

POLITICS OF CONSERVATION AND CONSUMPTION:
THE VICUÑA TRADE IN PERU

By

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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During the Incaic period it is estimated that between 1.5 and 2 million vicuña roamed the Andes. However with the arrival of the Spanish colonists those numbers rapidly began to decline and the vicuña has been threatened with extinction since the Spanish arrived in the New World. In the latter half of the twentieth century the vicuña population began to recover. Today there are approximately 130,000 vicuñas living in the Peruvian highlands.

This study focuses on how the trade of the vicuña, a wild, endangered and heavily protected species, is affecting local communities. With the reintroduction of the historic Incan ritual, the chaku, the government has worked for 10 years with Andean communities implementing this conservation program. As a result, ritual, history and identity are being re-invented and re-imagined in order to gain access and usufruct rights over the valuable resource. I examine three interrelated questions surrounding the

commercialization and trade of the vicuña. How does consumption and production of the vicuña shape cultural meaning of the resource and identity of those working with the animal? How is the chaku as a method for conservation being conceptualized and actualized locally? Finally, through an investigation of the vicuña commodity chain, I ask the question, can the vicuña deliver on its promise to bring economic prosperity to communities?

Indigenous identity and history are being promoted not only as a way to market the vicuña internationally but also as a way to encourage communities to perform the chaku ritual. In order to give usufruct rights to Andean communities, conflicting concepts of tradition and rights related to identity and history are deployed. Initial observations show that communities are active and dynamic in reshaping the Incan chaku ritual with respect to defining the space and meaning it will hold in their local economic and social structures. As consequence, however, there is much miscommunication and debate between those who have implemented the chaku and those who are subjects of that implementation. Lastly, it is doubtful that the vicuña can deliver on its promise to bring wealth to all the communities. Rather, a few communities that have large populations of vicuña will and are experiencing success, but the majority of the communities are not.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Fugitive vicuñas of winged lightness
Toward the snow they run to reflect their shadows
As if they were lead by instincts of purity

They are, by heraldic sign, made for heights
To melancholys and serenities
They love the cold peaks, they love the cold snow
They love distance, they love solitude

The vicuñas are not princesses or vestals
That in the pythagorism of reincarnations
In their sticks maintain priestly fires
Or ruminant dances and songs of melancholy

Polished and serene, romantic and slight
In a gallop full of agility and grace
Running out towards the calmness of the perpetual snows
Seek shelter in the peaks, their aristocratic shearing
-Jose Santos Chocano (original in Spanish, my translation)

Research Question

During the Incaic period it is estimated that 2 million vicuña roamed the Andes (National Organization of South American Camelids “CONACS” 1997). However with the arrival of the Spanish colonists those numbers rapidly began to decline and the vicuña has been threatened with extinction since the Spanish arrived in the New World. In the latter half of the twentieth century, however, the vicuña population began to recover. Today there are approximately 130,000 vicuñas living in the Peruvian highlands (CONACS 2002).

Vicuña fiber is the finest that can be woven and its preciousness has contributed to the poaching of the animal. In 1995 the endangered species status of the vicuña was changed so that Peru could export and sell the fiber. The motto became “a vicuña sheared is a vicuña saved” (Amy Cox interview with CONACS, 5/16/02 Lima, Peru). It was argued that through commercialization the species would be best conserved. Peruvian officials also believed that the vicuña resource was economically exploitable for its high value of fiber, and could be a mechanism and new source of income by which to improve the quality of life for Andean communities. The communities were given sole exclusive rights to the fiber as a way creating a new source of income and preserving the animal. I argue that while the program was developed to integrate communities into the national economy and improve communal well being, the promotion and sustainability of the vicuña resource as a commercial endeavor requires indigenous history, heritage and the highlanders themselves.

With the reintroduction of the historic Incan ritual, the *chaku*, the government has worked for 10 years with Andean communities implementing this conservation program. The *chaku*, first described in 1586 by Diego Cabeza de Vaca (Portus 1994:22), is a round up of the animals for shearing. During today’s *chaku* ceremony people climb into the hills, hold long strings of flags, which form a human chain/net and round up the wild vicuña for shearing. Once the shearing is complete, the animals are released alive back into nature. The *chaku* ritual, as well as other aspects of indigenous Peruvian heritage, is being commodified, re-invented, and re-imagined, in order to create a new source of income as well as to gain access and exclusive rights over the valuable resource. Vicuña

management embodies the articulation of power over an endangered natural resource and cultural symbol.

The intention of this study is to look at the international trade of vicuña fiber as a way of investigating questions of globalization, development, and identity. By focusing on what I view to be a dense symbol of wealth, history, and culture, the vicuña, I research the socioeconomic effects international trade has on rural communities. I explore how meaning and cultural values change at different phases in the commodification of this natural resource. In addition, I look at how an ancient Incan ritual and constructions of indigenous identity are being modified and manipulated to suit the needs of the community, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and other international entities.

My study has three questions, two of which stemmed from the needs of the National Society of the Vicuña, (SNV). One of the needs outlined in the action plan of the SNV was to explore new markets. In order to accomplish this the SNV outlined several needs areas, two of which were 1) a need for the aggregated worth of the fiber and 2) a need to understand the promotion and production process of the vicuña on the national and international level (Sociedad Nacional de la Vicuña "SNV" 2002:Appendix 3). I examine three interrelated questions surrounding the commercialization and trade of the vicuña.

- 1) How does consumption and production of vicuña fiber shape identity as well as cultural meaning of the resource?
- 2) How is the chaku as a method for conservation being conceptualized and actualized locally?
- 3) Is the vicuña delivering on its promise to economically develop communities?

I trace out the commodity chain driving an increase in shearing of the vicuña in order to understand how economic value and cultural meaning shift in the stages of commodification and production. I research the raw material extraction, the manufacturing process, and the final production and consumption of the product. My central concern is to look at how each part relates to one another forming the links that make up the commodity chain. One of the goals of the SNV was to learn more about vicuña fiber processing to be able to better manage the vicuña resource. While my investigation satisfied their need I also simultaneously investigated the purported economic benefits of the program.

I focus on two aspects of promotion: use of Incan history both for exclusive access to animals and for marketing to elite consumers. Indigenous identity and Incan history are the cornerstone for the promotion of the final product as well as for the chaku. I make clear that all parties are active in this process of using history for political and economic advancement. The result is the commodification of culture and history and a perpetuation of socio-biological claims about the naturalness of indigenous people.

The vicuña fiber is sheared using the historic chaku ritual. In Chapter 4 I compare three chakus in terms of their production capacity and their elaborateness of Incan ritual. I argue that the two are related. That is, the greater the number of vicuña, the greater “Incaness” is displayed, and the greater commodification of culture occurs. Supporting examples of this are the introduction of religious ritual, dance, Incan performance and ceremony, and development of eco-tourism operations as a way of buttressing and expanding economic opportunities from vicuña shearing.

Culture does not just represent society; it also fulfills, within the context of the requirements of the production of meaning, the functions of relaborating social

structures and inventing new ones. In addition to *representing* relations of production, it contributes to their *reproduction, transformation, and invention*. (Garcia-Canclini 1993:10, italics in original)

The chaku ritual is being manipulated so that it can eventually become a tourist attraction. This ritual is continuously changing as people see ways to better promote heritage, the vicuña, and develop a new source of income. History, heritage and identity are based on today's globalized world and its needs. How the public views what is indigenous influences the outcome of the "historic" ritual.

I do not argue that the ritual is inauthentic or that the rural people do not have a different cosmovision. I argue that authenticity and tradition are terms that ignore dynamism and we cannot continue to use them. New authenticities are being created from what we think should be authentic Inca and indigenous. "Objects represent a way of appropriating and preserving symbols of identity"(Garcia-Canclini 1993:34). Because the vicuña is a symbol steeped in history and part of Peruvian culture, studying how the symbol is used sheds light on how globalization is affecting Peruvian identity. Identity, ritual and heritage are constructs developed from today's history. It is not that globalization is the ultimate homogenizer. Rather, it is currently the ultimate creator of nationalism, specialized identities, and otherness.

In Chapter 5 I examine the promotional pamphlets and marketing philosophy of Grupo Inca, one of the three companies that have been given exclusive rights to manufacture vicuña fiber. Besides portraying current indigenous Peruvians as remnants of the past, Grupo Inca seeks to capitalize on Peruvian history in order to promote consumption. In its pamphlet Grupo Inca states:

The hair of the vicuña, the finest in the world was reserved in the time of the Inca for only the emperor and his nobility. Presently vicuña fiber is obtained through

an ancient Inca tradition called the chaku which consists of using a large human chain to capture the animals and herd them into a corral where they are shorn and then liberated back into the wild, converting this magical ritual into a colorful party. (Grupo Inca Marketing Pamphlet 2002)

Along with a promotion of the vicuña as historic, scarce and elite, the fiber is marketed as a sustainable, ecological and indigenous. This marketing plan of conservation and nature have elevated the importance of the vicuña and created a new indigenous ritual history based on nature, pristine, and Inca. Purchasing these products, you can feel good about your consumerism because you are helping to conserve a species and develop impoverished rural communities

I argue that all of this is acting within the sphere of globalization, which requires the exotic, the past, and nature. The promotion of the vicuña is based on an alteration of identity and history in relation to contemporary politics. Consumption is a powerful force. It, along with the very real hope of hitting a gold mine, are serving to create new notions of indigenous belief and history. At issue are concepts that cannot be easily defined: What is natural? What is wild? How do we define property? How do we view indigenous peoples not only in Peru but internationally? And finally, how does our consumerism serve to commodify culture and nature?

In Chapter 3 I calculate the aggregate worth of the fiber and quantify the economic costs and benefits of vicuña manufacturing. For example, a vicuña scarf costs \$400-\$1000 USD.¹ Through my research, I calculate that a vicuña scarf produced \$53,865.00 of income for the Peruvian manufacturing plant and \$28,702 for the Andean communities. However, only 20% of the vicuña fiber is finished in Peru. The remainder

¹ all monetary values in U.S. dollars.

is finished and sold overseas. Furthermore most of the fiber has been stockpiled as evidenced in the small number of scarves sold and produced vs. the amount of fiber purchased. I conclude that the monetary benefit for the communities stemming from the sale of the vicuña varies by community with the majority of communities not seeing any substantial monetary benefit. However, the communities with the highest concentration of vicuña will and are benefiting greatly.

The last issue I investigate was not one I had anticipated, but one that merits attention and thought. The entire conservation program of the vicuña hinges on Peruvian law giving usufruct rights of the fiber to the communities. The communities are given the right to shear the animal in exchange for community protection of the vicuña living on their communal land. Underlying this action is the belief that if given rights to the resource, poaching would cease. These rights, however, were not clearly defined and an ongoing struggle over access to the resource has ensued. In Chapter 2, I begin to explore how usufruct is conceptualized and the problems created because of this law. The *chaku*, a dynamic ritual system that was newly introduced to the communities, came to be a crucial component in my analysis of how tradition, belief, and power are altered.

My original hypothesis asserted that as the community becomes more involved in the international market, the monetary and cultural value of the vicuña will become stronger while class divisions will become greater. While it is difficult to assess causal relationships stemming from the vicuña, my observations show that new hierarchies have been created and indigenous identities are being manipulated by the state, local and corporate levels to gain socioeconomic and political leverage. The process is not a top-down domineering imposition. The local communities have very different perceptions,

problems, and projections for the vicuña. This is clearly manifested in the differences exemplified in the chaku ritual and beliefs of each community.

Methods and Timeline

I operationalize my three research questions through the exploration of the commodity chain. This research is somewhat different than classic anthropological research because of the nature of the study. Instead of conducting all my fieldwork in one community, my research required that I follow the production and consumption of vicuña products. Consequently, I spent a lot of time in urban centers like Arequipa and Lima, researching the main manufacturing plant, working with the Peruvian government, community organizations, and other private companies. I also had to change my community visits several times for a variety of reasons. In the end I worked in three communities – Rancas in Cerro de Pasco, Pampa Galeras in Ayacucho and Tambo Cañahuas in Arequipa. I also visited a research station outside of Cuzco and had plans to visit another community in that department but due to a freeze that occurred, the visit was canceled.

My methods included participant observation, open-ended interviews, and simple random surveys of community members. In the workshops sponsored by Conatura, a NGO located in Arequipa, Peru, I passed out questionnaires and conducted shorter informal interviews. I also used data from published materials and interviews to quantify the aggregate worth of the fiber and the profits and costs of the vicuña production. Lastly I collected and analyzed visual material culture, such as promotional pamphlets, posters, photographs and marketing materials.

I visited four communities in four different departments, one research station outside of Cuzco, participated in two chakus, and interviewed leaders of the SNV, Almar, Conatura, National Organization of South American Camelids (CONACS), National Institute of Environment and Natural Resources (INRENA) and Grupo Inca. In addition I worked with Conatura in two community planning workshops and attended several government meetings, local community congresses, and community meetings.

I began my study in Lima, Peru on May 12, 2002. Conatura had assisted me with the initial proposal and helped me set up contacts and community visits. Because Arequipa is located about twelve hours from Lima, I needed to contact the Lima organizations first. I called the SNV and CONACS and set up interviews. These interviews were the first of many and the discussions allowed me to get an overview of the stakeholders and as well as organize crucial community visits. The SNV and CONACS helped me gain entry into several communities and without their cooperation, this study would have been difficult, if not impossible, to execute.

During this week I also met with the director of Conatura to organize my site visits and workshops for the following weeks in Arequipa. Lastly, I visited the exclusive retail shop, Alpaca III, which sells vicuña products in the LarcoMar shopping center. At this shop I had the great fortune of getting the contact information for the only Peruvian factory that is permitted to work with vicuña fiber, Grupo Inca. I contacted them while in Lima and they agreed to meet with me the following week in Arequipa. Gilberto was my contact at Grupo Inca and was open and candid about the vicuña production process.² He gave me a tour of the factory and introduced me to key players in the vicuña production

² Names are changed, unless last name included.

process whom I later interviewed. I returned to the factory several times and Gilberto's kindness, frankness and availability, helped me to gain more insight into the process and understand how Grupo Inca viewed the vicuña in its overall business plan.

I had initial plans to visit a community in the department of Junin before departing to Arequipa, but the chaku was canceled.³ This would become a common occurrence and hindrance for not only my study but for the SNV. Instead, I flew to Arequipa where I began my work with Conatura. They had facilitated my initial meeting with the SNV and had agreed to help me with community visits in the departments of Arequipa and Puno.

My first week in Arequipa I participated in a workshop sponsored by Conatura. The two-day workshop was attended by all of the participating communities in the Arequipa department. This session provided me with the opportunity to conduct a survey, interview community leaders, and participate in discussions about community needs and problems. It also helped strengthen my relationship with the SNV and Conatura.

With the assistance of Conatura I had originally planned to visit two communities in the Arequipa region, Salinas and Pampa Cañahuas, and Picotani in the department of

³ Throughout the summer several obstacles presented themselves. The community I was scheduled to visit in Arequipa decided at the last minute that they did not want Conatura to conduct the scheduled five-day workshop. Without the assistance of Conatura I was also unable to visit the community. The two site visits I had scheduled in Cuzco were canceled because Peru was experiencing a severe freeze and shearing of the vicuña was canceled for fear that this would endanger the animals. My rescheduled visit to a community in the department of Junin was also canceled because the corral holding the animals broke and all of the vicuna escaped. Lastly, two community visits were shortened because of national strikes and riots. These experiences, while extraordinarily frustrating, also served to shed light on the instability of Peru and the difficulty of planning and promoting the chaku as a development alternative.

Puno. However, due to a conflict between Conatura and the community the Salinas visit was postponed and I was not able to attend. The Picotani visit was canceled due to conflicting schedules and reports of dangerous travel in Juliaca, the larger town on the way to Picotani.⁴ Consequently I only visited one community with Conatura, Pampa Cañahuas, which is an annex of four smaller communities. I visited Pampa Cañahuas with Conatura and participated in a community workshop and strategic vicuña management planning session.

Following this, I interviewed the managers at Grupo Inca. I was given a factory tour and initially they were quite open and willing to discuss manufacturing, marketing and their business plans with me. However, as my search for more sensitive information increased, their reluctance did as well. I interviewed the production manager, two textile engineers, and the Director of Retail Sales and Marketing. I attempted to interview the other major knitwear factory of Peru, Mitchell Company, (they were denied the opportunity to export vicuña), but was refused an interview.

From Arequipa I returned north where the SNV had agreed to take me to several different communities to participate in local congresses, meetings and chakus.⁵ First, I

⁴ Communities can be very fickle and in this particular instance two NGO's were vying for the exclusive right to work the community. Conatura had this workshop planned for several months but ARACUARIA, a Spanish NGO, had told the communities that if they worked with Conatura they could not work with ARACUARIA. Competition for community access continues to be a problem.

⁵ I had difficulties getting to and staying in communities. Because I had no reliable transportation, I had to rely on the SNV, Conatura or CONACS to take me to sites. In addition I needed them to help me enter these communities that would otherwise not necessarily welcome an outside researcher. While I visited several different types of communities I was unable to stay as long as I had originally planned, due not only to the time constraint of the summer, but also due to transportation and planning. Consequently

visited Ondores in the department of Junin and then went on to visit Rancas in the department of Cerro de Pasco. In Ondores I participated in a local congressional meeting and monthly planning meeting. There was also a forum for discussing the problems the community had experienced with the SNV and with Almar. Almar is a company named after Alfonso Martinez, a lawyer from Lucanas, Ayacucho. Martinez has been a key player in the development of the chaku program and in the promotion and production of vicuña fiber as a method for increasing community income. The meeting in Ondores stemmed from the fact that Almar was competing for rights to shear the vicuña fiber of several communities, offering better prices and plans than the SNV. Almar was targeting several of the major producers of fiber and threatening the stability and longevity of the SNV. The SNV believed that Almar was spreading rumors about them and the SNV had gone to Ondores in order to clarify and quell those rumors. Martinez was supposed to attend the meeting but failed to show up. This raised the ire of the SNV because they felt that they could not quell the rumors without speaking to him face to face in front of the entire community.

In Rancas, Cerro de Pasco I participated in my first chaku. This was also my third community visit. What I had begun to see was that while there were similarities between sites, there was much discontinuity. What was true in one community was not always true in another community. Not only was there discontinuity in the way the historic ritual was conducted, but also in terms of the presence of social capital, infrastructure,

I was unable to research much of what was originally scheduled. On the other hand, I sat in on meetings and met people who I had not originally planned for either.

leadership, organization, and financial well-being. My idea of a unified rural population and community structure was exploded.

Following this visit I returned to Lima and attended meetings with the SNV and CONACS learning more about the SNV's battle to maintain exclusive selling and shearing rights. The problems with Almar continued to be a thorn in the SNV's side and they were at constant battle with this phantasm.

Accompanied by the SNV I went to the department of Ayacucho to visit the town of Lucanas, the biggest producer of vicuña fiber. Lucanas is the site where "it all began". Here in the late 70's a German NGO began a program to repopulate the vicuña. This is also the home of the first leaders of the SNV and CONACS. This visit turned out to be pivotal. During the Festival of Cheese and Vicuña, dignitaries, tourists, and government officials had come to participate in the famous Incan chaku ritual. Creating the chaku, totally different from the one I saw in Rancas, into a national event, people from all over Peru came to participate and witness the shearing of the vicuña. Here I met Alfonso Martinez, the first president of CONACS and owner/founder of Almar. He introduced me to several of his friends and the first President of the SNV. The dialogues started to shift as new perspectives, politics and agendas came into play. I felt as if I was in a novel and the plot was thickening.

Returning to Lima I followed up on my new contacts and conducted several formal interviews before heading off to Junin again. I was scheduled to visit the community of Cachi Cachi and see another chaku. Leaving Lima I was robbed while sitting in traffic and worse, the visit to Cachi Cachi in Junin never happened because the fence surrounding the vicuña broke and all of the vicuña escaped, resulting in no chaku

for me to visit. At this point I had four community visits in four different departments. My last community visit was in the department of Cuzco. I flew to Cuzco, took a course in Quechua and continued to research. In Cuzco, a totally different angle was spun and a politic that was separated from the vested interests of Lima was displayed.

Unfortunately my Cuzco visits were canceled because of the immense freeze that Peru experienced, ultimately leading to a state of emergency and national campaign to send blankets and aid to the farmers and herders living in the high plains. No shearing of vicuña would be conducted during this time. Nonetheless I was able research in the university library and met three anthropologists who would help me greatly with literature and years of experience: Dr. Jorge Flores Ochoa, Dr. Carmen Escalante, and Dr. Ricardo Valderrama.

After a few weeks of waiting and after the freeze let up, I participated in the Department of Cuzco's Congress for Vicuña and met the Cuzco and Apurimac CONACS workers. While I never made it to Quispicanchis in Cuzco, I did visit La Raya, a university field research site that works with alpaca, llama, vicuña, cattle, and sheep. I also attended a festival in Sicuani where community members brought and showed their animals. La Raya is dedicated to answering biological questions of territoriality, family make-up, illness, and issues of fertility with the captured vicuña. They have extensive research facilities and are associated with the university in Cuzco. La Raya also performs chakus and has benefited monetarily from the sale of the fiber. Their chaku ritual, as told by my guide, was nothing like the one in Lucanas, but was similar to the chaku of Rancas.

Out of all the research conducted I am most disappointed with the absence of community visit in the Cuzco department. Cuzco communities are more isolated and separated from the politics of Lima and Arequipa. Moreover Quechua is spoken without shame in front of foreigners. This study would be improved with the experience of another chaku in the department of Cuzco.

It is difficult to capture and set down on paper the feeling of dynamism that life, projects and politics take on. A good example of this is that while in Peru the United States lifted the ban on the importation of vicuña products. Witnessing how everyone reacted to this policy change helped me to see the power the U.S. has in the creation of policy and ideology in other countries. However, I left during the development and opening of this new market. Being away from Peru and from contacts has left a void in this new development in the ongoing evolution of vicuña management. What lies ahead is unpredictable but watching it develop should prove interesting.

The conclusions of this research are not new. Rather this is a case study supporting the work of many anthropologists who have looked at international trade and the commodification of culture. Peru has been part of the globalized economy and trade for over six centuries (Wolf 1982). "It is characteristic of the Andean area that the coast, the piedmont, the altiplano highlands, and the tundra steppe (puna) afford very different environments and resources, and hence require and enable different human activities" (Wolf 1982:59). Trade between those areas was critical for survival and the Inca flourished by trading through these areas. More recent, Peru followed another export boom in the guano trade in the 1800s and in the 1900s wool was exported in mass quantities. Copper, silver and other minerals continue to be a part the Andean export

economy. The vicuña trade is simply another iteration of adaptability to a flexible trade economy.

My goal is that this research and observation provide insight into the way that local communities participate in the global marketplace and explain how they mobilize conventions of cooperative work and resource management to engage international markets. Curiously, knowing how important indigenous heritage is to the sustainability of the vicuña resource and its retail success may help empower the communities to take control over the portrayal and use of their history, heritage, ritual and identity. This, in turn, will allow them to actively engage in the development of their future.

CHAPTER 2 HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Quechua Myth

The gods had mercy on men
And decided to people the earth
By alpaca and llamas
By vicuña and guanacos
They emerged from the wells
From the pacarinas and the fountains
They offered their meat, their hide, and their blood
Thoughtful man in the darkness
That day they will be treated well
(In Silva 1994, my translation)

Q'olla Myth

Apullarghagua had a beautiful daughter named Qhori Chaska. All the young men of the region wanted her, but their parents did not accept any of them. One day when the Inca arrived in the village to govern, knowing of the young girl, he wanted to meet her, but her parents, to prevent this from happening, transformed the young girl into a vicuña. Nonetheless, in his dreams the Inca saw her as she was described to him. Sick and sad because of this, his servants brought to him the aforementioned vicuña. Healed by contemplating the greatness of the animal, he ordered that she be released in a prairie where he visited her every day. His wife, with jealous rage, killed the animal and ordered a dress made with its skin. When the Inca found out about this, he prohibited all women from wearing the vicuña skin.

(In Brack 1987 and reiterated in interview with Alfonso Martinez, 6/28/02, my translation)

A History of Conservation

In 1553, a Spanish chronicler, Pedro Cieza de Leon described the following:

Before the Spaniards took this kingdom, there was all around these lands and open fields great quantity of sheep of those lands, and greater number of guanacos and vicuñas, but with the quickness that the Spaniards took to kill them, so few remain that there are almost none. (Ochoa 1994:30, my translation)

The vicuña resides in the puna, or high treeless pampa plateau in the Andes Mountains, and grazes in elevations between 4000 and 5000 meters (Wheeler 1997). The puna, or high plateau, is a treeless pampa in the Andes Mountains. The vicuña is the smallest member of the camelid family and its hair is considered the finest in the world (Grewell 2002:2). “The fiber of vicuña, after natural silk, is the finest fiber the world knows, with an average diameter of 13.2 microns, outdoing the wool of alpaca and cashmere (Brack 1987:7). Others argue that the vicuña width is typically between 10 and 11.4 microns, while Cashmere is 15-19 and the Alpaca is 18-22. Duccio Bonavia states that the vicuña is the finest wool that can be woven and is the only wild ungulate that develops well in the high plains of the Andes (Bonavia 1996). In general, one vicuña every two years produces approximately 200-250 grams of fine fiber. This preciousness has spurred three centuries of use and abuse of the animal.

In 1825 Simon Bolivar signed into effect law #135 stating the prohibition of killing the vicuña and limiting the shearing to the months of April, May, June and July. A law in 1917 sought to increase the vicuña population through a teaching program of caring for the young of the vicuña, llama and alpaca. In 1920 and 1926 two laws prohibited the fabrication and exportation of the fiber (Silva 1994). In total between 1786 and 1964 over 40 legal motions were made to protect the vicuña and prevent extinction. Most did nothing to protect the animal from near extinction and in 1964 there were approximately 5000 vicuña left in Peru (Silva 1994). In 1965 the Peruvian government along with assistance from WWF, UICN, Sociedad Zoologica de Frankfurt and the Belgian government created a 6,500-hectare (16,061.85 acres) reserve in Pampa Galeras,

Ayacucho. Their goal was to protect the vicuña and eventually use these animals to repopulate all of the Andes and to create income potential for the communities.

The German Society for Technical Cooperation in 1977 stated:

The vicuñas although not domesticated, form part of the high puna ecosystem. We consider the vicuñas for the possibility to use them in benefit for the human populations and for the need to conserve this valuable natural resource. The Rational Utilization Project of the Vicuña has the basic objective of repopulating the puna with a native species of grand economic potential and to augment the profitability of the marginal lands of the Andes, through the use of the vicuña and other wild fauna species for the benefit of communities and campesina businesses. (Ochoa 1982:22, my translation)

Law 17816 in 1969 prohibited the exportation, importation and commerce of vicuña fiber and pelt. In 1975 this law was reinforced through the Forest and Wild Fauna Law. Argentina joined the coalition in 1971 as did Chile in 1972 (Rabinovich 1985 in Grewell 2002). The first technical conference for the conservation of the vicuña was held in Lima and Nazca in 1971 and included the participation of FAO, OEA, UICN, and WWF. Another conference was held in 1979 for the Conservation and Management of the Vicuña.

National Parks in both Chile and Peru have successfully protected the vicuña. The 2000 census from INRENA reflects this growing cipher and shows that there are approximately 134,000-150,000 vicuñas living in Peru. This is about 65 -70% of the world's total (National Institute of Environment and Natural Resources "INRENA" 2000).

Vicuñas were transferred from Pampa Galeras in 1977 to SAIS and then to two cooperatives in Junin. Following that, the vicuña was transferred to Arequipa. In 1980 SAIS-Cusco began a project to start a vicuña-breeding program (Ochoa 1982).

Table 2-1 Change in population for selected departments.

| <u>Department</u> | <u>1982</u> | <u>1994</u> | <u>1998*</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Arequipa | 630 | 2079 | 3310 |
| Pasco | - | 248 | 65 |
| Junin | 1853 | 7106 | 12341 |
| Cusco | 956 | 1849 | 3306 |
| Puno | - | 8618 | 16340 |
| Ayacucho | 20893 | 18430 | 39175 |
| <i>National Total</i> | | <i>6781</i> | <i>120210</i> |

Source: INRENA 1994

*Estimate

The years 1983 to 1993 are referred to as the “gran matanza” or grand killing. In this five year period about half of the vicuña were killed because scientific calculations called for an optimal population of vicuña per hectare, permitting communities and other members to trim their populations (Amy Cox interview with CONACS 5/16/02 Lima, Peru). Exacerbating this were violent attacks by Shining Path guerrillas on the Pampa Galeras Reserve. They dismantled the posts and the area was abandoned, making it vulnerable to poachers (Lichtenstein et al 2002:3).

Table 2-2 Vicuña timeline.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 1824 | Simon Bolivar expresses concern about the vicuña and seeks to protect it by enacting laws |
| 1860-70 | Vicuña enter into danger of extinction |
| 1964 | Grand alarm because only 5000 vicuña left. University makes program, lots of news about the vicuña |
| 1973 | Begin practice of using park guards |
| 1977 | Culling of vicuña occurs. Still no talk of introducing the chaku. |
| 1983-1994 | The vicuña population grows, but the Shining Path attacks this area and it is estimated that over 50,000 vicuñas were killed during this era, due either to their violence or to a massive drought. |
| 1994 | Chaku introduced |
| 1995 | CITES permits purchase of vicuña products. Commercialization to save the vicuña. Involve the community, shearing and caring reduces poaching and also improve lives of vicuña. Motto “a vicuña sheared is a vicuña saved” started. |

Source: Interview with CONACS 5/16/02, Lichtenstein et al 2002

Conservation Today

From the outset the vicuña project has been called ideal for what is considered a combined effort of conservation with development motives for the financial betterment of the local communities. A plan that works from a paradigm of natural, tradition, and native has been hailed as innovative because it promotes the use of a natural Andean resource for community development.

The first to create a government committee to promote the commercialization of camelid products was Alan Garcia, who in 1985 created the National Institution for the Investigation and Promotion of Agriculture. The organization was not well run however, and several other institutions were subsequently created. Most of these organizations focused on camelids in general or specifically on the alpaca. In 1980 the treaty for the conservation and management of the vicuña was approved and then in 1989 the CONACS was created. This legislative declaration, #653, stated that:

1. The state declares the vicuña a wild species under protection, prohibiting the exportation of live animals.
2. The activities of management and utilization of the vicuña pass to the campesino communities.
3. The use is extensive, making it possible to enjoy the usufruct of the fiber products of live animals.
4. The campesino communities are the possessors of the populations of the vicuña of the country, the law confers them the preferential treatment and guarantees the custody and usufruct rights of the vicuña.
(Marin 1994:33, my translation).

In this same decree, the council was given power to dictate policy surrounding the vicuña that was not specifically mentioned in the decree. In 1992 Supreme Decree 026 created CONACS with the function of promoting the protection and development on a national level for South American camelids (Marin 1994:34). With the creation of CONACS a national program of management and shearing was implemented.

The motto of CONACS during the 1990's was "a vicuña sheared, is a vicuña saved". It was believed that if the community profited from the sale of the vicuña fiber, then the community would be more encouraged to help protect and manage the vicuña and therefore less likely to poach the animal. While poaching remains one of the biggest risks for the vicuña population, communities have begun to see that working with these animals can be a new source of income. In addition new and more potent laws have discouraged poaching.

Up until 1995 the vicuña was listed as level one on the endangered species list meaning that any part of the vicuña could not be exported. In October of 1995 a petition from the International Vicuña Consortium (IVC) was submitted requesting that the vicuña be removed from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) list. Eighty-five comments were received during the public comment period. One comment from Loro Piana, one of the business members in the IVC argued that strong economic incentive, through an open international market, would increase sustainable management of the vicuña. However, there were also many comments from stakeholders who did not support the harvest of fiber from captured animals. For Peru many of the negative comments were related to the perceived detrimental competition from domestic livestock and limits on watershed.

The CITES status of the vicuña was changed and downlisted to an appendix level two species. The vicuña could be sheared and its fiber sold and exported. The U.S. was the only market that continued to refuse importation rights and until June of 2002 it was illegal to import products made from vicuña into the U.S. The SNV was created in 1995 in order to assist communities in bringing their fiber to market. The commodity chain is

explained in deeper detail in Chapter 3, but essentially CONACS oversees the management of the vicuña, the SNV shears the fiber and sells it through their exclusive contract. The company that has received the exclusive rights to manufacture and export the fiber is the IVC, which consists of Loro Piana, Agnona (recently sold), and Grupo Inca. Grupo Inca is located in Arequipa, Peru and Loro Piana and Agnona are located in Italy.

Property Rights and Concepts of Wilderness

Today the laws surrounding the vicuña have entered a period of heightened conflict. In 1991 Supreme Decree 653, which established usufruct rights for the communities and affine organizations was challenged with Decree 26496, which gave rights to private landholders to sell vicuña fiber. Prior to this only communities selling through the SNV were allowed to sell the fiber.

Usufruct is a Latin word meaning use and fruit. Usufruct rights provide organizations or individuals, in this case the community, an opportunity to take advantage of the fruit of the wild animal. The government gave the communities usufruct rights as a way to circumvent the detrimental poaching that plagued the vicuña population. It was reasoned that the communities aided in and were responsible for poaching. If they were given the rights to benefit from the animal, then the poaching would cease. Moreover, since the animals lived on their property, who best to protect them but the community? Usufruct rights were also used as a way to gain access to the international market after CITES had restricted the exportation or sale of vicuña fiber. Commercialization was the best protection for the species.

Giving the animal back to the community was considered a sustainable development opportunity. The chaku allowed Peru to capitalize on the resource by arguing that by shearing the animal, the animal would be saved. Markets needed to be open in order to accomplish this. CONACS established a three-prong plan to protect the vicuña; 1) The efficient response of the communities in the management of the species; 2) The opening of the legal international market; 3) Legal enforcement against poaching (Agronoticias 1998).

This controversial law giving usufruct rights has spawned battles with private owners, non-community members, and businessmen, who while wanting to profit from the sale of vicuña fiber, were not explicitly included in the initial plan. How were private landowners supposed to shear the vicuña and get their fiber to market? The legal route was not clearly outlined in the original law and a subsequent law, conflicting with the original law, was passed permitting another route for the sale of vicuña fiber. This law has permitted organizations like Almar and Tupac Amaru to exist outside of the SNV and promote and manage the vicuña in more private terms.

Confusing the situation even more, CONACS in 1996 began to sell fences to the communities in order to improve the management of the vicuña. Fences were given to the communities in exchange for vicuñas; each vicuña being valued at approximately \$1,000 USD (Lichtenstein et al 2002). The vicuñas given to CONACS were then used to repopulate other areas of Peru. Leaving questions of consanguinity and animal territoriality aside, the use of fences as a way to protect and promote the conservation of the vicuña has spawned a philosophical change in the perception of the vicuña that is irreversible. It has also challenged the notion of usufruct with the notion of ownership.

As the animals, once virtually ignored by most community members, came to occupy a large space of enclosed property requiring watchmen, the perception of wild dissolved into domestic. In *Agronoticias*, they state that in 1996 107 fences were installed and 128 the following year, making a total of 235 fences, in equal number of communities. On a national scale they want to increase the vicuña population to 250,000 heads across Peru, produce 16,000 kg and install 300 sustainable use modules (fences) for 1,000 operating communities (Agronoticias 1998).

This large-scale fencing program diluted the idea of wilderness and has further created space for private landowners and ranchers to capture and cultivate their own quarry of animals. After all, if fences are used in communities, why not with individuals whose property lines those same fences? What is wild about fences? If the animal is no longer wild, what is the rationale for giving communities exclusive rights?

The communities have come to relate to the vicuña in domestic terms. Two brothers, who have worked extensively with the SNV, exemplify this perfectly. In a meeting between the SNV and CONACS right after the notice that the U.S. opened their market to vicuña fiber, Carlos and his brother were very concerned. They did not understand that they did not own the animals and that the usufruct status was subject to changes in Peruvian law. Although the lawyer for CONACS explained the concept, they still did not understand. Usufruct, as concept of ownership and care for wild animals, has created confusion and reinforced feelings of being tricked. Later that day at lunch, the lawyer for CONACS felt the people were misled and that people “treat them (community members) like children. They lie and make things pretty and are afraid to tell them the

truth because the communities have the power to kill the animals” (CONACS and SNV meeting, 6/27/02 Lima, Peru).

The communities feel like they own the vicuña, but the reality is that they only are allowed access to the fruits of the animal. “The vicuña is a resource of the state. The vicuña belongs to the Peruvian state through the Peruvian legislation. But the resource can be exploited by the communities” (Amy Cox interview with CONACS 5/16/02 Lima, Peru). The communities do not own the animals and it is now difficult for CONACS to legislate policy. CONACS is concerned that if the community members believe that they fully own the animals that they will think that they can sell the animal and poaching will rise again. This concept is further muddled when one asks: Why is this not a concern with private ranchers? Why is the animal wild on indigenous land and property on private land?

The question of usufruct rights is not a simple dispute with the law. Philosophical questions arise: What is wild? What is natural? Who owns the animal? These concepts have become confused and problematic as community members, governmental organizations and private partnerships see that they can profit from the animal. In addition, as the community members have begun working, caring for, maintaining and guarding the animal, notions of ownership and property have positioned the vicuña as something other than a simple wild animal where the community can take advantage of its fruits. The animal has become property and part of the community’s identity.

Tradition, Chaku and Environmentalism

In a magazine advertisement for the chaku in Ayacucho, the chaku is described as:

The chaku is an ancestral ritual, realized since the epoch of the pre-Inca, in order to round up wild vicuña in the zone toward a corral where they are classified and sheared in order to obtain their valuable fiber without endangering the species. (Agrovalle 2002, my translation)

CONACS actively promoted the chaku believing that if incentive was given to the communities, poaching would decrease. “All people participated in the chaku, making a human circle and closing the circle until capturing them. During the colonial epoch all sense of the chaku was lost...The entire fiber went to the Inca. The fiber has always been important” (Amy Cox interview with CONACS 5/16/02 Lima, Peru). There is reverence for the past as the government pushes this lost history on community members. “The chaku is promoted as an ancient way of protecting and conserving the species” (Marin 1994:32).

However, this historic tradition is not in the memory of the community. The community members do not have any recollection of working with the vicuña and are adopting this history as it is being promoted. Consequently this ritual is being reinvented, both by CONACS and by herders, as it is refashioned from the past for the present.

Each community organizes their own guard for the vicuñas and plans for their chaku. “Each community has a set date for their chaku, the same as the Inca conducted the chaku” (Amy Cox interview with CONACS, 5/16/02 Lima, Peru). The times set for the shearing, while in line with the periods specified by the Inca, are not necessarily the best for the animal. Many biologists argue that the summer months are the worst times to shear due to cold temperatures. In addition, it is so early that pregnant vicuña are often undetected and spontaneously abort during the stress of the chaku and shearing.

A few others argue that it is precisely shearing that will be the demise of the vicuña. Alfonso, the technical director at Grupo Inca stated:

Each time you shear the fiber, the fiber thickens. With the alpaca, you should only shear 3 to 5 times, no more. The alpaca can live to be 25 years old, but at age 14 they (herders) usually kill and eat the alpaca because the animal is no longer producing valuable fiber. The problem with the vicuña is that you don't know how many times the fiber has been cut. The ideal would be to shear every 2 years only twice. No more. But what happens? Surely there are vicuñas that have been cut every year. Now the fiber is thickening (Amy Cox interview with Grupo Inca. 6/4/02 Arequipa, Peru)

Alfonso likens some of the vicuña fiber sheared today to cashmere and says:

“You can buy the bristle of cashmere. You can say that is cashmere but not tell anyone that it is the bristle of cashmere. It is the same with the vicuña.”

Further research disputes the benefits of the chaku.

The chaku has also been one of the causes that have helped without a doubt and in an important manner, in the destruction of the native Andean fauna. While this indigenous custom continued to be practiced in the viceregal times, but without the necessary order like that in the Incaic time, to such an extreme that the chaku was forbidden. (Bonavia 1996)

Nonetheless, the SNV and CONACS argue that the main threat to the growth of vicuña population is poaching not shearing. Grewell offers another perspective and argues that “the threat to the vicuña is no longer dwindling population, but rather encroachments on the species' habitat” (Grewell 2002:19).

In an evaluation conducted by INRENA they state that:

The census has received the support of the campesino communities, facilitating the identification of the sites and they have contributed and participated in taking the census. The vicuña resource is economically exploitable for its high value of fiber, making it a mechanism of integration in the active economy of the country and of the Andean population in order to improve their level of life through direct advantage. The campesino communities, for their ancestral identification with the preservation of the ecosystem and in general for their ideological concept, are more suitable to assume the protection, conservation and management of the vicuña. (INRENA 2000:27)

This is contradicted by the community members themselves, many of whom stated that they had never imagined working with the vicuña. “No, we never worked with

the vicuña. We hardly knew they were there” (Amy Cox interview with community member, 6/8/02 Ondores, Junin). The government and NGO’s have a romanticized vision that the communities are linked to the Inca and that environmentalism is embedded in their culture. Watching people toss candy wrappers, and garbage in the pen of the vicuña makes one question this assumption. While the herders obviously work in nature, it does not mean that they know how to care and manage a wild animal that they have previously never worked with.

The idea that ancient equals natural, authentic and harmless is the main marketing tool for the chaku. NGO’s refer back to the Inca, claiming that they knew best, and had lots of vicuñas without fences, thus hoping to promote the pristine. CONACS argues that the calendar is set by the Inca and they should stick to it. The SNV argues that the chaku belongs to them and they are the authentic caretakers of the animal. There is a prevalent belief that the chaku is naturally the best technique because old is sacred, and the Inca’s ways (native) is better for the environment.

In a book published by Grupo Inca titled *Oro de Los Andes* (Gold of the Andes), several photos serve to depict the historicity of the chaku. One shows nude men with bow and arrows chasing what might be a vicuña, but the animal looks more like a deer. The Figure is titled Chaco (1582) (Figure 2-1).

The other graphic (Figure 2-2) is also titled Chaco, 1779-1789 and is a childlike portrait that shows people constructing a fence around mountains and trees and stabbing the vicuña that are inside of the roped in structure.



Figure 2-1 Chaku I.

It is unclear in both graphics who the people are, who is hunting and whether or not the animals shown are vicuña, guanaco, alpaca or llama. Grupo Inca publishes *Oro de los Andes*. This book along with several other books and films are part of the holistic marketing plan of the company to become the best and only producer of South American camelid fibers. These drawings serve to legitimize the chaku not only as part of Peruvian heritage but also as naturally good. The book also shows photographs of the vicuña as depicted in colonial drawings and as part of the Peruvian shield (Figures 2-3 and 2-4). These serve to legitimize the vicuña as part of the cultural heritage of Peru as well as to provide heritage and pedigree for the vicuña, thus supporting usufruct law for the communities, which are based on heritage and culture. Ultimately all of this buttresses

the vicuña as a treasured product, well deserving of space in fine boutiques, displaying price tags of thousands of dollars.



Figure 2-2 Chaku II.

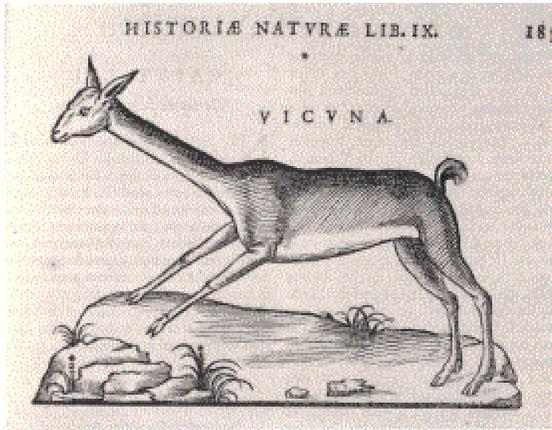


Figure 2-3 Vicuña; Figure 2-4 Peruvian crest.

Was a gold mine promised? According to CONACS there is land use of 13,800 hectares (34,100.5 acres) in the puna zone. Brack estimates that the carrying capacity in Peru for the vicuña population is 3 million. It is believed that the vicuña has lower costs and greater benefits than other sources of income like mining. Vicuña, although fragile, are very adaptable. In addition, many argue that there are not a lot of other alternatives as the alpaca sales are so low and pastoralists are looking for any option. Some communities have even purchased the fence offered by CONACS without having any vicuña.

While no projection for consumer capacity for vicuña products is known, the vicuña does represent an alternative source of income for Peru. The vicuña has become a source of indigenous identity and a prospective economic gold mine for the future. This is perpetuated not only by Peruvians, but also by those interested in exoticizing the Andean people and the wildlife. The conflation of monetary value, development and

preservation battle against one another. Can tradition, environmentalism and growth be combined? The answer is really not that it can, but that it must. People in Andean communities are dissatisfied with a life of poverty compared to outsiders. In contrast those in government and business must promote and preserve the rural Andean people, as is, in order to maintain the exotic Incan ancestry. Tradition has to be combined with growth.

CHAPTER 3
COMMODITY CHAIN OF VICUÑA MANUFACTURING

No object, no thing, has being or movement in human society except by the significance men give it.

-Marshall Sahlins

Vicuña to Market

The vicuña live in the high Andean plains around 3000 to 4000 meters. About 60 to 70 percent of the world's vicuña population live in Peru. The remaining 30 to 40 percent live in Bolivia, Chile and Argentina. A harsh arid climate, very few animals and plants are capable of living and thriving in this environment. Consequently the vicuña have become an idealized resource for the people living in this resource poor area.

Several systems of commercialization for the vicuña exist: 1) A cooperative of communities comprising the SNV have been given the rights to shear and sell; 2) private organizations – like Almar or Tupac purchase fiber from private owners or communities and assist them in shearing and selling the raw material to manufacturers; 3) local artisans use the shorter fibers that are useless in mass production to make lesser quality garments; 4) poaching. The vicuña fiber of Peru arrives to market in mainly the first two ways.

At every shearing a CONACS officer is present to insure proper care and management of the vicuña. CONACS, established in 1992, is an autonomous institution, independent from the ministry of agriculture, and was established to manage the camelid resources of the state. For wild camelids the role of CONACS is to:

1. Conserve and protect the species
 2. Evaluation of the population of the vicuña
 3. Management and development of the vicuña.
 4. Instruct, support and organize the communities how to manage resources.
 5. Sustainable use of the vicuña.
- (CONACS 2002)

CONACS has a direct role in controlling and supervising the management and care of the vicuña from the state's point of view. They are given this power because the vicuña is a national subject. They supervise the chaku because it is part of the management process. In each chaku there is a CONACS member to see how many animals are sheared, captured, and how much the fiber weighs. They give their certification that the fiber is sheared from live animals but do not have anything to do with the sale. Although some argue that this is a crucial part of the management process and, therefore, they should be more actively involved, CONACS does not want to be involved in monetary issues and disputes (Amy Cox interview with CONACS, 5/16/02 Lima, Peru).

The vicuña fiber is sheared utilizing a traditional method dating back to the Inca. This method is called the chaku and consists of capturing the wild vicuña, shearing them, and then releasing them into the wild. The chaku is conducted with assistance and equipment lent to the community by either the SNV or a private company like Almar. Private entities that have vicuña can also shear the fiber but CONACS members are present for this as well.¹

¹ That private parties have access to the fiber has caused great conflict and concern that such privatization will encourage domestication of the animal.

The capture is conducted with about 100 to 200 people who hold hands, making a large human chain. The people hold a long plastic rope adorned with colorful flags and gently persuade the vicuña into a holding pen. Several communities also use horses to assist in the round up. Recently communities have installed large permanent corrals to make the round up of the animals easier. Consequently the chaku can either be inside the corral or in the open plains without the assistance of a preexisting pen. Capturing vicuña inside the pen typically results in a more efficient and more productive capture. Some communities like Ondores, Junin conduct both pen and non-pen chakus.² Before the fiber is sheared a ritual is performed. These rituals vary by communities but could be a marriage, a pagapa, or another type of offering. Once the fiber is sheared it is weighed and recorded with the CONACS technician.

If the fiber was sheared with the SNV the fiber moves to Nazca, Peru where it is cleaned and bagged. If the fiber was sheared with Almar it goes directly to the buyer, the IVC. Almar has negotiated a contract with the IVC whereby they sell un-cleaned fiber directly to the manufacturer. Both parties have to secure verification from INRENA insuring that the fiber has been legally sheared.

A contract is negotiated between the seller, the SNV, and the buyer. A call for bids is sent out and a company wins the rights to be the sole manufacturer of vicuña

² Because the fiber is so valuable, many people would like to exploit this valuable product more efficiently and increase profits. Six months ago, there was much discussion over the implementation of permanent corrals as a way of increasing efficiency and profitability (Sahley et al 2002). This option has been tabled for the time-being and the communities have returned to a more wild animal management policy. The question remains, however, how will use and meaning of the resource change when more and more monetary value can be derived from its sale.

products. In 1994 the fiber was sold for \$816.38/kg. The price continued to fluctuate in the following years and a system was developed to improve dependability and stability. Now a price is negotiated with the manufacturer and set for a specified number of years. During the first call for bids the fiber was sold for \$358.00/kg. However, during the second solicitation nobody submitted a bid. The SNV became very concerned because they needed to sell the fiber. Because of their lack of financing and organizational instability, they accepted a bid that was lower than desired. Vulnerability has forced the SNV into a position of powerlessness.

Table 3-1 Price of vicuña fiber per kilogram 1994-2002.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>\$/kg</u> |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1994 –I | 816.34 |
| 1994-II | 425.30 |
| 1995 | 482.38 |
| 1998 | 358.00 |
| 1999 | 358.00 |
| 2001 | 385.00 |
| 2002 | 385.00 |

Source: SNV data presented at May 2002 workshop

When asked why they did not submit a bid, the companies said it was because of the Asian financial crisis. The crisis had a big impact on them because Japan is one of their main clients. The SNV had no choice but to send out another solicitation. They finally negotiated a price of \$385/kg. This was satisfactory until one year later they heard that the Chileans sold their fiber for \$575/kg. They regretted making the contract and wanted CONACS to assist in renegotiating. The IVC, the consortium that had agreed to purchase the fiber, felt that they had paid market price and negotiated a fair and binding contract.

There has been two calls for bids and the IVC has won each time. A third solicitation was conducted in early 2003. The IVC consists of three companies, Incalpaca

of Grupo Inca, Loro Piana and Agnona. The IVC believes that they won the bids because they offer the best marketing package, strongest alliance of manufacturing and the finest manufacturing of natural knit fibers in the world (Amy Cox interview with Gilberto at Grupo Inca 5/22/02 Arequipa, Peru). Besides Chile, Argentina has also opened up their vicuña trade and last year also received over \$500/kg for the fiber.

After the fiber is cleaned approximately 30% is sold directly to Grupo Inca in Arequipa. The other 70% are shipped to the Italian partners of the IVC. Once the fiber arrives to Grupo Inca it is either stored or cleaned again and readied for processing. Typically after cleaning they get about 79-82% of usable fiber. They conduct this part by hand because if do it by machine they only get about 64% (Amy Cox interview with Alberto of Grupo Inca, 5/22/02 Arequipa, Peru).

The fiber is then combed, carded, spun, dyed and knit. Most of the vicuña products are not dyed and kept in the natural cinnamon color. However, they do offer vicuña products in black and navy dyes. Finally the product is finished and packaged. From the vicuña fiber they manufacture only shawls, capes, scarves and an occasional blanket. Currently they do not make sweaters but in the future hope to perfect this technology. The highest grossing store in Lima sells about one vicuña cape per month and three vicuña scarves per month. If other stores sell vicuña products it is because Grupo Inca has licensed that store.

Grupo Inca is primarily a vendor of alpaca and baby alpaca, but are working with the vicuña to complete their image as the only producer of all four South American camelid fibers. They have improved their product immensely to get it to be as soft as it can be. They have an on-line website and sell their wares at their Alpaca III stores much

cheaper than their European counterparts. The scarves made from vicuña are packaged in a cedar box, lined with tissue. A decorative metal pin and authentication tag detailing the item number and its legality, are pinned delicately to all products. The end result is elegant, luxurious and treasured.

SNV vs. Almar

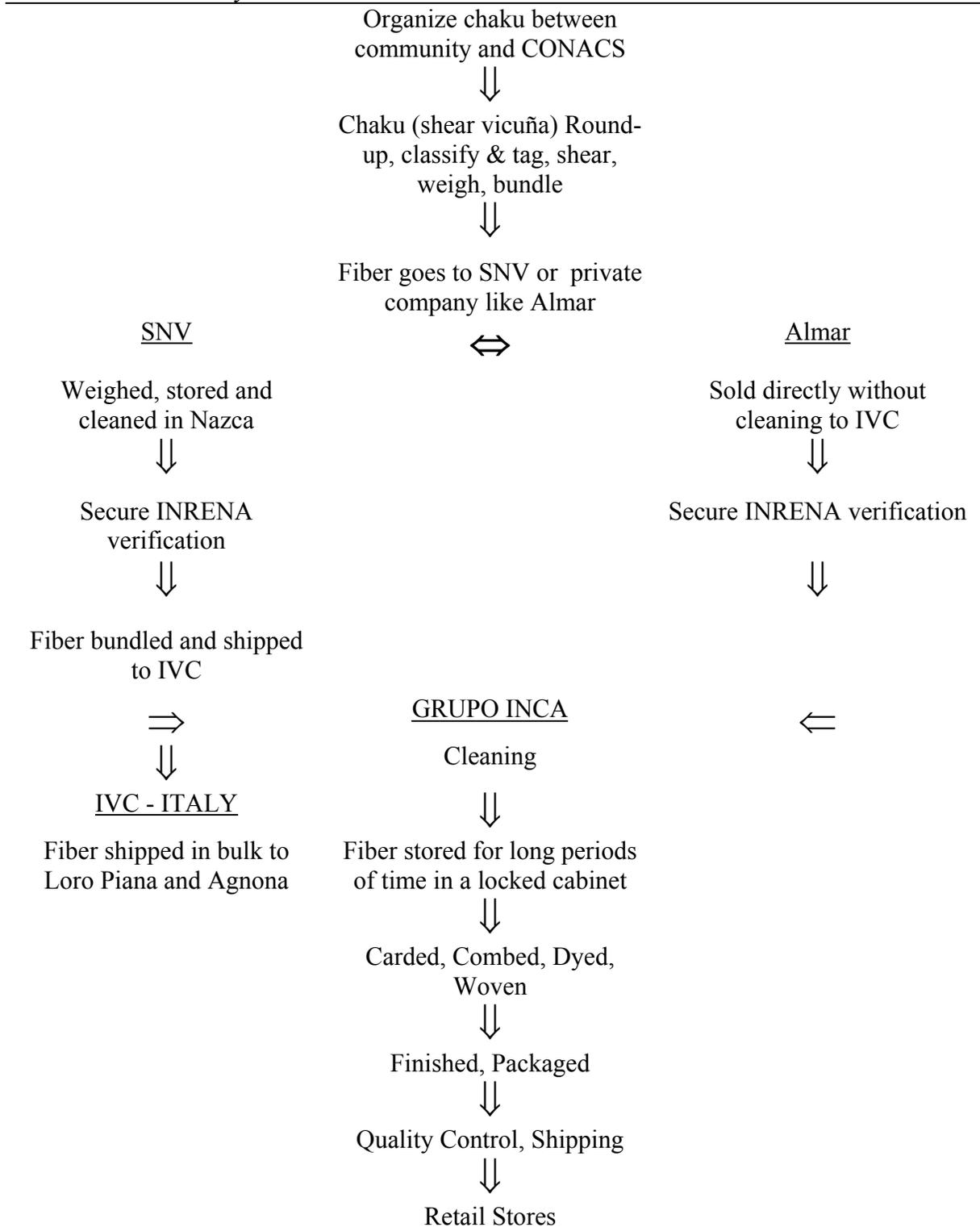
The recent battle in the vicuña management struggle has been between the SNV and the corporation Almar. Almar's president and founder is Alfonso Martinez. Martinez was integral in the promotion and protection of the vicuña in the early 1990's under President Fujimori and encouraged the creation of CONACS, later becoming its president. Two conflicting laws exist regarding the commercialization of the vicuña. One states that the SNV is the exclusive group to manage and sell the fiber to the IVC. Another takes a loophole in the previous law and questions it by stating that private parties and communities can opt to sell their fiber to any organization, not just the SNV.

People have to be with SNV to sell their fibers. They made the contract bid and the SNV is the only way communities can sell the fiber, but there are particulars that aren't a part of a community. This has brought jealousy to the SNV – not all are communities. SNV wants to ignore them and say that they do not exist. But the law did not say how they would sell their fiber. (Amy Cox interview with CONACS 5/16/02 Lima, Peru)

The threat of Almar has caused the SNV to become very concerned about their place in the vicuña business. Part of the problem arises because the SNV has not been able to pay communities on time. The SNV is supposed to pay the communities when they are paid by Grupo Inca. However, due to bureaucracy and inefficiency many communities have not been paid for the previous year's fiber production. Moreover there has been much corruption at the hands of past and transient SNV and regional leaders. Consequently the current SNV leaders have to contest with those memories and those

financial deficits. Almar has taken the opportunity to come up with a more efficient and effective purchasing program whereby communities are paid when the fiber is sheared.

Table 3-2 Commodity chain of the vicuña.



Almar is able to do this because they have secured financing and a different selling contract from Grupo Inca (Amy Cox interview with A.Martinez 6/28/02 Lima, Peru). Grupo Inca declined to comment about their financing with Almar or with their Italian partners. Almar and businesses like it threaten the SNV because they fear a loss in the control of production, an increase in poaching and illegal commercialization of the fiber, and ultimately a decrease in the prices paid to the communities. The SNV feels that a cooperative system would be the most beneficial for the communities.

Table 3-3 2002 Financing of SNV and Almar, price per kilogram.*

| SNV | \$ | Almar | \$ |
|--|----------|---|----------|
| SNV arrives in communities and performs chaku. | | Almar arrives in communities and performs chaku | |
| Sells fiber after cleaning | | Buys Uncleaned fiber | |
| Discount 10 % regional assoc. | \$ 38.50 | | |
| Discount to SNV 10% | \$ 38.50 | 60% to community | \$226.00 |
| Total to community | \$308.50 | 40% to Almar | \$114.00 |
| Total IVC Purchase | \$385.00 | Total IVC Purchase | \$340.00 |

Source: SNV

* Almar confirms their numbers but disputes the SNV's numbers.

IVC

The vicuña represents less than 0.5 percent of their business. The image of being authorized to work with the finest fiber, one of the two finest in the world, Ahah, is very good. This gives us a lot. It is very important strategically. It is very important. (Amy Cox interview with Gilberto of Grupo Inca, 5/22/02 Lima, Peru)

The IVC buys a certain quantity of fiber. When ready, the fiber is processed and sold. In the past, the IVC paid 10% royalties from the sales to the communities. This payment is no longer part of the contract.

We are not going to get rich using the vicuña. I want to leave that well understood. What we gain is prestige. Do you want a scarf of vicuña? I have it. Do you want a scarf of guanaco? I have it. But my business is alpaca. (Amy Cox interview with Gilberto of Grupo Inca, 5/22/02 Lima, Peru)

The entire platform for Group Inca's marketing plan is that they are a sustainable company whose communities that provide the raw material, benefit through a unique system of tradition and modernity. One of the conditions of the group is that they cannot damage the environment in any way. To protect the environment is to protect the industry. In their brochure, Grupo Inca states:

Promote ancient methods and modern technologies. Peasant communities are well rewarded for the sale of the fiber and receive the necessary financing for the preservation and raising of the vicuña. Worked by the hands of the virgins of the sun, the company has grown from working with nature.

The directors follow this mission and one of the managers stated:

For example, our managers of the business are very preoccupied with providing jobs in Arequipa where the industry is or to the Andean communities where we have our raw material. Thirty years ago, the owners had a very open and modern mind. During an era, which was all exploitation, they began with this mentality. The group began with this philosophy and still today they maintain it. This is one of the reasons the Peruvian government gave them the right to work with the vicuña. (Amy Cox interview with Grupo Inca 6/4/02 Arequipa, Peru)

After speaking with several communities the biggest complaint, however, was that they were not compensated for their fiber. This does not mean that Grupo Inca did not pay. Grupo Inca paid but either the money vanished, was stolen or was excruciatingly slow in arriving to the communities.

Vicuña sales are less than 1% of the total sales for Grupo Inca. For 2001 they sold 338 items (Table 3-4). However Grupo Inca only produces 30 percent of the total fiber and the items are sold at significantly lower prices than their Italian partners.

One should be wary of extrapolating this number to \$2,564,000.00 (to include Italian partners) to obtain the total world's sales of vicuña because the European prices are often three times higher than those provided to me by Grupo Inca. Raw fiber is exported to Italy and only a small portion is processed within Peru. There is a strong and

somewhat complicated relationship between the Italian factories and the Peruvian factory. When asked why the company would opt to export their fiber when they could add value to the fiber here in Peru, the manager thought that either the Italians had better financing or better access to markets. I asked if Grupo Inca was getting kickbacks and he just shrugged his shoulders and said, “well I guess that might be possible”.

Table 3-4 Sales 2001.

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Sold</u> | <u>Retail Price</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Male Scarf | 225 | \$ 400 | \$ 90,000 |
| Female Scarf (wrap) | 76 | \$ 800 | \$620,800 |
| Blanket | 2 | \$2000 (<i>est</i>) | \$ 4,000 |
| Cape | 34 | \$1600 | \$ 54,400 |
| Total | 338 | | \$769,200 |

Source: Grupo Inca, store price reflects Lima retail price.

Table 3-5 IVC consumption, 2001.

| <u>Company</u> | <u>% of Total</u> | <u>Total Amount</u> |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Loro Piana | 70% | 1974 kg |
| Zegna (Agnona) | 10% | 282 kg |
| Incalpaca | 20% | 564 kg |
| Total | 100% | 2820 kg |

Source: Incalpaca of Grupo Inca

Grupo Inca has stored much of the vicuña fiber for later production in anticipation of the opening of emerging markets. For the last eleven years the U.S., under CITES, had forbidden vicuña imports.³ According to the textile engineer at Grupo Inca, their biggest customers are the Japanese, but the U.S. offers a profitable market. When the U.S. market opened up in July of 2002, the marketing manager exclaimed that this was the moment they were waiting for. Incalpaca exports 26% finished goods, approximately 290 pieces,

³ When President Bush visited Peru in 2001, the government gave him a present of the Gold of the Andes made by Grupo Inca. This cedar box contains four scarves each one made from a different South American camelid. Gilberto declared: “Your President is a contrabandista!”

and sells 74% locally, about 810 pieces, through their chain of stores (email communication Grupo Inca 9/14/02).

Grupo Inca has a strategic alliance because they are partners with European companies. They formed the IVC because they wanted to insure that they won the solicitation. If all three companies entered, only one company could win, creating unnecessary competition and exclusion. The upper management of Grupo Inca is trained in the Italian factories. The companies normally do not work on the same thing and try to make sure that they do not compete. But, to weave the vicuña you need high technical skills. The marketing manager still felt that “under my concept, as a Peruvian, it would be good if it all stayed in Peru” (Amy Cox interview with Gilberto, 6/4/02 Arequipa, Peru).

Alberto, the factory manager, is very proud of the fact that they are one of three companies that can work with vicuña. “Even that which is made by hand can’t compare to what we do.”

You are buying 100 percent of fiber from a live animal. That is to say that to buy the fiber you are contributing to the protection of this animal for that the major part of the money is going to the highlanders. I don’t say that better ways don’t exist, but ours, the manner in which we are working the fiber is adequate and sufficient for a quality product. (Amy Cox interview with Alberto, 6/4/02 Arequipa, Peru)

The prestige of Grupo Inca and their marketing platform culminates in one of their products, The Gold of the Andes. A customer can purchase four scarves, each made with a different animal fiber - llama, alpaca, vicuña and guanaco, packaged together in a tissue-lined cedar box.

This gives us an image; it gives us the power to negotiate. For us it is very important. In economic terms it isn’t, for example a cape of vicuña costs in the international market \$3000 and we sell it for \$1600. We are suppliers of this. In reality there is little profit, very little. There are many more personal gains than

what you get selling it. But for us it is worthwhile because we went the simple act of supplying vicuña. (Amy Cox interview with Gilberto 6/4/02 Arequipa, Peru)

Costs and Profits

Arequipa is a very important economic center of Peru and Grupo Inca is a very important business. Their net sales are 45 million dollars year and they employ more than 1000 people. In the textile group alone they employ around 250 people. Because it is such an important business they have much political power. When asked why they were awarded the right to sell the vicuña, the retail manager remarked:

They gave us the possibility of working with the vicuña because of our philosophy. We have won the public bid two or three times. We have won the right to process the vicuña for the next few years and we'll see what happens in the next bid. We enter equally with others from all over the world. The other companies can win too. (Amy Cox interview with Gilberto 6/4/02 Arequipa, Peru)

Grupo Inca has two to three eight-hour shifts each day. During the high season (September, October, November) they hire seasonal workers and have three shifts. In addition, they contract piece workers for other projects to work out of their home. All the workers wear navy blue overcoats and have time cards. They wear badges in order to pass through security to enter the building.

Grupo Inca pays their employees about \$150-200 USD/month including taxes and health insurance. The workers are mostly young, staying at Grupo Inca for an average of five years. They are permitted to employ workers aged 15 to 18 because the workers formed a labor union, and fought so that they can work if they are under 18. If a worker is under 18 they can work two to three hours per day but are paid the same per hour as the other employees.

I visited one out of Grupo Inca's three factories. The factory is extremely clean, which is not uncommon for knit manufacturers. The factory floor is cleaned three times a day and is spacious. At any given moment the managers know exactly what they produce and everything is controlled through mechanization and computers. Each product comes with a special printed tag so that the manager knows where and what is being processed.

We not only invest in human capital, which is our principal investment, but we invest a lot in technology. You are going to see now and going to know the plant and we are very very avant garde. Grupo Inca is not the biggest but they are the best. There is not enough fiber to grow (the company) more. (Amy Cox interview with Gilberto 5/22/02 Arequipa, Peru)

Grupo Inca processes vicuña one to three times per year. The total process, from start to finish, takes approximately fourteen days.

The textile engineer at Grupo Inca provided me with the following timetable and waste calculation:

Table 3-6 Production and waste for vicuña processing.

| |
|-------------------------------|
| 160kg – dirty fiber |
| 70kg – cleaned |
| 56 kg – washed (1 day) |
| 47.2 kg yarn (2 days) |
| 46.8 kg crude fabric (2 days) |
| 42.1 kg final fabric |

Source: Grupo Inca

I tried to verify these numbers to see if the numbers were accurate and received the following reply from an U.S. garment company:

With regard to loss in knitting and finishing, I am not sure what percentage, if any, should be applied. I imagine it would depend on whether the fabric is washed and tumble dried and what the shrinkage rate is. Your question is actually really complicated and essentially almost impossible to figure out without some textile engineering. It isn't straight match because it has to do with how tightly or loosely the knitting is done. However, you know the weight of the scarf so you could basically assume the weight of the scarf is the same weight of fiber +5-6% for waste. That may be a little high but should cover 'whatever' issues. The only other determinate would be if there is any finish added to the fiber or knitted

material. This would also add a little weight but fairly minimal. (email communication 9/7/02)

The real difficulty in calculating cost is that all the 'waste' is recycled so it is almost impossible for an outsider to determine the actual cost and profit of the product. Each garment is made with 70% new and 30% recycled fiber. I do not know if the textile engineer's numbers reflect the re-use of fiber and what percentage is actually lost and what percentage is actually recycled. If they do not, and I presume that they do not, then the actual cost will be significantly lower than what I have calculated (looking only at the % waste from post-wash to end result).

Another discrepancy is that I have conflicting answers from Grupo Inca with respect to how much waste there is from the dirty to the clean fiber. Alberto's numbers show 160 kg down to 70 kg, a loss of 57%. Another contact said that they could get about 80% usable fiber from the dirty fiber, a loss of only 20%. Nonetheless I will use Alberto's numbers which will reflect the highest possible cost of the garment:

Table 3-7 Percentage waste and end purchase price per kilogram.

| <u>Dirty</u> | <u>Clean</u> | <u>Wash</u> | <u>Yarn</u> | <u>Crude</u> | <u>End</u> |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--|
| 160kg | 70kg | 56kg | 47.2kg | 46.8kg | 42.1kg |
| \$385/kg | | | | | 26% (74% loss) |
| \$61,600 per 160kg | | | | | \$61,600 per 42.1kg processed fiber |

Source: Grupo Inca

Sixty-one thousand six hundred dollars divided per 42.1 kg of processed fiber accounts for the material cost and does not include the labor, overhead, profit, shipping and general operating costs that Grupo Inca incurs from processing this fiber.

Nonetheless given these numbers, one can calculate the raw material cost per item. Sixty-one thousand six hundred dollars divided by 42,100 grams results in a price of \$1.46 per gram. Looking at three items, the woman's scarf, men's scarf and the blanket, I calculate

that the actual fiber used by taking the final weight and dividing it by the waste (Table 3-8).

Table 3-8 Raw material cost (\$385/kg) vs. retail price.*

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Actual fiber used</u> | <u>Weight</u> | <u>Cost</u> | <u>Retail Price Peru</u> | <u>Difference</u> |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Men's Scarf | 418.25 gm | 110 gm | \$160.60 | \$ 400 | \$239.40 |
| Woman's Scarf | 760.00 gm | 200 gm | \$292.78 | \$ 800 | \$507.22 |
| Blanket | 2661.50 gm | 700 gm | \$1022.00 | \$2000 | \$978.00 |

Table 3-9 Purchase price vs. retail price.*

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Total Sold</u> | <u>Difference</u> | <u>Total Net Profit Grupo Inca</u> | <u>Total Income to SNV</u> |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Men's Scarf | 225 | \$239.40 | \$53,865.00 | \$36,135.00 |
| Woman's Scarf | 76 | \$507.22 | \$38,548.72 | \$22,251.28 |
| Blanket | 2 | \$978.00 | \$ 1956.00 | \$ 2044.00 |
| <i>Total</i> | | | <i>\$94,369.72</i> | <i>\$60,430.28</i> |

*Cape not included because weight unknown

If in 2001 there was a total of 2820 kg of fiber purchased by the IVC, (see table 3-5) and each animal produces about 200 grams of fiber, it will take four animals to make a woman's scarf, two animals to make a men's scarf and thirteen animals to make a blanket.⁴ At a total of 2820 kgs of fiber purchased, approximately fourteen thousand one hundred animals were sheared or about 10% of Peru's vicuña population. Therefore, each pelt is worth about \$77.00.

Looking at the community of Rancas, they sheared 21.9 kg of fiber in 2002. It took about 150 community members to execute the chaku, plus the CONACS technicians and five SNV employees. About eight hours was spent between arrival, organization, execution of chaku, shearing and weighing. For the 21.9 kg they received, the SNV

⁴ The back of the vicuña is the only part sheared. The belly, legs and necks are not sheared.

received \$8431.50 in payment. The community received \$6,679.50 (reflecting SNV price to community of \$305.00/kg after discounts). Dividing that number by the amount of workers and hours spent, the hourly wage is \$5.56. For the community of Ondores they sheared 95.29 kg of fiber.⁵ At a price of \$305 per kilogram, they earned \$29,063.45. Using the same number of workers and eight-hour day, these community members earned \$24.22 per hour.

The amount of money to be gained from this resource is unfortunately minimal for most communities. In a survey taken at one of Conatura's capacity building workshops, the communities had anywhere from 0 to 150 vicuña. Given this low number and that they can only shear once every two years, this leaves very little fiber to be sheared. If out of 150 vicuña they can shear 20% of the animals (between actual capture and if the animal's fiber is long enough) that leaves 30 animals sheared. 30 animals with 200 grams of fiber each results in a total of 6 kg sheared for about \$1800. The situation is worsened when one looks at all of the kickbacks that are taken out of this and the fact that about half of the communities have never received the money from shearing. The only communities that will make any money are those with significant populations of vicuñas; and those are few.

Some argue that the resource is free and waiting to be plucked. The rationale is that any income is better than none. Leonidas Gutierrez Hermoza, a university professor in Huancayo, explains "this resource does not cost anything to produce and costs very little in exploiting it. They are a key species" (Cuzco Congress for Vicuña and Guanaco

⁵ I was not present to verify number of participants.

7/23/02 Cuzco, Peru). This is not exactly true. The labor of the community members should be valued. Moreover, if the community has a fence they also have the cost of the fence to deal with, maintenance and supplying guards for the corrals.

Shearing a few vicuñas from each community is not going to draw the communities out of poverty. On the contrary it has inspired and taken labor away from other jobs. Because the fiber is reworked and value added, most of the profit goes to the companies and retailers. The SNV hopes that by combining all of the community's vicuña that they will be able to form a political alliance that will help bolster the prices that are paid to each community. It is a difficult and expensive task to include 700 communities into a cohesive unit. If they are not linked, however, the competition between communities will increase and the price will plummet. Those with very few vicuña will be left with a resource that is really not worth working with.

The SNV hopes to increase profitability with better shearing and management. For example in Picotani, department of Puno, they increased their clean fiber from 68.24 kg to 74.18 kg. The profits could be increased if there were more efficient shearing and control over the process. Another option is to sell dirty fiber to the IVC similar to what Almar has negotiated. Given that the price in the last ten years has decreased from \$800 to as low as \$358/kg one must ask where about will the price bottom out? Will it go as low as the alpaca? Furthermore, given the nature of the apparel industry, what will happen if the vicuña scarf never catches on? Will the treasured aspect of the vicuña fade away?

Annual production of vicuña fiber in Peru is 2000 kilograms. Production of alpaca worldwide is about 5000 tons. Another comparison is that only 8% of fiber textiles

in the world are wool or animal fibers, 52% is cotton. Of this 8-7% about 93% is wool and .001 % is alpaca. The vicuña fiber as a real resource on this scale seems minuscule. The managers at Group Inca feel that in relative terms, the alpaca is a fiber that is produced very little, the vicuña even less. The production of vicuña is for prestige not profit (Amy Cox interview with Alberto and Gilberto 5/22/02 Arequipa, Peru).

As far as profits go, the vicuña is not making most of the communities wealthy. What it offers for many is the prospect of wealth, a future to be capitalized on either in elite apparel, artesanía, or eco-tourism. The vicuña embodies hope. Identity is used as a way of realizing this hope. In the next two chapters I look at how identity and heritage are being transformed around the vicuña commodity. In Chapter 4 I show how the chaku ritual is changed in order to create and enhance economic opportunities. These changes are mostly based on the interests and desires of outsiders. In Chapter 5 I examine the promotion and marketing of vicuña products to end consumers. I conclude that the retail success of vicuña products is dependent upon Peruvian's indigenous history and current Andean population.

Identity is best conceptualized contextually. It is not a stagnant concept nor do people have one singular identity. Rather, identity is part of an ethnoscape, where definitions are dependent on time and space (Appadurai 1996). Identity is used selectively. It is slippery. If objects indeed represent a way of appropriating and preserving symbols of identity (García-Canclini 1993), then looking at how identity, heritage and ritual are recontextualized and reinvented around the vicuña commodity, allows one to see how trade and commodification alter and inform our concepts of self and other.

CHAPTER 4
THE GLOBAL MARKET AND ITS EFFECTS ON LOCAL COMMUNITY

Juana is 54 years old. Her husband is 86. They have six children. She wanted to come to the meeting to ask for help, not really to attend the workshop on conducting a census. Her husband cannot work because he is old and so she has no one to help her. Nobody is at the workshop and she is annoyed because she walked an hour to get there and everyone should know about the workshop because they talked about it at the prior assembly. Juana's family has a few alpacas and llamas but they do not grow anything because of the altitude. There are no jobs in the city. She wants to know what I have brought her from the U.S. She asks if I can bring one of her children to the U.S.

"I want a nice warm coat. What have you brought? We need stuff. There is no work. We are hungry. It is very cold. I want you to take my daughter with you." I weakly explain the difficulties and I know that she thinks I am lying. My words fade off. She gets close because I am foreign and she believes I have money and a way out.

"No, the vicuña has not brought us any money."

She has no idea where the money went. She does not know about the truck. The other community members ostracize her husband and so this year she will be the one who participates in the chaku. She wants part of the money. The money goes to certain individuals and doesn't help the whole community. She doesn't get any help from the community and she has come here to complain.

"I hope to God that the vicuña helps. I hope to God."

Nobody showed up that day, and Juan, the workshop leader, had to go door-to-door asking people to attend tomorrow's workshop. There should have been about forty people in attendance, and on the first day only five showed up. Unfortunately, some are willing to miss work and attend the meeting and others are not. Everyone said they would attend but they did not and this adds to a feeling of disunity and lack of confidence in the word of their fellow community members. Juan is concerned because he needs to deliver numbers to his funding agency and if people do not participate, he will not be able to continue to receive money (Amy Cox interviews with Juan and Juana 6/14/02 Tambo Cañahuas, Peru).

The town square in Tambo Cañahuas is approximately one city block. Small houses line the outer edges and in the center are a flagpole and plaza. The latrines are off in one corner facing the river. The people have not showed up because they are working and conducting the trueque (bartering) with people in the Colca Canyon. They are trading fiber and meat to obtain other goods like flour, beans, and vegetables. Juana, along with most of the people attending the census workshop, did not come to town to learn about how to conduct a census of the vicuña. Rather they came to ask the NGO for assistance.

Four smaller communities have been annexed into what is called Pampa Cañahuas. Conatura invited 150 families, each consisting of about five to eight people. Some people are not very involved with the community so the workshop leaders hope to have approximately forty people. A few of the families have trout farms that they hope to cultivate and sell either to a local restaurant or to Arequipa. They have a restaurant but it is not open and not many people stop anyway.

The people of the community are angered and disillusioned about the sale and income from the sale of the vicuña fiber. The money has disappeared into the hands of a few individuals and this has spawned a dialogue of community vs. individual. Many feel the money would be better served if it were divided individually instead of through a community purchase that has risks of corruption and opacity. With the money from the last sale, Tambo Cañahuas purchased a truck and one of the community leaders stole the rest. The truck has disappeared and now nobody has access to it. Many argue that everyone would benefit more if the money were divided up individually so that each family could use the money how they see fit. Conatura discourages this and says that if the money was pooled together everyone could reap greater benefits. They argue that the *chaku*, as ancient Incan ritual, should promote community, not the individual.

Market Participation and Its Effects Locally

Sahlins (1999) states that groups will absorb some symbols of modernization but can be successful in maintaining their identity. “There is a determination on the part of Eskimos to maintain traditional Eskimo culture and at the same time to adopt a pragmatic acceptance of the benefits of modern technology (Jorgensen 1990:6 in Sahlins 1999:viii). In short, an Eskimo is still an Eskimo even if he drives a pick-up truck. Indeed “changing global conditions – whether economic, political, cultural or environmental are ‘relocalized’ within the national, regional or local frameworks of knowledge and organization” (Arce 2000:188). International symbols and conceptions are reworked so that they will fit in with traditional practices and beliefs.

If Arce and Sahlins are correct in their assertion that indigenous communities are able to maintain their traditions and culture, even in the face of global economic

interaction, then marketing the vicuña will have little “real” impact on their cultural values and identity.

Sahlin’s case concurs with Orlove: “What is striking about rural Arequipa, which has largely been ignored by Andean ethnography, is that the social formation there has remained remarkably stable despite changing articulations in state apparatus over several centuries” (Orlove 1989:150). Furthermore, Sahlins points out that the greater a person’s success in the money economy, the greater their participation in the indigenous order (Sahlins, 1999:xvi). Following this logic, the communities working with and profiting from the vicuña will experience greater participation on the part of the community’s elite and subsequent reinforcement of vicuña as a cultural symbol of identity and heritage.

While Sahlins and Orlove may glorify the potential for local communities to retain their “culture” in the face of modernity, it is important to note that this is not unilaterally agreed upon. Guillet asserts that the Andean community is illiterate and monolingual which causes difficulties in dealing with bureaucracies (Guillet 1979:165). Consequently, the groups rely on certain people (presumably those with greater success in the money economy) who can communicate with those outside of the community. Information is a powerful tool when allocating resources. Who makes the decisions about the management of the vicuña holds the power of the community’s economic development.

As a point of comparison, Kenya has attempted to implement communal ranches. This serves as a useful comparison because shearing the vicuña is also an attempt to harvest a communal property. In Kenya, the decision making of communal ranches lies in the hands of a single owner/manager. “Policies that encourage private ranching in Africa

have only benefited the elite and mostly non-pastoral entrepreneurs. Group ranches in Kenya have resulted in an expropriation of land by the rich and loss of access rights by women and the younger generation” (Folke 1998:256). He further states that “communal is actually a system of usufruct exchange and agreement between herders” (Folke 1998:49). He argues that the biggest problem with group ranching or communal farming is that people do not respect the boundaries agreed upon (Folke 1998:120).

In the mid-1990’s President Fujimori placed ownership of the vicuña into the hands of the communities. In doing so, Peru hoped to increase the participation of the indigenous community in the global and national economy. The Andean indigenous communities have formed a national alliance, the SNV that is empowered with the sale of vicuña fiber. The mission statement of the SNV reflects their commitment to the vicuña not just as an economic resource, but also as an important part of their culture. “We are a representative entity of wild vicuña, conservationists charged with its sustainable development in benefit of the Andean population (and)...to treat our cultural identity with respect, ethics, dignity, solidarity, democracy and transparency” (SNV 2002:22).

The SNV hopes to unite the Andean community through communal management of a resource. They hope this will strengthen their social capital, which will strengthen their bargaining power. At the same time, market forces are encouraging individualized shearing of the vicuña through the use of fences.

Some argue that the vicuña provides social capital. Social capital has been defined as the social relationships that people have with each other through the collective knowledge of a group and the subsequent supervision that the group exercises over its members (Winch 2000:5). Social cohesion is created when individuals form social

networks to produce goods, i.e. communal shearing of vicuña. Many contend that this leads to a more productive and healthier community. “Social capital, then, is an amalgam of moral, cultural and cognitive elements all dependent on one another” (Winch 2000:6).

For example, the nets used for funneling the vicuña into temporary shearing pens during the chaku are sometimes shared amongst communities and their use coordinated. Sharing the nets reinforces bonds of reciprocity and neighborly goodwill. “The chaku is a ritual way of nurturing nature...The human community ‘thins’ or ‘prunes’ what is strictly necessary...In this way nature is pruned to permit a regeneration, at the same time the human community is nurtured” (Apffel-Marglin 1998:179).

What my observations show, however, is that this nurturing vision of cooperation and taking only what one needs is simplistic and romantic. What in fact often occurs is the nets are not shared even when it is in the financial interest of the community leaders. Sharing the nets is a political decision not only an economic one. There is a continuous adjustment of alliances as individuals negotiate this space. We see this readjustment and example of agency in Enrique Mayer’s and Marisol De la Cadena’s study of conflict and cooperation in Huancayo.

In the studies about communities there exists a black and white tendency – full of nostalgia of the past – to qualify ‘positively’ the existence of collective organization and negatively of the predominance of ‘individual’ aspects. Accompanying this tendency is the concept that ‘community’ signifies collectivity and egalitarianism. Correlatively the notion of the community excluded individual aspects. Fieldwork reflected that the work of collective organization did not offer the same benefit for all of the community members. The validity of the ‘campesino community’ is relative...It is presumed implicitly that private property of the family parcels changed the material conditions of production in the Andes, something that evidently does not occur. (Mayer and De la Cadena 1989:113) (my translation)

Mayer and De la Cadena rightly point out that the concept of community is a romantic notion that does not allow for critique. Worse this notion obfuscates the fact that community does not mean lack of hierarchy. There is a presumption with the chaku program that it will benefit everyone equally and that a jockeying for its resources will not occur. While local politics affect the chaku, it is more important to say that the chaku is being reworked communally within their system of production as well as within the local social hierarchy. The alternative proposal would understand that:

- 1) The campesino families technically need instances of collectivity (group or communal) for their reproduction, for that which is the development of certain individual aspects – like the property of the land – does not exclude the existence of communal institutions.
- 2) The communal activities can benefit community members or groups of community members in unequal form without that signifying ‘the process of communal deconstruction’. (Mayer and De la Cadena 1989) (my translation)

The chaku program, while still in its adolescent stages is being absorbed into the communal system. However, as Mayer and De la Cadena state this can and is benefiting the communities and groups of communities unequally. The chaku is working communally and individually on various levels. A hierarchy and culture of the community existed prior to the conception of the chaku. This history, memory and structure of that system is inserting the chaku into that system. In addition the chaku is also acting to reinforce and remake certain politics and hierarchies of the communities.

Currently a reshaping of subjects occurs through a reshaping of the space in which they live. Restructuring their communities by building fences and altering the landscape acts on the individual and community to re-contour their daily lives, attitudes, and tasks. Reshaping does occur but as Sahlins argues the culture of the community is not lost in this.

Whether Asanaqi To Inca, Indian to Spaniard, or rural community or individual to the Bolivian government, all have found themselves engaged not only in political struggle but also in a struggle to mark out relatively autonomous spheres in which to gain control over the meanings of their lives. Crucial to this endeavor are efforts to gain and retain control over the definition, transmission, and interpretation of the past. (Abercrombie 1998:5)

I argue that while integration into the global marketplace does affect rural communities' social structure and subsequently their culture, individuals and communities are active participants in this creation. The chaku is not a totalizing top-down structural adjustment to the community life. Rather it is being negotiated and integrated according to the conditions of the community.

We see evidence of this in the organization and mobilization of the chaku. As Abercrombie explains above in his study of festivals in Bolivia, control over the interpretation of the past and how it should be remembered today is crucial to communities. The struggle over how the chaku will be performed and how the vicuña will be managed reflect this struggle. Deciding what part of Incan history to keep or reinterpret and deciding how the vicuña will be absorbed into the current communal structure is part of the ongoing debate between communities, government and businesses. Together, all participants are active in altering the perception of the past and the subsequent promise the vicuña has for the future. An example of this is the chaku calendar.

“The calendar is important and most codified aspects of social existence” (Bourdieu 1977:97). By this Bourdieu means that while there are always different interpretations, of the calendar is understood because it is codified as it becomes the custom. There is both a logic and a praxis behind the working of the calendar which is exemplified in the codification and then the ignoring of that codification.

The calendar of the chaku operates exactly the way Bourdieu is suggesting. It has been reworked and will continue to be reworked for each community. The dates are planned a year in advance and negotiated with CONACS. As the date has become more consistent through the last five years and as it coincides with the period recorded as chaku conducted during the Inca period, this classification system will become more solidified. Nonetheless these dates change as the community members see fit. The people in the communities often change and ignore the times set for the chaku much to the frustration of CONACS, the SNV and NGO's.

For example, community members in Arequipa wanted to change the date of their chaku because all of the equipment was ready for them to use. They wanted to capitalize immediately on the opportunity. The NGO Conatura fought with them about the change because they had already planned the chaku and dignitaries had been invited. If the chaku was changed at the last minute, all of their planning would be wasted. In the end the chaku was conducted on schedule, but not without strong negotiation.

At root of Bourdieu's, Sahlins', Abercrombie's, Mayer's and De la Cadena's argument is that the indigenous communities are not helpless. They have and wield power in the politics of their lives. How international trade affects communities depends on the individual community. A generalized assertion is an erroneous one and a dialectic of power shows how the global and the local interact, resulting in a variety of outcomes.

The following discussion offers local perspectives from four communities in three departments. How the community members view the vicuña and how the chaku is performed are important for understanding how each community is benefiting and reacting differently from the vicuña trade.

Community Reflections

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves. The tradition of all the dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living. (Marx 2001:15)

The communities are not homogenous. Each is unique and regional with different feelings, attitudes, and problems with the vicuña. These categories of culture are subject to reinterpretation and reinvention. “For any human group the tradition at issue is a set of accumulated meaning: collective and historical theory, which makes their perception a conception” (Sahlins 1995:65).

Tambo Cañahuas, Department of Arequipa.

Lucia says that in the past there was lots of food.

We lived so well. Now it is terrible. We live. We die. We live. We die. So it is. Nobody knows our poverty but God. God helps us. The vicuña is a joke that has not given us one cent. I participated and worked and nothing. I received nothing. Some did but me no. I won't participate this year. They tricked us. We have beliefs about the vicuñas. My daughters know. (author's translation) (Amy Cox interview with Lucia, 6/14/02 Tambo Cañahuas)

The reason for poverty is too many people and not enough farms. Arequipa is now nothing more than rooms. In the past it wasn't that way. Too many people not enough farms. Now it is kilos and kilos for nothing. The price of meat and fiber is really low. The intermediaries trick us and take advantage of us. Now we have to go buy stuff. We have to make *chicharrones* of them. Eat the ticks. Ha Ha!! (author's translation) (Amy Cox interview with Lucia, 6/14/02 Tambo Cañahuas)

Lucia thinks the best way to develop is through handicrafts. She works with fiber, knitting gloves and scarves to sell. She thinks that there could be a shop where they worked and sold goods to tourists and exported their products. She wants to get rid of the intermediaries because she feels they hurt them. She is at the Conatura workshop today to learn even though she thinks the vicuña is a scam.

One boy said he liked the chaku. “Yes, all have to participate. There is a belief.” He wants to use the money to make more money. “The money is for business. They could have a shop or restaurant for tourists, car traffic, also a hotel or thermal bath. They use the money for the community, for example they bought the car.”

Other women said that they would be better off splitting the money individually. A pervasive feeling of distrust taints the workshop as many members argue that if the money goes to the community leaders, then the money will disappear. “What then?” one woman asks. She says that it is better to pay them for their work like individuals. The truck they purchased is stopped and people rob money from their community. She will participate today. But, many people have not participated today because the vicuña leaders robbed the money. The vicuña is not a good investment.

Others are angry and exclaim during the workshop in June:

“You should realize quickly and make reality your promises or support us with more certainty and more sincerity to be able to continue forward with our management of vicuñas.” Another community representative argues that “there is a lack of methodological capacity and technology. That is to say how can we organize our community for its development if my community lacks organizational support?”

Frustration and loss of hope is the overarching theme in the Arequipa workshops. It is unclear if the chaku will occur this year and if it does, no one knows how many people will participate.

In 2001, Tambo Cañahuas sheared 18 kg of fiber (SNV email 9/14/02). 18 kg of fiber is worth approximately \$6930 USD. Their chaku is conducted without horses and there is no marriage ritual before the shearing ceremony. The only ritual conducted

before the chaku is a payment to the Gods consisting of burning an offering (Amy Cox interview with Conatura 6/12/02 Tambo Cañahuas). This ritual is performed before every harvest or shearing and is thought to insure prosperity.

Ondores, Department of Junin and Rancas, Department of Cerro de Pasco

“People were so nice to me. I can’t believe that they were so open and wanted to talk (to me).”

“It is because they want you to take them to the U.S.”

“Cerro and Junin have their mines.”

Ondores and Rancas are wealthier than Tambo Cañahuas. One of the SNV workers commented on the large community center, electricity and improvements being done to the church as evidence of this wealth. What I see is that Lake Junin is so toxic that the colors match the bright hues of the Andean blankets.¹ I traveled to Ondores for an assembly and then to Rancas to participate in their chaku. I interviewed a group of six people before the assembly in Ondores. Most of the men thought that the vicuña money should go toward improving dairy operations, creating another business or toward protecting the vicuña.

Many of the workers of Junin City, ten minutes from Ondores, had been contracted by U.S. companies to migrate and work for several years in dairy farms in Utah, Wyoming and Montana. Their knowledge and labor are valuable in these areas where migration out of rural U.S. towns is prevalent. The town has benefited from their remittances. In Ondores, CONACS has complemented them because their vicuña population has doubled in three years. Ondores is benefiting from the vicuña and are

¹ Lake Junin is toxic from the mine tailings and other waste that occurs during the mining process.

experiencing growth in their vicuña population. This, opposite of the Arequipa region, is reflected in hope and planning for how to invest the money from the vicuña in order to benefit the community.

In Ondores in 2001 they sheared 18.424 kg of fiber, worth about \$7093.24 USD. In 2002 they sheared a total of 114.29 kg for about \$44,001.65 USD (SNV email communication 9/14/02).

University professors and NGO's in Cerro de Pasco are also planning for the future. At the chaku, two university professors from Cerro told me of their plans to start an eco-tourism business with the chaku at the center of the marketing. "How could it work?" they wanted my opinion. "Don't you think it would be good? We have deer, vicuña, alpaca, and vizcacha. Of course, then there is the chaku. We could promote a package where people could come and stay and do trekking. It is a good idea right?" (Amy Cox interview, 6/09/02 Rancas).

What the professors do not discuss is the toxicity that lurks everywhere. Lakes are unnatural colors at 4300 meters. Views of the cold expansive plains are interrupted by mines and hydroelectric plants. Many of the animals have sarcoma from the contamination. The area is also politically unstable. The day that the chaku occurred, a strike that would last four days began.

The chaku in Rancas begins early with people having to be bused from the town to the corral. University students, CONACS officers, the SNV, and community members are all waiting outside the fence. We arrive at the chaku around 8:30 am. People have already arrived. The actual chaku starts around 10 am. Two buses and several cars bring

people to the corral. There, people mill around, chew coca, drink cane alcohol, and wait for direction. A lady talks to me about menopause, aging, and the celebration of the saint.

Directions are given and the men on horseback start to go up to the top of the hill. Young men and women pile into the truck, so full that the vehicle almost tips over. The truck climbs to the top of the mountain and the rest of us walk up the mountain to participate too. We group ourselves off and line up along the nylon fence, but sit still so as not to disturb the animals. All of this takes several hours and it is now noon. The vicuñas begin to run down the fence. A few male vicuña jump the fence. The vicuña try to escape back up the mountain. This proves chaotic and the struggle to herd them into the corner of the fence lasts around 30 minutes. A line of people holding a long string of colored flags appears on the top of the hill and they start screaming and whistling. The men on horseback ride back and forth to insure that all the vicuñas enter in tip of the corral. Finally they close in and secure a net, making a triangle in the corner of the fence, which serves to enclose the vicuña in a compact space. There is more chaos and decisions are made about what to do next and a man is speaking into a bullhorn. Most of the people are sitting outside the corral on blankets, having a picnic, unable to see anything.

The pre-shearing ritual begins. A song that the singer cannot remember all the words to is sung before the marriage ceremony. This lasts 20-30 minutes, or at least it seems that way. Two adolescent vicuña are selected and placed side by side, legs wrapped around each other, “hugging” one another. Several people place coca, cigarettes, wine, and candy on their bellies. On the “table” where the vicuña lay (a tablecloth laid on the ground), aguardiente, cigarettes, coca leaves, cups, flowers, quinoa, crackers, maca, wine and candy are displayed. A blessing is said and the Godfather, in today’s chaku the

SNV president, cuts a slice out of the vicuña ear. The blood is mixed with wine and the mixture is poured into the mouths of the vicuña. The Godmother and Godfather of the now married vicuña consume the remainder of the wine mixture. Following this toast, blood is wiped on the faces of those witnessing the marriage. The matrimony is a fertility ritual that will insure that the population will grow.

Earrings (colored tags) and flowers are placed on the ears and the animals are set free, “walking down the aisle”. People have lined up in two rows and celebrate the marriage by throwing candy and popcorn onto the couple. The animals run skittishly around the mayhem back into the mountainside. People scream and are excited as they begin to grab the candy from the ground while the two animals are set free. After this people clap and mingle, celebrating the successful marriage.

Chaos again ensues as men enter the pen and begin releasing the babies and animals that are too young to shear. The community members and CONACS feel this is better because they do not want the animals in the crowded pen for too long. However the babies, upon release, are constantly trying to reenter the pen, ostensibly to be with their family, and then get caught in the net. The loud electric shearer is brought out and the animals are selected one at a time, their fiber measured to see if it is long enough to be sheared. Once they are sheared, they are released. The wind whips around and it is cold at this altitude. After the fiber is weighed and certified, it is bundled and taken by the SNV to Nazca where it is cleaned by women.²

² The workers in Nazca are mostly women and make \$5/kg. A good worker can clean one kilogram in a day. I was not allowed to see the site because the SNV was embarrassed about its condition.

When asked about the environmental effects and stress on the animal caused by the chaku ritual, the CONACS officer said “it is what they do. We do not want to interfere with their ritual because they will get angry at us and not want to do the chaku.” Everyone says cutting the ears and drinking the blood is a good thing but no one can really tell me why. The drinking of the blood disgusts the girl who is acting as the Godmother, but she drinks it anyway.

The fence is permanent and people think that it encompasses about 400 hectares. However, the vicuña population is growing. What will happen when the population is too big and the area is no longer healthy? People talk about this but it is not their primary concern at the moment. They are worried about poachers and encouraging community members to guard the fence. They are paying for the fence in kind with vicuñas. Each vicuña is valued at \$1,000 and each fence cost \$23,000 (Lichenstein 2002). Unless they shear a certain amount of fiber, the community does not have to pay that year. Most people feel it is a fair deal.

Only a few people are allowed inside the fence. As we leave there are caramel wrapper and bottles strewn on the ground. There are 700 people in community and about 100-200 people show up to participate in the chaku. Many are students from the university in Cerro de Pasco. In 2001 Rancas sheared a total of 6.88 kg. For 2002 Rancas sheared 21.9kg (SNV email communication 9/14/02). They are pleased with this year’s chaku.

Lucanas, Department of Ayacucho.

The chaku is conducted in Pampa Galeras throughout the year from May to October. Approximately \$100,000/year is spent on vicuña management and about 25

people are employed year-round for the shearing. This chaku, in contrast with Rancas, is very commercial and is widely promoted throughout Peru. In 2002 Pampa Galeras captured 500 vicuña during the festival but normally they try to capture 1500. Although they shear year-round, this is the only chaku celebration that is performed.

The night before the chaku there is a pagapa or payment to the Gods. Garcia, the CONACS officer, says it is a small demonstration because normally a pagapa will last at least four hours. Shamans conduct the ceremony and they chitchat, hang out, and smoke their cigarettes. This pagapa is two hours long because CONACS feels that tourists really cannot wait for four hours. The pagapa is conducted in Pampa Galeras with a small group and the shamans bury a package wrapped in newspaper consisting of alcohol, coca, cigarettes, maca and a variety of other things. The purpose of the ceremony is to give thanks and payment to the apus or mountain Gods.

After the pagapa there is a street party. Lots of groups are dancing, celebrating, and drinking. The music is folkloric with bands from all over, but mostly from the city of Ayacucho. Rock in Quechua is also sung. The bands are excellent and the performances are conducted on a stage, with lights, and television crews surround the stage. No snacks or hot foods are sold, but there are the ubiquitous soda carts with cigarettes, gum, candy, and soft drinks. Mostly though there are hot alcoholic beverages made with eucalyptus syrup, rum, and orange juice. Sometimes the beverage is made with bee honey. Bottles are shared and swigs are taken out of a little Dixie cup that is passed around until the bottle is empty. Then someone exchanges the bottle for another one or a woman comes by selling another bottle. There is also straight cane alcohol sold to keep the cold at bay. Large groups stand around talking, dancing and drinking. In my particular group, made

up of current and ex-SNV and CONACS workers, contentious debates about vicuña management are the focus of the evening.

Mario, a schoolteacher from Lucanas, believes that the money can go to build roads, and pay for electricity. The vicuña has been helpful there. Carlos Espinosa, the first SNV president and close friend to Alfonso Martinez, is revered in the community for helping to stop terrorism and promote the vicuña. He and Martinez helped to start the SNV and CONACS. He argues that today the money is not going to the communities and this is why he is supporting Martinez's efforts to begin a new company, which can help the communities. SNV members argue that Espinosa and Martinez are criminals and stole money, which has now imperiled the SNV because it, as an organization, is being held accountable for those actions. Nonetheless Lucanas has obviously benefited from the sale of fiber in Pampa Galeras and are working on expanding the operation.

Umberto, a CONACS member, whom I met in Rancas was participating in the festival. Umberto warned me that it was very dangerous and that I should be careful who I spoke with and what questions I asked. He was worried about me and was embarrassed by the behavior of his fellow Peruvians who were all extraordinarily intoxicated. "Don't trust anyone – not even me." He wanted to show me a non-commercial chaku where the people are excited and are into it. I told him I did not think that existed and that the chaku was about making money. He disagreed with me and said that Lucanas was too commercial. He has seen the pleasure and spirit of community members totally enraptured with the chaku.

The following day the chaku occurs. This one begins later than the one in Rancas. Two men from Lucanas offered their opinions of the vicuña.

We suffer. Only the people who work come to the chaku, CONACS, dignitaries. We are community members. We do not really have alpaca, or cattle. We work and try our hand at other things, but there is not a lot of vicuña. (Amy Cox interview Pampa Galeras 6/24/02)

The chaku is a much larger performance than any of the other events I had witnessed. A large circular pen is surrounded by hundreds of on-lookers. Buses line the highway. A large group of high school students are dressed in bright colors and enter the ring where the vicuña are held. They dance and chant and are followed by the Incan King. Another high school student, selected to play the part of the King, is carried on their shoulders on a wooden structure. The King and Queen climb to the top of a stone mound. The stone mound represents the apu. Two vicuña are again carried out and are married. The ears are cut and the blood mixed with wine. The Inca King offers the wine up to the Gods speaking the entire time in Quechua. Cameramen swarm the area preventing those outside the fence to see what is actually going on. After the offering is made, the King and Queen exit and more dancing occurs. One vicuña is selected and ceremonially sheared for the audience and cameras. The rest of the vicuña will be sheared tomorrow under more efficient conditions. Following this the vicuña are released into the larger enclosed circular pen and visitors can enter the pen to get their picture taken with the vicuña. These vicuña are much more docile and less jittery than those of Rancas. The ceremony and performance lasts about an hour most people go to the visitor's center where lunch is being served. At the visitor's center there is also a small museum and a band beginning to play.

Three girls, all around 16 years old, come from Picquoi, the community further along the highway from Lucanas. They wanted to come and see the event but do not know much about the vicuña. A lady from Nazca, a few hours down the highway from

Lucanas, has come to sell cakes and beverages. She is from the sierra but moved to Nazca for variety and to give her children a better education and more opportunities, a chance to improve life. She came to see the chaku but really she came to sell bread and soda. She thinks this year is so-so. There are not many people and therefore she has not made a lot of money. Also she is disappointed because there are very few vicuña captured this year.

A family from Lima is on vacation, visiting Lucanas to see the chaku. The mother states: "We wanted to see and enjoy. It is our first time. I remember vicuña from when I was younger." They enjoyed it but had seen enough and were taking the bus home that evening.

During this chaku Pampa Galeras only sheared 25 kg of fiber. I do not have the total amount sheared for 2002 but in 2000 the entire Department of Ayacucho sheared a total of 1,376,410 kg of fiber, Lucanas being the main producer shearing approximately 44,000 kgs/year. The second largest producer is Puno shearing 393,510 kg (SNV 2001:27). The remaining departments shear an average of 126,493 kg/year, Cajamarca shearing the least at 4,661 kg. The vicuña trade is big business for Lucanas and for Ayacucho.

Memory and Power

Bourdieu (1977) discusses mimicry as a way of creating memory and power. A logic of mimicry, he argues, supports the notion that through mimicry a beginning of memory occurs. At this point a change has occurred as social history comes to bargain with the dynamic system. Bourdieu contends that there is a historical consciousness, whether it is remembered or not. The chaku ritual was taught to the communities. There was no current memory of working with the animal. However through mimicry of the

ancient ritual, participants are active in the creation of a new memory that is derived from knowledge both political and historical.

In practice, it is the habitus, history turned into nature, i.e. denied as such, which accomplishes practically the relating of these two systems of relations, in and through the production of practice. The ‘unconscious’ is never anything other than the forgetting of history which history itself produces by incorporating the objective structures it produces in the second natures of habitus....Conversely, we are very much aware of the most recent attainments of civilization, because being recent they have not yet had time to settle into our unconscious. (Bourdieu 1977:79)

An ancestral linkage to the chaku is absent from today’s consciousness of the communities but through historical ties these habits and practices are performed and included into the structure. A re-creation and reinvention of this ritual has occurred through mimicry and memory making on the part of historians, NGO’s and the Peruvian government. So much so, that this new history is writing a future whereby the communities will be delivered out of poverty through the shearing of this sacred animal. Peruvians are returning to history and heritage in order to be saved from the poverty that engulfs their Andean communities.

Eric Hobsbawm in *The Invention of Tradition* shows that traditions have their own political and economic history. During the 1700s political institutions, ideological movements, and groups were so new that they had to invent their own historic continuity. New symbols that personified ‘the nation’ came into existence. He cites such devices as the national anthem, national flag or the personification of the nation in image, i.e. Uncle Sam (Hobsbawm 1983).

‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable past. (Hobsbawm 1983:1)

CONACS began to encourage communities, because of their heritage, to shear the vicuña, cashing in on the fruits of this wild animal, by utilizing the ancient chaku ritual once used by their Incan ancestors. CONACS taught the communities how to conduct the chaku and through mimicry, and agency, a ritual tradition is born. Through an indigenous heritage belief that categorizes the vicuña as sacred, Peruvians are actively creating a memory that spins heritage for political and economic gain.

Originally, this ritual was constructed from the point of view of CONACS. Commodification of heritage by the state is not unique to Peru or to the chaku and has been researched by countless anthropologists in places like the Southwest United States, Mexico, Panama, Guatemala and Ecuador to name a few. Lynn Stephen in her research on textile production in Oaxaca, Mexico, states:

The ideological package, which was and is sold to tourists who come to states with high indigenous populations, is based on a homogenized image of “Indian culture” and the material remains of that culture which can be visited or purchased and taken home. Of primary import in this cultural package is the “Mexican Indian”. (Stephen 1993:39)

Along similar lines, Garcia-Canclini argues that “Artisans are not there to talk about what they know, but to find out how their work can appeal as a commodity based on a logic created by others” (Garcia-Canclini 1993:64).

The communities, however, are also working with this system for their own purposes. Some communities do not shear every year because it might not have worked the first few times or they might not have received their payment. Most have added new steps to the ritual such as the pagapa and the marriage ceremony. There is dynamism on the part of the community that is shaping this ritual. The communities have begun to take ownership of the chaku and the vicuña.

Rules are broken as a form of resistance and power on the part of the communities. Both CONACS and the community are negotiating this space to create a ritual that will fulfill their needs. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, De Certau argues that humans work within systems of structure and classification to make it their own.

La Perruque is the worker's own work disguised as work for the employer...he cunningly takes pleasure in finding a way to create gratuitous products whose sole purpose is to signify his own capabilities through his work and to confirm his solidarity with other workers. (DeCertau 1984:25)

Extrapolating this logic from the workplace onto the chaku (after all it is labor output), communities have worked within the structure of CONACS to make the ceremony their own. In the smaller chakus, picnics are set up and chicken dishes sold to outsiders. In the larger chaku, embellished dances and costumes are inserted. Marriage rituals have been added. People sell cakes and beverages. This is a "cleverness that does not recognize itself as such" (De Certau 1984:55).

All four communities display different perceptions and feelings about the vicuña. Some are hopeful, others are not, and still others have achieved a distance that comes from mechanization and commercialization. The chaku and the discussions around the vicuña reflect these different hopes, perceptions and place they have in the political and economic structure of the communities. Community members are active agents in the pragmatic acceptance, rejection and restructuring of globalization, heritage and their 'development'.

CHAPTER 5 CONSUMING IDENTITIES

“However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of ‘invented’ traditions is that the continuity with it is largely fictitious” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:2).

Recently globalization and international trade was severely criticized in the Global Social Forum 2002 in Brazil. Is globalization the ultimate homogenizer? Does international trade really have socio-economic benefits? In the last five years, the vicuña has been spotlighted because of its growing significance in the world as a luxury good and commodity for rural development. Through an investigation of the promotion and commodification of vicuña, I argue that it is globalization that is encouraging heterogeneity not homogeneity by actively producing constructions of indigenous identity and otherness.

In my original proposal I asked the following:

The community believes that the vicuña has cosmological and cultural heritage value. If, after several years of working in the western marketplace, they come to believe that the vicuña is nothing more than a commodity for development then consumer demand is indeed driving cultural meaning of a resource. This is a critical question not only for Andean communities, but all rural communities who are beginning to interact in the global marketplace.

While my research shows that consumption is indeed a powerful and political force, the result is not that the cosmological value of the object decreases with an increase in monetary value. Rather, it is the contrary. It is precisely this increase in monetary value and the emphasis on the chaku ritual as part of Incan history that is working to develop a

historical memory and cultural value. However, this return to heritage is malleable and influenced by today's politics.

Consumerism and capitalism has been criticized as fears that globalization will remove localized aspects of culture. This fear of homogeneity coupled with our desire for the exotic combines to create traditions, perpetuate erroneous histories and strengthen identities of indigenous.

There is probably no time and place with which historians are concerned, which has not seen the 'invention' of tradition in this sense. However, we should expect it to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable and flexible, or are otherwise eliminated; in short, when there are sufficiently large and rapid changes on the demand or supply side. (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:5)

Applying the above statement to the chaku, Hobsbawm and Ranger are correct in that this ancient Incan ritual applied today stems from a change in the supply - a decrease in the vicuña population. However, the chaku is also being created from the promised wealth from increased consumption and demand. The chaku was resurrected as a way to conserve the species and prevent poaching. Nonetheless, its ongoing invention and its promotion are derived from increased consumer demand, not only change in supply.

Appadurai describes this creation more accurately. "Elite tastes, in general, have this 'turnstile' function. Selecting from exogenous possibilities and then providing models, as well as direct political control for internal tastes and production" (Appadurai 1986:31). It is not that globalization is the ultimate homogenizer. Rather, it is currently the ultimate creator of nationalism, specialized identities, and otherness. The international trade of the vicuña, and Peru's place in the global economic sphere, is not smoothing

edges. It is working hard at creating these edges so that the consumer can purchase culture and difference. Steiner agrees and in his work on African art argues that purchases of African art are made in order to “buy a piece of the cultural system” (Steiner 1994:93).

A certain evangelism aligns itself with the question of the vicuña. “The vicuña will get you. You won’t leave Peru” (Daniel Zevallos, President SNV). In an effort to dissuade community members from purchasing corrals from CONACS, the President of Conatura declared that “the Inca knew more than us and they did not use fences.” Not only is there a belief that touches on values and identities (indigenous or environmentalist or Peruvian nationalism) but this belief is proselytized to the communities. “The vicuña is a unique richness, there will be much more”, an employee of Conatura declares assuring community members of the promise of wealth from the vicuña.

The entire chaku program came about through efforts to convince communities to reclaim their heritage, perform the chaku, and participate in the creation of a new source of income. CONACS visited communities and convinced them to reserve a day to perform this ritual. CONACS taught the communities the ritual and convinced them to purchase corrals and fence in 800 hectares of their property. Furthermore, CONACS introduced the implementation of the marriage ritual before the Lucanas chaku as a way to strengthen the event (Amy Cox interview A. Martinez 6/24/02 Lucanas).¹ These efforts are shaping the place the vicuña and the ritual have in Peruvian society and the world. The importance of today’s ideology is grafted onto the history of the people and

¹ It is unclear how the ritual was disseminated to other communities.

the place the vicuña has had in history. History, identity and culture are the foundation for the success of the vicuña trade.

One of the necessary components for the survival of capitalism has been the procurement of raw materials. Historically the north has extracted a variety of products from Latin America – tin from Bolivia, copper from Chile, oil from Venezuela, rubber from Brazil. In the case of the vicuña, fiber is sold to an international consortium where the fiber is made into treasured products for elite consumption. Treasure and scarcity are important to outside consumers.

“Vicuña fiber is the most expensive natural fiber in the world and fetches a price of around \$500/kg” (Sahley et al 2002:1). “The products made from the fiber reflect this price and are considered luxuriously fashionable. Scarves made from vicuña fiber sold for \$550 - \$1000 pounds” (Symington 2001). “Agnona Italy, one of the world’s top woolen mills, supplies the largest design houses, like Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Chanel, with vicuña knitwear. Agnona is one of three members that holds the world exclusive for the sale and promotion of vicuña” (Conti 1997). Agnona’s financial plan is to boost sales from \$41 million to \$59 million by the year 2001 (total knitwear including alpaca, cashmere, etc.). Hernan Blacazar, who sells the merchandise in his exclusive shop in Britain, claims that: “Increasingly, people demand quality as well as luxury. Once they experience vicuña, they will be hooked. It’s not a trend that will disappear” (Morgan 1997:2).

Consumption has become a more powerful political and economic force than production (Arce 2000). Because consumption has become such an important force it shapes meaning through its promotion of resource extraction and emphasis on monetary

value. One of the implications of economic globalization has been that consumer taste in the first world is increasingly able to impact the third world by encouraging rural communities to become more export oriented (Arce 2000:107). The meaning of those material goods is important because it is linked to cultural identity and social formation (Bauer 2001). The increasing demand for vicuña fiber increases its value and therefore increases the community's desire to export more fiber. The discussion and marketing surrounding the vicuña, the myth making that goes into shoring up conceptions of treasure, exotic and sacredness, increases its preciousness and value to not only those purchasing the unique and elite final product but also for those responsible for procuring the raw fiber.

Along with a promotion of the vicuña as scarce and elite, the fiber is marketed as a sustainable, ecological and indigenous. This marketing plan of conservation and nature have elevated the importance of the vicuña and created a new indigenous ritual history based on nature, the pristine, and Inca. Consumption indeed has become a more powerful political and economic force than production.

Creating the Neo-Indigenous Identity

'Tradition' in this sense must be distinguished clearly from 'custom' which dominates so-called 'traditional' societies. The object and characteristic of 'traditions', including invented ones, is invariance. The past, real or invented, to which they refer imposes fixed (normally formalized) practices, such as repetition. (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:2)

The chaku tradition, as Hobsbawm and Ranger define it, has not yet become tradition. It continues to be constructed. We see this in the comparison of how individual communities are inventing the chaku. For example in Ondores, Junin during a community assembly the women were very excited to work with the vicuña because they felt it

would bring great fortune. Other community members argued that the income derived from the vicuña fiber could be used to make more money and improve other important operations of the community like cattle and alpaca. They want to continue to perform both the fence and non-fence chakus. The SNV and many communities are interested in developing the chaku as a tourist attraction. In Rancas, university professors believed that tourists would love the area. They could come, go hiking and see exotic animals and then participate in the ancient Incan ritual, helping to round up the vicuña. In Picotani, a community in the department of Cuzco, three communities work communally for four days conducting the chaku. They capture the vicuña bringing them to the pen and on the fourth day shear the animals. They have plans to build large structures to house tourists. “They can come and sleep in dormitories with food and participate in the ancient ritual” (Picotani Representative Conatura Workshop 6/2/02). In Lucanas, where the chaku has been in existence the longest and has the most vicuña, an elaborate display of Incan ancestry has been added to the performance.

While this might be taboo to say in Peru, all of the Quechua speakers are not descendants from Inca. The Inca were the nobility and several other indigenous cultures existed in Peru prior to the Inca and were conquered by the Inca. The conflation of indigenous as Inca reflects the value Incan identity has in Peru. No one is claiming to be of Moche or Wari descent. Steiner argues that people in Cote D’Ivoire manipulate ethnic identity for perceived shift in economic advantage (Steiner 1994:90). “Ethnicity is claimed rather than determined” (Steiner 1994:81). Where this process is evident is in the pamphlets of Grupo Inca and CONACS. Incan identity and heritage are being invoked to promote an exotic product tied to history as well as to promote a notion that indigenous is

more primitive and therefore closer to nature, the environment and better for conservation and preservation. The mean of production is disguised and is replaced with an elegant final product. The indigenous population of Peru nothing more than a nostalgic remnant from the past.

Grupo Inca markets the vicuña and themselves through a captivating presentation of wealth, ecology and indigenous camaraderie. The first picture in the Alpaca III store catalog, the retail face of Incalpaca, shows a fashionable European woman in a lovely coat standing imposed upon a scene in the Andes of Suri Alpacas feeding on green grass (Figure 5-1). In the lower corner a tag line states: “Gold of the Andes, Vicuña, Guanaco, Alpaca y Llama”.

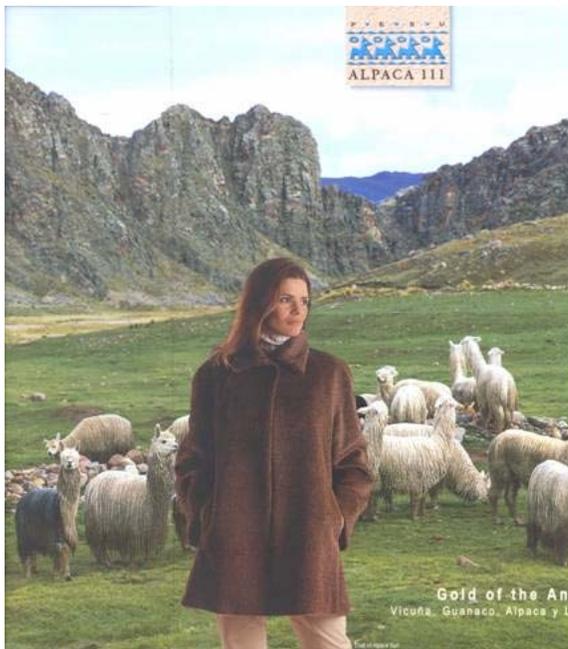


Figure 5-1 Front cover of Grupo Inca marketing pamphlet.

On the first page, *A tradition knit in time*, shows pre-Hispanic textiles and an anglo model in a multi-colored alpaca sweater (Figure 5-2). A full page photograph of two indigenous woman hand spinning yarn, complete in their skirts, neck scarves and

hats convey a picture of purity, harmony and a turn away from industrialization to a simplistic harmony that indigenous Peruvians still enjoy today. Indigenous peoples are presented as Peru's living history.



Figure 5-2 Page one and two of Grupo Inca marketing pamphlet.

The second page titled, *Preserving the Millenarian Heritage and Gold of the Andes, Treasure Dressing the World*, shows a brunette, olive skinned man and blond pigtailed woman with a baby alpaca lying comfortably in their crème colored luxurious scarves. Beauty, happiness, and contentment shine through this golden-lit frame. On the opposite pages, four pictures of each animal highlight and promote the natural resources that Peru boasts (Figure 5-3). We see the transformation from primitive to modern.

A double-truck layout of *Vicuña, Fiber of the Gods* follows (Figure 5-4). Here, against an Incan wall (possibly the famous puma wall in Cuzco), a light colored brunette, adorned in a vicuña cape, confidently strolls by. Behind her is an indigenous woman with a bright fuchsia colored blanket holding her possessions. The text under this photo states:



Figure 5-3 Page three and four of Grupo Inca marketing pamphlet.

The hair of the vicuña, the finest in the world was reserved in the time of the Inca for only the emperor and his nobility. Presently vicuña fiber is obtained through an ancient Inca tradition called the chaku which consists of using a large human chain to capture the animals and herd them into a corral where they are shorn and then liberated back into the wild, converting this magical ritual into a colorful party. (Grupo Inca Marketing Pamphlet 2002)

In this photo the European woman is wearing the vicuña cape. The picture, along with the text, serves to promote the vicuña product as noble, treasured and elite. This picture also serves to take past hierarchies and graft them on to today's privileged populations. Who wears vicuña is noble.

The following page, one that is the most perplexing in this series, is titled *Working with Nature*. It features a white brunette woman and her white Aryan male partner sitting next to an indigenous woman weaving. They are dressed in Alpaca sweaters and baby alpaca scarves. All wear white straw hats (Figure 5-5). Who or what is nature in this photo? Who is working with it?



Figure 5-4 Page five and six of Grupo Inca marketing pamphlet..

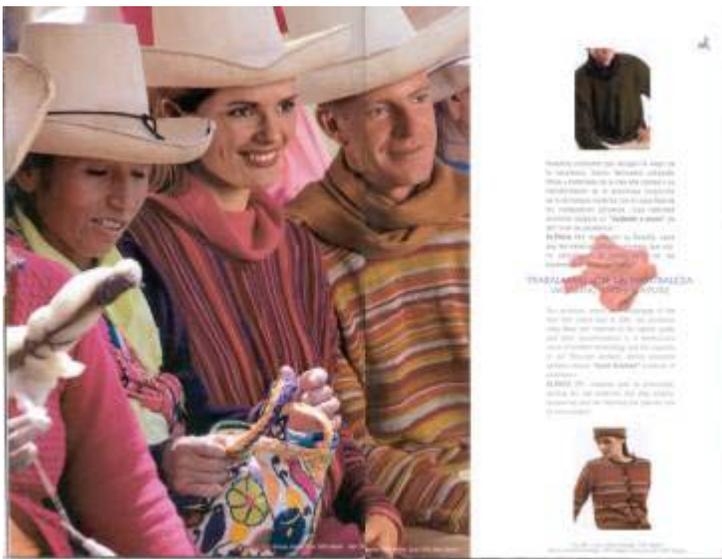


Figure 5-5 Page seven and eight of Grupo Inca marketing pamphlet.

The middle section shows off some of the colors and products that Grupo Inca designs and manufactures (Figure 5-6). Again they link their products with Peru's history, showing how they have improved on the past and nature's resources in order to offer a garment made for today's standards.



Figure 5-6 Page nine and ten of Grupo Inca marketing pamphlet.

The pamphlet concludes with the brunette woman dressed in a lovely knit dress, with matching scarf and hat (Figure 5-7). She strolls in tall black leather riding boots next to a campesino man and woman. The man is wearing rubber boots and is steering his donkey laden with straw. The woman, walking in sandals made of tire rubber, is carrying her bundle of goods in her brightly colored blanket.

Our products which take advantage of the best that nature has to offer are produced using fibers and materials of the highest quality and their transformation is a harmonious union of modern technology and the capacity of our Peruvian workers, whose ancestral abilities ensure ‘hand finished’ products of excellence. (Grupo Inca Marketing Pamphlet 2002)

What is interesting about these photos is not that these images do not exist. All of the people are Peruvian. However, the mixture and juxtaposition tells a story that blends nature, conservation, indigenous, and industrialization into one. The goal for Grupo Inca is to profit from Peru’s resources by promoting themselves as benevolent capitalists. Modern luxury is combined with its historic Incan past. The animal fiber is harmlessly plucked from nature and made better through technology. All of these pictures seek to



Figure 5-7 Last Page of Grupo Inca marketing pamphlet.

conflate and unite the current Peruvian indigenous population into the past and subsequently into the natural. Indigenous as natural and good is pictured in harmony with examples of today's achievement. The pictures, although depicting the difference in wealth and lifestyle, ignore this conflict and tension and place the two groups as working and living together in harmony. Grupo Inca promotes indigenous Peruvian history as ecological and natural in order to sell their products. Without this heritage and exotic other, the scarf would not be a treasure.

In their handout Incalpaca describes the vicuña as:

The vicuña is the most graceful and scarce of the South American Camelids. Vicuña fiber, the finest in the world was reserved in the time of the Inca for only the noble class. In the 1960's, the vicuña was on the brink of extinction, today, after an intensive recovery program, the most luxurious fiber of the world returns to the markets in very limited quantities. Our company, member of the International Vicuña Consortium, has the worldwide exclusive rights of the production of the vicuña product.

In the same pamphlet they say the following about Alpaca:

Alpacas are the most numerous of the four South American Camelids. With a population of approximately 3.5 million head in the Peru (near 75% of the world

total). Alpacas are the main means of subsistence for thousands of families for whom it constitutes an inexhaustible source of soft, beautiful and resistant fiber occurring naturally in a fantastic array of colors characteristic that is impossible to find in other natural “noble” fibers.

In order to gain a niche, they play on our love of nature, native, exotic and elite.

The vicuña is the perfect commodity for the 21st century. It includes historic Incan ritual, conservation, environmentalism, and Indians, all knitted together in a treasured, silky soft, exorbitantly priced garment. Wearing a vicuña you can feel good about your elitism- helping to bring money to needy communities and not pollute the environment.

Invoking Inca

“It is more, to personify the Incan nobility and be a specialist in the Quechua language was a means to acquire aristocratic rank” (De la Cadena 2000:298).

Grupo Inca is not the only party promoting indigenous. This is also claimed from community members. Marisol de la Cadena in *La Decencia en el Cusco de los Años 20: la Cuna de los Indigenistas* argues that people living in Cuzco created a social hierarchy within a racialized hierarchy based on intellectualism and education. “Since colonial times, the local upper class had glorified the memory of the Quechua dramas written by Incas and acted by elite gentlemen. Reviving and preserving the past was an academic mission (De la Cadena 2000a:293, my translation).

She discusses indigenaity and how the indigenous elite in Cuzco formed a group and had a political discourse, and academic daily life to dispute the supremacy of those from Lima. They did so in order to help them acquire political and intellectual influence. This intellectualism and decency, through a promotion of Inca as generous, wise, decent and good, converted itself into the ultimate protection against the nobility through the creation and strengthening of indigenous. “On the contrary, this group of Cuzco

regionalists searched the racial regeneration in the reenactment of the spirit of the Incan race” (De la Cadena 2000a:283, my translation). She goes on to argue that the creation of the Incaic Theatre “was an efficient tool in order to demonstrate the cultural purity of the elite and self-perception as superior Cuzco group in bio-moral terms: the decent people” (De la Cadena 2000a:296, my translation).

While the social hierarchy is still in place today, Peru’s place in the global marketplace has resulted in Peru’s placement into another hierarchy. This hierarchy is encouraging an emphasis and return to indigenous. In the same way Cuzco elite positioned themselves against a racial hierarchy, Peruvians are acting within a global world to secure an elevated position in this new hierarchy. While this does not imply that the higher echelons of societies are returning to the farms, it does imply that there is a continuing emphasis on the history and noble past of Peru; particularly the Incan past is used in order to participate in today’s globalized hierarchy.

Inca is used to varying ways; either to show a naturalized intelligence, a native sense of environmentalism or a proud history of power and strength. What is rarely talked about is the Incan history of brutality, forced societal restructuring, enslavement, conquering and tithing. Similar to what De la Cadena argues happened in the 1920’s in Cuzco, we see a return to the Incan nobility in order to sell vicuña products, sell the chaku method of shearing the vicuña, and compete in the global marketplace.

The chaku is nested in this hierarchy and is an ethnic performance and display of power. In Pampa Galeras, where the chaku has been performed the longest and is the most widely advertised and promoted, personifies this performance of political maneuvering and promotion of indigenous power and desire for the exotic. The press is

allowed inside the ring after the vicuñas have been corralled. Lining the outside of the fence are the spectators. Prior to the singular shearing (only one vicuña is sheared that day) there is an Incan celebration of giving the vicuña to the Gods and thanking the Apu. Students from the local high schools are dressed in traditional costumes, some dance, and an Incan King is carried out atop the shoulders of several people. Gold Aluminum medallions and fabrics of bright oranges, fuchsias, greens and yellows adorn their bodies. The King and Queen are brought to the top of a stone mound. After the King, in this case played by a high school student who resembles what they think an Incan should look like, drinks the blood and speaks in Quechua, the animal is sheared.

The marrying ritual performed before the chaku, actually comes from something that the ranchers use with their cattle and acts as an offering and prayer for fertility, health and prosperity. However, it was not until the third year of the chaku in Pampa Galeras that they had the matrimony ceremony. The first two years performing the chaku they didn't include this rite. Moreover this is the first year that they have the Inca celebration with costumes, dances, and Quechua representation. I was curious about the marrying rite and I asked some people in Tambo Cañahuas about whether or not they perform the marriage. They said no, and actually had no idea what I was talking about. They perform a small pagapa before shearing.

I am not arguing that the ceremony is inauthentic. Rather I am arguing that this ritual is active, dynamic and political. With each new ceremony, memory, nostalgia and identity become embedded in the consciousness of the nation. The chaku in Pampa Galeras is nine years old and is closely linked with the promotion and tourism enterprise that Peru hopes to create around the vicuña. Eventually this ritual will become more

solidified but it is currently being perfected to perform and achieve the ultimate display of indigenous heritage and nostalgia.

A national identity with Inca at its center is further developed through the ritual whereby the Inca is invoked as a better time, before the Spanish colonists. The European presence and power encourages a return to the native and exotic because authenticity and purity are desired. The Peruvians are capitalizing on and supplying what is in demand. Incan history has provided tourist dollars and interest from outsiders. A country in need of income reshapes itself in order to become more marketable. From phone cards to hotel signs, images of Inca are promoted as powerful and intelligent, a nostalgia of yesteryear. While it seems false, it is very real in the minds of the performers. As globalization bears down and blurs the lines and definitions of communities, culture, and personhood, a return to the past is inspired.

Steiner in his book *African Art in Transit* discusses an anxiety over authenticity and a crisis of misrepresentation as our boundaries become blurred through transnationalism and a confounding global dialectic that often reinvent their objects of desire.

While Western notions about the authenticity of African art are constructed by privileging aesthetic forms imagined to have existed in the past – worlds that never were but might have been – African beliefs about Western authenticity are projected into the future – worlds that aren't yet but someday could be. (Steiner 1994:129)

The value of the vicuña is not strictly monetary. Its promise to act not only as economic savior but social power has come to play an important role in the ideological importance of the animal has in Peruvian culture and beliefs. The local communities and their institution, the SNV, exist because of the usufruct rights given to them based on

their Incan history and identity. A political force has arisen that strives to preserve the vicuña and perpetuate a sustainable development alternative through a platform of community rights, indigenous power, and environmentalism. Indigenous is important for everyone.

The myth that Peruvian indigenous peoples are isolated and pristine is a simplistic representation that ignores the dynamic of the human capacity for change. The idea of indigenous community, however, is a necessity if Peru wants to continue their promotion of Incan tradition, history and identity. In order to sell things like vicuña scarves it is essential to have a current indigenous population working with the animal.

The notion of indigenous is bound up in a colonial history that is currently being transformed into an industrialized history. We see this in the fact that these groups were given usufruct rights to shear the vicuña because they are indigenous and deserve rights to the resources that exist in their land. If they are no longer considered indigenous and if this 'privilege' and othering ceased to exist, then this exclusive right would break down. The notion of native as being more environmental and closer to nature is a construction to be used when necessary. The reality is that these groups can be impoverished, some more than others, some are descendent from the Inca, some only speak Quechua, some are bilingual, some only speak Spanish.

The Othering separation is being actively promoted and used in different ways and in different contexts. With respect to the vicuña, it is used as a way to promote conservation, authenticity of the past, and the vicuña as sacred treasure. It perpetuates a separation based on race and encourages further hierarchy in Peruvian society. It also acts as De la Cadena asserts, as a way to gain socio-economic and political access. The

creation and consumption of identity is acted upon by the community members, the government, the consumers and the businesses, in order to promote, purchase and sustain this resource. It is especially powerful in this case because it adds much value to a commodity like the vicuña. Without the indigenous identity, people lose their rights to shear the animal, the state loses income, the corporation loses a crucial marketing component, and the end consumer loses out on an authentic elite scarf that was once reserved only for the Inca. “For Incalpaca TPX, the vicuña is not just a symbol of Peru’s past, but is now part of the world’s future” (Grupo Inca Marketing Pamphlet 2002).

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

If Grupo Inca's marketing philosophy is based around selling the vicuña, I wondered what would happen if they do not win the solicitation again. Gilberto states:

We will continue doing it. It is part of the philosophy of the group. Today there are very few who can knit the vicuña. We think 20, 30, 40 years there is the possibility of much competition. And perhaps, no more solicitations. It will be open, free, and this group will not work, but today this group works. I repeat it in benefit through the development of the group and the work of the future. The group started 30 years ago. We know the possibility. We know it is possible to make a business. (Amy Cox interview with Grupo Inca 6/04/02 Arequipa)

Grupo Inca has 18 stores in Peru, two in France, one in Switzerland, one in Korea, and one in Seattle. The salesperson at Alpaca III emphasizes the fine fabric and the wonderful touch and warmth and the fashion of it. She urges me to feel it. In a near empty store there are four people working.

An article recently written for the *New York Times* reflects the desire for authentic and pristine. The town of Q'ero, Peru is depicted prior to the invasion of tourism as a community that was isolated, primitive and still much the same as it was before western tourists bungled onto the scene. A proof of this is that the men still knit the hats, and the women still weave the fabric, and rarely are the textiles up for sale. John Cohen, a photographer, documentary filmmaker, musician and collector donated several textiles for the Museum of Natural History in New York and Textile Museum. " "These textiles are not just commodities, because they communicate the spirit of their makers... On Easter Sunday, before the communal feasting begins, the Q'ero people sanctify their

fabrics,' Mr. Cohen said. 'They take the finest women's shawls and men's vicuña scarves produced in the previous year and raise them up on long forked poles to the top of an arch of timbers. Then the townspeople move in a procession through the arch bearing crosses and banners to bless the weavings, marching to the music of two flutes and a drum'" (Washington 2002). The power of these items (vicuña) is derived from the ritual and spiritual investment culturally embedded in the artifact.

The vicuña is as much revered internally as it is externally. All players are active in constructing the vicuña as something other than a strict commodity. Nonetheless, the vicuña is a commodity, whether it is invested with a supernatural cosmovision or not. The value of the vicuña is based on its sacredness and this sacredness has become part of its commodification. Even though the fiber is the finest in the world, without Incan history and an indigenous population, the vicuña is not an exotic treasure.

Unfortunately accompanying this value is the issue of sustainability of the vicuña as a resource for commercialization. In the case of the alpaca, it is well known that the commercialization of alpaca fiber has impacted the breeding of the animal. Consumer preference and marketing has influenced the breeding of the alpaca because of a desire for bright colors. It is easier to dye white alpaca fiber and therefore more valuable to those companies that process the fiber. The breeds of the alpaca have been reduced as more money is paid out to the pastoralists who sell white alpaca fiber (Ochoa 1982, Orlove 1977).

Commercialization is also beginning to impact the vicuña. Concerns about consanguinity, wildness and health are rampant. In the communities of Cala Cala and Picotani they have 1,200 and 3,000 vicuñas respectively. It is profitable and less

problematic to fence in large quantities of vicuña. However, when there is not a plentiful supply of vicuña there is the danger of consanguinity because of the few animals breeding in an enclosed space.

The CONACS biologist explains the confusion about fencing in the vicuña. “There is a risk of a pacovicuña or a llamavicuña if the animals cross breed. The fiber will thicken and the price will decrease.” He avoids telling me if he thinks it would be a good idea, but shows a chart that determines the optimal size for the biology of the species but also for efficient shearing and management of the animal. Bigger fences are too expensive and you have to care for, feed, regenerate pasture; but they are efficient to shear. “The ideal is to conserve the species. But also that we move forward”(Amy Cox interview with CONACS biologist 05/16/02 Lima).

Although referring to sheep and alpaca, Orlove in *Alpacas, Sheep and Men* states:

Without large sums of money and considerable political influence, pastoral units cannot fence their land; this step is a necessary antecedent to the introduction of improved breeds of animals, the sowing of higher quality pasture, the systematic use of veterinary medicine...In short, to increase the value of the wool the pastoralist has to increase its volume, which entails obtaining more land to graze larger herds. (Orlove 1977:192)

Enclosure and volume are issues that prevent wide scale commercialization of the vicuña and thus wide scale economic development in the communities that house these animals. Capture and enclosure are part of the economic viability of the vicuña trade but these concepts conflict with the marketing foundation for the vicuña. Enclosure and breeding question the authenticity of the chaku ritual, the scarcity of the vicuña and the wildness of the animal.

In addition to issues of genetic purity, other health issues are beginning to affect the worth of the fiber. In Pampa Galeras dandruff has appeared on many of the animals

for the first time. The suspected root of the problem is the corral and the close contact of the vicuña with other domestic animals. This indicates possible health issues and concern over the continued high price for the fiber. During a site visit to Rancas, one of the CONACS officers discussed with a leader of the community that they should not allow their domestic animals (sheep especially) to graze and enter into the vicuña corral because this poses additional health concerns. Health problems may prevent further enclosure.

The political struggle surrounding the rights to capitalize on the animal has come to represent a longer and deeper struggle. The animal has come to symbolize a historical struggle of individual (capitalism) vs. community (socialism) and industrial vs. rural. The majority of the one hundred plus communities that actively shear and work with the vicuña have less than 75 vicuña. The business plan is not profitable for the majority of communities because it takes the same amount of people to round up 2000 vicuña as it does to round up twenty. Yet people are attending workshops, congresses and working hard at developing plans to work with the animal. A representative for the Cuzco congress, a younger man from far beyond Sicuani, admits that he does not know anything about vicuñas but is excited to learn. Possibility is motivating participation, creating new meanings, and affecting social structure. Hopes of making this enterprise benefit communities are encouraging the creation and perpetuation of a political and economic organization like the SNV.

Rural fiestas in Mexico are changed to become urban shows to fit the needs of tourists. Fiestas as well as artesanía are altered in an attempt to appeal to outsiders (Garcia-Canclini 1993:64). In the same way, the chaku ritual is being altered to fit the

needs of the tourists. Whether it is shortening a religious offering or including colorful dances, the ritual becomes a performance based on the desires of outsiders. Emphasizing Incan history and indigenous heritage gives impoverished communities a new source of income and outsiders the exotic *Indian*.

When used by anthropologists the term local seems to take on an authentic preserved quality. Globalization is a process acting on people. People are also acting on globalization. The idea of 'local' identity is itself born out of, and created by, our increasing globalization. Its use is employed not only by locals, but by outsiders interested in creating, consuming and profiting from that identity. As such, local identity can be viewed as powerful resistance from inside but also as a product created from the powers of integration into global circuits of exchange.

Contemporary globalization is the increasing flow of trade, finance, culture, ideas and people brought about by the sophisticated technology of communications and travel and by the worldwide spread of neo-liberal capitalism and it is the local and regional adaptations to and resistance against these flows. (Lewellen 2002:7)

The vicuña trade reflects Lewellen's definition of globalization. It involves the movement of goods across borders and integration of Peru into an international economy. Reflecting his concept of a bi-directional flow we see how the vicuña and notions of indigenous identity are sold across those lines and purchased in Europe. However, the integration of the local economy does not necessarily mean a liberalization of trade and investment. A monopoly on the production of vicuña fiber clashes with the neo-liberal philosophy of international trade.

One must be wary of assuming that these groups are powerless in this creation. Insertion into capitalism acts upon groups but those groups are also acting upon it (Wolf 1982). Local economies are interacting in this globalized marketplace with different

ideologies and conceptions of efficiency, property and value. As Lewellen suggests there is resistance and adaptation to these flows. Its adoption locally and regionally has taken and will continue to take on different shapes.

Present day Andean communities are not vestiges of the past, isolated and unspoiled by the modernity existing outside their rural homes. They have traded with outsiders for centuries. From spondylus shells, to copper, to cotton, to guano, to wool, Peruvians have been involved in the boom and bust cycles of global exchange. Community integration, stemming from usufruct rights, is an active component in the development of an ideology about the animal and the identity of a people. The effect of this integration is dependent on each community and cannot be generalized for all communities across the Andes. The vicuña will deliver on its promise for many communities but certainly will not be the savior many hope for. The consequences from such success remain to be seen, but each community will bear those consequences and benefits uniquely.

The value of the vicuña is rooted in marketing campaigns, political efforts to include communities, and plans for future business operations based on the chaku ritual. “The growing gap in wealth among sectors of the same society and nations in the global order creates a demand for exotic products that preserve the very features destroyed in the globalization of world production” (Nash 1993:129). Consumption is shaping identity, ritual and cultural meaning of the vicuña. The international trade of the vicuña will not result in an increasingly homogenous world, as its success is dependent on indigenous history and tradition. Both the manufacturers and the rural peoples need this history. Its reinvention will continue in order to compete in today’s globalized economy.

The vicuña trade is simply another example of how adaptation to international trade and the desire for the exotic continues to take on new forms.

The chaku has decreased poaching making it a success based on the original objective of conservation. It is also an unquestionably viable and profitable new source of income for several communities. Along with these successes the vicuña trade has resulted in a conflation of possession and wilderness and commodification of culture. It has created an untenable feeling of ownership amongst the communities that have been given usufruct rights to the vicuña. It has also begun to alter identity, culture and reinforce class and race lines based on marketing and heritage. The development of the vicuña trade exemplifies how power and wealth continue to be unequally distributed, and shows how “first-world” consumptive desires are affecting the beliefs, behavior and cultural practices of other nations. Unfortunately at root of our desire for elegance and luxury is a desire for the unique and exotic. In the case of the vicuña, that sacred exotic treasure has become not only the animal’s fiber but also the indigenous peoples producing the raw material. The consequences of this program are far-reaching and have deep implications into the sociopolitical situation of Peru. Indigenous culture continues to be commodified for the benefit of tourists and the nation, while the actual indigenous people remain at the margins.

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Born and raised in Petaluma, CA, Amy Cox received her bachelor's degree in political science from The University of California at Los Angeles in 1995. Upon graduation, she worked in Washington, DC, as an intern for the U.S. Department of Agriculture researching rural development programs in the U.S. After completing the internship she moved to Bozeman, MT, where she worked for several years as a product manager, manufacturing and importing clothing made overseas. She began graduate school at the University of Florida in the fall of 2001. She has traveled extensively, including Taiwan, Indonesia, Europe, Canada, Mexico, South America, and plans to do her dissertation fieldwork in northern Brazil. She currently lives in Gainesville, FL, where she teaches computers to senior citizens at Santa Fe Community College and is a graduate assistant at the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art.