths. Given the use of tactics administered between both *Sendero Luminoso* and the Peruvian government throughout the conflict, Perú became one of the leading violators of human rights in the world.[9] The combination of military force and insurgent violence was mostly directed against the poor themselves, providing an example of the "total lack of civilian control over the military or, in the case of many government officials, of complicity in military crime" and the vulnerability to rebel forces.[9]

Sendero Luminoso's leader, Guzmán, affirmed that "the revolution [would] triumph after they [had] crossed the river of blood and reached the other side,"[4] demonstrating the lengths to *Sendero Luminoso* was willing to go to and the reality that thousands of Peruvian women of indigenous identity fell victim to as a result. However, "women were subject to sexual violence in different forms by both official forces and insurgent groups." The Commission of Truth and Reconciliation was able to prove "that such abuses were perpetrated mainly by official forces and, to a lesser extent, by members of insurgent groups."[2] Female indigenous individuals living in the Andean highlands were subject to a variety of abuses that included "being direct victims of kidnappings, forced recruitment, arbitrary detentions, physical and psychological torture, forced disappearances, massacres and extrajudicial executions as well as the death and disappearances of family members."[2] While these abuses were enough to terrorize and permanently scar females' relationships within their personal, once-cohesive communities, these women have additionally faced the repercussions of gender-specific crimes that have ensued long suffering.

The gender-specific abuses committed against women comprised of various forms of oppressive acts. While "83% of rapes were attributable to the state, including multiple rape and rape of pregnant women, insurgent groups were mainly responsible for actions such as forced domestic work; mutilations, including mutilations of sexual nature; sexual slavery; forced contraception; forced abortion; and forced cohabitation."[2] This does not undermine that both armed groups, regardless of affiliation, were responsible for multiple forms of sexual violence and gender specific discrimination against women.

3.1.2. using rape as a weapon to silence the threatening female voice

According to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, rape is the least condemned war crime.[7] The lack of consideration for victims of rape, primarily those who are women, is a gender discriminatory policy that continues to perpetuate the instance and prevalence of rape during national periods of instability. The need to differentiate between criminal rape and rape used as a strategy designed to destroy or disperse ethnic groups is dire. In the case of Perú's conflict between the years of 1980 and 2000, of the estimated 69,000 dead, 75% were indigenous peoples and the majority of raped women were indigenous; 75% of those raped were Quechua speakers of indigenous Incan descent.[7] Eighty percent of victims lived in rural areas and thirty-four percent were illiterate.[2] However, this estimate is likely not accurate due to the reluctance of many female victims to voice the abuses committed against them, while many others, as the Peruvian Commission of Truth and Reconciliation confirms, "died as a result of torture and it is difficult to recover their story directly."[7]

For *Sendero Luminoso*, rape was a systematic way of "punishing supposed informers and avenging themselves on husbands who were not sympathetic to the cause or who occupied official positions. It was a form of forcible recruitment of women who were made to accompany the guerrillas on marches or to become their sexual slaves."[7] Peruvian armed forces, on the other hand, used rape as a systematic form of torture upon the expectation of rebel affiliation. "Captured women, suspected of belonging to *Sendero Luminoso* or of aiding them, were handed over to the troops, whereupon they were submitted to mass rape accompanied by insult and other forms of humiliation."[7] Both forces of the Peruvian conflict utilized rape as if "violence against women could be counted among the guaranteed spoils of war,"[7] violating women against their will without hesitation or remorse. The ferocity and degree of violence coupled with the statistical evidence that the majority of victims were of indigenous descent, suggests that indigenous women represented a significant threat. In a country plagued by insurgent and state motives of racial purity and superiority, sexual abuse of indigenous women "emphasized that this was a deadly campaign against the body's reproductive potential."[7] Mass rapes were often followed by the absolute destruction and mutilation of the voiceless female body, a body already degraded because it was racially inferior.

The tendencies of male figures of armed control and organized violence historically represent "an act of initiation, serving to strengthen ties to the army or the nation"[7] and the "dual process of ejecting certain bodies from humanity while exalting others was not random but part of a strategy for rebuilding the nation."[7] Women historically and presently symbolize fertility—the possibility of future generations. It is for this reason that they are considered dangerous in times of conflict and social instability. Particularly in the case of the indigenous woman, "racism was an influence in nurturing feelings against the indigenous as distinct, inferior, a little less human and removed from the moral universe of the perpetrators, making their elimination less problematic"[7] and confirming the aggressors' masculinity and position in society.

The physiological, psychological and social effects of the organized rape and sexual abuses committed against indigenous women in this period of Peruvian history are paramount. "Many testimonies revealed that the aftereffects of sexual violence included vaginal problems, sexual diseases, pregnancy-related difficulties, and in some cases, sterility."[2] Perhaps most burdensome for women affected by sexual violence however have been the implications

their "tampered" and "dirty" bodies impose on their positions within their communities and intimate relationships with others. Resistance has often included "rejection, abandonment or violence by their partner, rejection by their family, stigmatization in the community, the impossibility of getting married, and so on."[2] The victimization of these indigenous women was directly associated with the subjugation of those characterized by situations of poverty, low educational attainment, male dominance within a gender binary and racism.[12]

3.1.3. Alberto Fujimori's population control campaign & forced sterilizations of women

Fujimori was responsible for one extensive political initiative in particular that violated female reproductive rights following his second election in 1995. In the same year of his re-election, Fujimori implemented a "nation-wide family planning program"[6] to "reduce the growth of the population to a maximum of an annual two percent growth to promote a decrease in fertility from three and a half children per woman in 1995, to two and half children in 2000; to improve maternal and child health; and to guarantee the freedom of choice and the reproductive rights of persons."[6] Despite Fujimori's publicly expressed justification for his *Programa Nacional de Población*, "underlying motives for these strategies were based on fears of poverty and racial degeneration with effects beyond national borders" and a concern for the "quality of the Peruvian population and the improvement of the race, while their efforts were grounded in a quest for modernity."[6] Fujimori incorporated "voluntary" sterilization into his newly proposed laws as an approved contraceptive method in 1995 and in the same year, the Peruvian government received millions of dollars and several thousand tons of food from USAID to support its plans.[6]

With international support from the United States, Fujimori gained the popular support he needed to successfully implement his population campaign and began to use these donated funds for what he described to the public as an implementation of a "participatory program to inform women on the use of birth control methods and empower them to become actively involved in the improvement of their reproductive health." He continued to publicly propose that the remainder of funds "were used by the government to provide information campaigns and family planning services, including sterilizations, without a fee."[6] These messages Fujimori disseminated to the public have since proven to merely be messages of appeasement and false promise. The result of his campaign later revealed that "poor, mainly rural and indigenous women were sterilized according to a quota system. Many were coerced and some women died of unattended complications."[6] Funds promised to improve the reproductive health of women were actually given to healthcare providers who successfully decreased the fertility rates in scarcely populated rural areas and those who performed the greatest amount of sterilizations on "women in fertile age" and successfully were able to "ensure that all women accepted a contraceptive method after delivery."[6] Providers that met their quotas were compensated with considerable pay. Hence, funds were not, in any way, allocated toward "improvements in the quality of rural healthcare services, such as the provisions of a hygienic working environment, medical supplies or even beds."

The healthcare personnel of rural Andean highlands were responsible for the sterilization of nearly 277,793 women according to the Ministry of Health. The majority of these sterilizations were performed on indigenous and impoverished women of rural areas and were targeted and coerced based on their lack of economic resources.[10] Procedures were found to be extremely negligent, with less than half being administered with proper anesthesia.[11] Often health facilities "lacked necessary equipment and knowledge to actually carry out the operations, the clinics did not meet hygienic standards, and women received no appropriate care" following operations.[6] In order to convince women to participate in operations (that they may or may not have known the likely, final outcome), healthcare personnel, under instruction of the government, lured women to fertility reduction through promises of food, health care specialists and clothing. And when women protested, "threats of imprisonment, fines and not treating any members of the family ever again were made."[6] In addition, healthcare personnel "failed to inform their clients properly about the side effects of different contraceptives, appropriate individual usage, and the possible consequences of sterilization."[6] Instead of educating women of their choices and truly promoting a campaign of female reproductive rights as promised, methods were imposed upon them with little to no compliance. "Pure physical force and confinement were the last resort that healthcare personnel used. The government even ordered healthcare centers in marginalized areas to make sure that women who [came] for delivery or abortion [walked] out with a sufficient method to prevent future pregnancies." These practices led to mass amounts of women leaving health care facilities without receiving notification that they had in fact been sterilized against their will.[6] For many, they did not discover their infertility until suddenly unable to have children or subsequent anatomical deformities and health problems introduced themselves.

Fujimori's population program was sufficient proof of the political motives of this program: setting quotas seriously implies that the program was not motivated by concerns about women's health, birth control, or even

family planning; it was about national demographics in relation to economic growth."[6] Furthermore, the goals of fertility rate reduction "were not set in an overpopulated area; rather, they were set in inaccessible, poor and marginalized rural areas."[6] Fujimori's true motives perpetuated the racist and classist perspective of indigenous women of the Andean highlands—the same women forced to bear the brunt of the extensive human rights violations committed during the years of *Sendero Luminoso*'s greatest power. Formal instruction on behalf of the government caused healthcare personnel to further contribute to the social divisions encouraged by class, race and gender ideals. Several victimized women who appeared before the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation prior to when its final report on human rights violations was released contended that healthcare personnel treated them disrespectfully. Racist attitudes were the cornerstone of coercive family planning programs and sterilization procedures as many personnel acted under the "belief that indigenous women and men were not capable of understanding birth control methods" and dismissed any opportunity for education of victims.[6] This paternalistic and hierarchal application of medical practices thus perpetuated the stigmas and socially-constructed beliefs of indigenous women, further dissolving their opportunity for voice and agency in their reproductive decisions.

The Commission of Truth and Reconciliation reported that Fujimori's flawed family planning program had a significant psychological and moral impact that harmed the dignity and physical integrity of women.[11] If "the goal was to empower women, then the opposite was achieved: women were treated as subordinate people."[6] What Fujimori initiated in his population control program and inspired within healthcare personnel between the years of 1995 and 2000 was a demonstration of power and control that continues to be the "central obstacle that women encounter in controlling their fertility, which is the socio-cultural value attached to having many children."[6] What Fujimori jeopardized is the one natural element of life that provides Peruvian women social power and status: fertility. In interviews with women affected by the population control campaign, women expressed concern that "if they wanted to use modern contraceptives, husbands might accuse them of wanting to be with another man."[6] Peruvian society lends itself to gender roles that "impose a strong relationship between motherhood, decency and the reproduction of the group. Women are seen as the 'guardians' of traditional life and the use of modern contraceptives threatens the traditional order."[6] Despite the gendering of these traditions, rendering women as only capable of status and power by the families that they create and the purity of their sexualized body, it is important to recognize that Fujimori's campaign only further complicated these issues for women. Post-sterilization, whether it was against their will or not, victims professed that the relationship with their husbands and community were permanently altered; their body became considered as "burned" and their husbands refused to acknowledge them both sexually and as women. Because women give birth and are the fertile beings of our communities, "they are perceived as responsible for the number and the 'quality' of the children they have. Often men are overlooked in reproductive health matters, and are rarely held responsible for the conception of (too many) children."[6] In the failure to address the male responsibility in the conception of children, government policies to control national birth rates are generally directed at women, not at men. "Although this responsibility is projected onto them, women are paradoxically not always perceived as capable of managing their own sexuality and are therefore excluded from controlling their own fertility."[6]

3.2. Reconciliation, Reparation & Prosecution

The Commission of Truth and Reconciliation was devised to investigate the assassination, torture, disappearance, displacement, employment of terrorist methods and other violations attributable to the state and *Sendero Luminoso*. The commission was comprised of twelve Peruvian commissioners, ten men and two women. On August 28, 2003, the commission released an 8,000 page report to then president Alejandro Toledo and other important members of the government.[8] Despite the documentation and recommendations made on behalf of the commission in response to committed human rights violations, still no prosecutions have been made against those involved in the sexual violence, rape or forced sterilization of women between the years of 1980 and 2000.

The Commission's effort, although unprecedented in its creation and release of once silenced information, has fallen short of instituting reparations and procedures that truly respect and protect the women affected by the violence. The programs initiated demonstrate "a general lack of sensitivity for the social, family, and community-related reality of women, particularly of rural, Quechua-speaking women who are victims themselves or relatives of victims."[2] The failure to consider specific violations, particularly sexual abuse, "on women's social status and on their ability to access state resources, as well as to identify family or community conflicts that may arise upon obtaining reparations—particularly economic reparations—demonstrates the effect of the commission's gender bias."[2] Additional revision and addition must be made to the policies of reparation and prosecution set forth by the commission. The necessary conditions for women to speak about their experiences without suffering the

consequences of community shame and guilt is necessary to stop the suffering of victims—something that is now characterized by suffering twofold: first by being raped and second by being condemned by a patriarchal community.

3.3. The Continued Quest for Justice & the Voice of the Indigenous Female

3.3.1. peruvian female considerations of reproductive health

In looking at more current studies and reports of Peruvian women, it is evident that the gender-specific violations attributed to state and *Sendero Luminoso* violence from 1980 to 2000 continues to negatively affect the construction of a healthy female identity in Perú. Most affected are still indigenous women of rural Andean highlands, as the division caused by class and race continues to direct and characterize Peruvian cultural norms and realities.

In a study conducted in 2011 on the social construction of unwanted pregnancy and abortion in two Peruvian settings, researchers found that "pregnancy and childbearing are inherently related to women's social status or power, to gender relations at the societal level and to the conditions that allow women to decide about their reproductive capacity."[13] Thus, the characterization of the female identity as primarily associated with fertility continues to dominate Peruvian culture and is further influenced by class and race. When focus group participants discussed pregnancy termination or the use of contraceptives, "they referred to experiences marked by clandestinity, guilt and censure."[13] Not unexpectedly, the highest rates of resistance to formal contraceptive use, sterilization and abortion were strongest among low-income women, who to some degree associate these practices "with health consequences and problems and consider it to be a consequence of breaking away from what they would do according to the social norms of expected behaviors."[13]

3.3.2. in the court of law: female agency & voice

The case of Mercedes Ccorimanya Lavilla is an especially illustrative account of sexual violence and the agency of race and class in the female victim's pursuit of legal justice and prosecution of aggressors guilty of sexual violence and rape. Out of 250 cases filed under the rubric of rape in the province of Cusco over the course of nearly a century, Lavilla's case is only one of five that ended in just conviction.[14] As a woman of indigenous descent that was gang raped at the age of 18 in a rural province of Cusco located in the Andean highlands, Lavilla's case proves that race defines women's sexual reproductive rights in rural Perú. Lavilla struggled tremendously in the case she presented before Cusqueñan court of law, a key site in the production and negotiation of racial taxonomies.[14] Lavilla found herself in a unique situation, as a victim of rape in arguably the most traditionally indigenous city of Perú where ancient Incan doctrine continues to influence society and beliefs. However, the challenges Lavilla faced before Cusco's court of law emphasizes the scrutiny and augmentation that the indigenous identity has undergone post-conquest and in the modernized world of Perú. In Cusco, where "age, virginity and race (glossed as morality) are the chief factors in rape trials despite what is written in penal statutes and mandated procedural codes,"[14] Lavilla had to prove that she did not *deserve* to be raped, not whether she was in fact raped or not.

Lavilla felt that she had to employ the concept of race in order to earn a conviction in her favor that would properly prosecute her aggressors. In an environment where "race is produced in courtrooms, which often serve as analytical sites of anxiety," Lavilla developed a strategy in which "she instrumentally employed the languages of race to distance herself from her own indigeneity, as well as that of her alleged attackers."[14] In current Peruvian settings, where "female indigeneity is akin to lasciviousness," Lavilla had to maneuver the degree by which her blood was indigenous to earn the respect and protection of judicial law. Lavilla faced scrutiny and abuse in the face of community members, supporters of her alleged attackers and even the police officers to whom she originally reported her case. Her current husband explains that, "machismo is a plague…a woman is trapped because of her reproductive situation. Nepotism, machismo, alcoholism and abuse. And illiteracy. They are very closely related…the poorer a person is, the more they drink and here in Perú, that is the way it is for the vast majority."[14] Lavilla's case touches upon the history of Incan considerations of female divinity and to the extent by which such affection for the female has been lost from even the most indigenous of communities that remain in Perú. What Lavilla's case teaches us is that in "addition to exercising agency with regard to the legal system itself, women have to contend with racially coded cultural tropes that center on age, virginity and morality." Her experience demonstrates the barriers women encounter in Peruvian courts, where "they face humiliating physical exams and procedural irregularities at the hands of state agents" [14] and are further limited to exercising agency when among lower-income, impoverished and illiterate societies.

3.3.3. indigenous women's self-identified priorities of sexual health

The connection between sexuality and development is often misunderstood and unexplored, or it is rendered insignificant until more pressing national needs are met. In participatory assessments conducted of Andean and Amazonian women in Perú, "sexual rights issues, and particularly those related to gender inequality, are identified by the women themselves as the most important obstacles to their good health and well-being."[15] Publicly, female concerns for the control of their sexuality are considered among the priorities of urban, middle-class women. Indigenous, rural women are not included as part of this female community and rather are assumed to occupy themselves with more mindless and submissive lifestyles, "which development workers see as harmonious places, where ideas of cooperation between men, women and the natural environment are the organizing principles" of life.[15]

What indigenous women confirmed in this 2008 participatory assessment however is that "gender inequality, gender-based violence and lack of sexual rights are important obstacles to good health, well-being and productivity."[15] It seems it could even be argued that "the less urban, white and middle-class women in Perú are, the more their sexual rights become a matter of life and death."[15] In a survey conducted by *Movimiento Manuela Ramos*, five thousand Quechua men and women were interviewed. Among the women surveyed, only four percent confirmed that they speak up when they do not agree with their husband, while only 15% said they actively participate in decision-making about having sexual relations, the use of contraception and the number of children they have. Only 28% of women went on to say that they thought women should not be beaten under any circumstance and 44% of women admitted to being forcibly engaged in sex at some point in their lives.[15] These personal accounts of indigenous Peruvian women demonstrate the continued objectification and oppression that their female identity lends to the construction of a healthy family.

4. Conclusion

This paper argues that the use of women as a weapon of war and progress between the years of 1980 and 2000 is something I have argued as deliberate and rooted in the socially constructed and historical Peruvian struggle of class, gender and race identification. This victimization and violation primarily affected women of indigenous, rural communities in the Andean highlands. However, the human rights violations committed under *Sendero Luminoso* and Fujimori's political state were not new or revolutionary in their specific merciless attacks on this vulnerable female community. In fact, such continued and recurrent abuse employed during this period of Peruvian instability and conflict has only served to perpetuate and deepen the challenges of the indigenous female to agent control and voice in her sexual and reproductive health.

Perú seems to be plagued by its history of European colonization and subsequent reduction of an authentic indigenous identity paired with the onset of additional racial integration and development. As European heritage has become woven into the Peruvian racial identity, the most purely European of Peruvians have appropriated power and dominance as a right. In turn, the rich indigenous roots and cultural history of Perú have dissolved, disassociated from a large majority of the Peruvian population and continues to only resonate with communities located in more historically relevant centers of indigenous culture, such as those found in the Andean highlands of the Peruvian southern sierra. Among these implications of race, class has ultimately become a hierarchy structured by racial purity and sophistication. Those that still incorporate traditional indigenous practices into their everyday lives such as the Quechua language, traditional *artesanía* crafts and agricultural lifestyles are those most deeply impoverished simply by their inherent nature, considered resistant to what a modern Perú has been socially constructed to encompass.

The division of race and class following the transformation of belief systems post-colonization within Perú parallels many other Latin American countries in permanently creating a society of specific, oppressive gender roles and norms. Women have shifted away from the traditional Incan association of divinity and power and instead become relevant only in the context of their sexual body and level of fertility. This objectification of the Peruvian female most greatly affects those of the most indigenous and rural societies as they struggle to not only deal with a harsh gender binary in their partnerships, community and family but are also pressured by their subordinate status defined by their very level of "impure" blood. The vulnerability of rural, indigenous women in the Andean highlands of Perú is most honestly and terribly represented by the sexual violence and reproductive impositions that

have historically been thrust upon them. In looking at the national conflict of insurgent *Sendero Luminoso* and President Fujimori between the years of 1980 and 2000, the obvious insensitive and dominating attitudes toward women are vividly demonstrated in the human rights violations committed on the two parties' behalf. This period of Peruvian history in particular demonstrates the inefficiency of the Peruvian social order and political establishment to properly protect its female population. Whether as a weapon of progress or war, indigenous Andean women are relentlessly objectified to affirm male dominance and racial superiority. Without changes in the underlying structural conditions that have created a social context in which various forms of racism and sexism thrive, it is unlikely that the oppression will cease to define the lives of those most culturally and historically precious—the indigenous women of the Andean highlands.

5. Notes

1 Silverblatt, Irene. *Moon, sun, and witches: gender ideologies and class in Inca and colonial Peru*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987.

2 Marín, Ruth. *What Happened to the Women? Gender and Reparations for Human Rights Violations*. New York: Social Science Research Council, 2006.

3 Pearce, Jenny. "The Shining Path Movement." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 8, no. 1 (2002): 85-87.

4 Arjomand, Said Amir. "6." In *The Political dimensions of religion*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993. 169-173.

5 Encyclopedia Britannica. "Alberto Fujimori (president of Peru)." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/221549/Alberto-Fujimori (accessed November 4, 2013).

6 Boesten, Jelke. "Free Choice or Poverty Alleviation? Population Politics in Peru under Alberto Fujimori." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 82 (2007): 3-20.

7 Franco, Jean. "Rape: A Weapon of War." *Social Text* 25, no. 2 91 (2007): 23-37.

8 "Findings & Recommendations." Commission of Truth and Reconciliation. http://www.usip.org/publications/truth-commission-peru-01 (accessed October 1, 2013).

9 Klaiber, Jeffrey. "Peru: The Church and the Shining Path." *America*, February 22, 1992.

10 "Peru to Reopen Investigation into Forced Sterilization of Women." Amnesty International USA. http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/peru-reopen-investigation-forced-sterilizations-women-2011-10-31 (accessed October 3, 2013).

11 "Mass Sterilization Scandal Shocks Peru." BBC News. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2148793.stm (accessed October 1, 2013).

12 Alcalde, M. Cristina. The woman in the violence gender, poverty, and resistance in Peru. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2010.

13 Palomino, Nancy, Miguel Ramos Padilla, Brigitte Davey Talledo , Christian Guzmán Mazuelos Jessica Carda, and Angela M. Bayer. "The Social Constructions of Unwanted Pregnancy and Abortion in Lima, Peru." *Global Public Health* 6, no. 1 (2011): 73-89.

14 Bunt, Laura A.. "A Quest For Justice In Cuzco, Peru: Race And Evidence In The Case Of Mercedes Ccorimanya Lavilla." *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 31, no. 2 (2008): 286-302.

15 Brant, Astrid, and Francoise Girard. "Sexuality, Health and Human Rights: Self-Identified Priorities of Indigenous Women in Peru." *Gender and Development* 16, no. 2 (2008): 247-256.

5. References

Alexander Bailey, Gauvin. "The Andean Hybrid Baroque: Convergent Cultures in the Churches of Colonial Peru." *University of Notre Dame* 1 (2010): 702-704.

Alcalde, M. Cristina. The woman in the violence gender, poverty, and resistance in Peru. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2010.

Arjomand, Said Amir. "6." In *The Political dimensions of religion*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993. 169-173.

Boesten, Jelke. "Free Choice or Poverty Alleviation? Population Politics in Peru under Alberto Fujimori." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 82 (2007): 3-20.

Boesten, Jelke. *Intersecting inequalities: women and social policy in Peru, 1990-2000*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010.

Brant, Astrid, and Francoise Girard. "Sexuality, Health and Human Rights: Self-Identified Priorities of Indigenous Women in Peru." *Gender and Development* 16, no. 2 (2008): 247-256.

Bunt, Laura A.. "A Quest For Justice In Cuzco, Peru: Race And Evidence In The Case Of Mercedes Ccorimanya Lavilla." *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 31, no. 2 (2008): 286-302.

De la Cadena, Marisol. "Silent Racism and Intellectual Superiority in Peru." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 17, no. 2 (1998): 143-164.

Encyclopedia Britannica. "Alberto Fujimori (president of Peru)." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/221549/Alberto-Fujimori (accessed November 4, 2013).

"Findings & Recommendations." Commission of Truth and Reconciliation. http://www.usip.org/publications/truth-commission-peru-01 (accessed October 1, 2013).

Franco, Jean. "Rape: A Weapon of War." *Social Text* 25, no. 2 91 (2007): 23-37.

Klaiber, Jeffrey. "Peru: The Church and the Shining Path." *America*, February 22, 1992.

Marín, Ruth. *What Happened to the Women? Gender and Reparations for Human Rights Violations*. New York: Social Science Research Council, 2006.

"Mass Sterilization Scandal Shocks Peru." BBC News. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2148793.stm (accessed October 1, 2013).

Moser, Annalise. "Happy Heterogeneity? Feminism, Development, and the Grassroots Women's Movement in Peru." *Feminist Studies* 30, no. 1 (2004): 211-237.

Palomino, Nancy, Miguel Ramos Padilla, Brigitte Davey Talledo , Christian Guzmán Mazuelos, Jessica Carda, and Angela M. Bayer. "The Social Constructions of Unwanted Pregnancy and Abortion in Lima, Peru." *Global Public Health* 6, no. 1 (2011): 73-89.

Pearce, Jenny. "The Shining Path Movement." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 8, no. 1 (2002): 85-87.

"Peru to Reopen Investigation into Forced Sterilization of Women." Amnesty International USA. http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/peru-reopen-investigation-forced-sterilizations-women- 2011-10-31 (accessed October 3, 2013).

Silverblatt, Irene. *Moon, sun, and witches: gender ideologies and class in Inca and colonial Peru*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987.

State of Fear: The Truth about Terrorism. DVD. Directed by Pamela Yates. USA: Skylight Pictures, 2005.

The Fall of Fujimori. DVD. Directed by Ellen Perry. Canoga Park, CA: Cinema Libre Studio, 2006.

To Be a Mother in Latin America. DVD. Directed by Carmen Sarmiento. Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 1997.