

*Sumaq Kawsay, Allin Kawsay: Conceptions of Well-Being among Quechua
Female Vendors in the Face of Change in Chinchero, Peru*

By

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Thesis

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*Dedico esta tesis a las mujeres tejedoras-vendedoras de Chinero
por invitarme abiertamente en sus vidas*

Tupunanchiskama

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: LIFE IN CHINCHERO, THEN AND NOW

The midday sun burns my face and heats up the thick crowd around me. As I adjust my hat and sunglasses, the woman next to me holds a folded woven textile over her head to shade her face from the unrelenting sunlight. Her daughter stares at me inquisitively, her dark brown eyes slowly tracing my foreign body, until her mother hisses at her to pay attention. Hundreds of people have arrived from the surrounding communities and neighboring towns to fill the open plaza for the celebration of Corpus Christi. Spectators and dancers all stand silently in the suffocating heat to attend the Catholic Mass. The crowd is lined with natural-dyed ponchos, shimmering tunics, colorful masks, brightly colored flags, red *montera* hats and brown *mestiza* hats, held in hand out of respect. The priest addresses the crowd from an impromptu altar, in front of the white colonial church and atop a long Inca stone wall with angular trapezoidal niches. A chorus sung in Quechua announces the end of the Mass, and the crowd quickly comes alive. As hats and masks are donned again, the drumbeat and panpipe music excitedly resumes and the dancing begins. Dozens of groups in matching costumes begin their rehearsed choreographies, bounding around the crowded plaza. Spectators continue to file into the packed plaza along with vendors lugging huge buckets of homemade *chicha* corn beer on their backs and crates of Cusqueña beer bottles on their shoulders. With a renewed immunity to the scorching sunlight, the lively crowd enjoys the dancing, music, and revelry for the rest of the afternoon.

...

It was only my first week in Chinchero and the Corpus Christi celebration opened my eyes to the continued vitality of Andean cultural traditions. The day illustrated a religious and social

hybridity: Pre-Columbian community organizations and dress, Catholic Mass outside the Spanish colonial church, and manufactured beer from our modern industrial world. I could sense the intricate fusions between past and present that have created the unique beauty of the Peruvian Andes. It was as if I got a glimpse of a ritual event that archaeologists can only dream of from their material findings. The event was an appropriate opening to my studies of weaving traditions, well-being, and change in Chinchero.

One of the strongest modernizing forces affecting the quaint Andean town is the planned new Chinchero International Airport. Although the megaproject had been present in local political discourses for over 40 years and the land was finally expropriated in 2013, construction has yet to begin. Consequently, I was curious how the unfinished megaproject was already impacting life and culture in the town. How did weavers and vendors think the airport would affect their well-being, both socially and economically? How were local traditions of weaving, social organization, and economic activity being altered by the modernizing forces of capitalist and market-based economies? Was the absent presence of the airport altering their communal values? These key questions guided me throughout the five weeks I spent conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Chinchero in 2017.

My findings reveal a strong discrepancy between vendors' conceptions of what it means to live well and their opinions about the outcomes of the airport. Social, economic, and environmental pillars of the Quechua term *sumaq kawsay*—their idea of well-being—were all seen as threatened by the airport's possible arrival. While vendors have already significantly adapted their weaving practices in order to compete in the tourist economy, they still cling to their autochthonous principles of a good life. Even as an absent presence, the airport has already dramatically changed life in Chinchero. Local, all-encompassing worldviews of well-being are incongruent with linear paths to economic development. Before previewing subsequent chapters of this thesis, it is important to situate my work within the geographic, historical, and economic context of the region.

Chincheró is a small town located about 30 kilometers northwest of the city of Cusco in the Department of Cusco in the southern highlands of Peru (See Figure 1). At an altitude of 3,765 meters (12,352 feet) above sea level, the town sits high in the *quechua* and *puna* ecological zones, even 1,335 meters (4,380 feet) higher than the famous Machu Picchu. Due to the high altitude, the climate of Chincheró is often quite cold. In both the wet and dry seasons, temperatures drop to around 0°C (32°F) at night, although during the day the sun provides a respite from the chilly winds. Chincheró is comprised of an area of 95 square kilometers and with a population of over 9,700 inhabitants spread over 14 *ayllu* communities and an urban area (INEI 2015:112; Callañaupa Alvarez 2012:5). The traditionally primary language spoken in Chincheró is Quechua, the ancient language of the Inca, although in recent years Spanish has also become more common and widespread.



Figure 1. Panoramic view of Chincheró from the north. On the left are the archaeological complex, plaza, and traditional adobe houses; on the right the urban area. To the right (not pictured) is the land sold for the airport construction. Photo by author.

Historically and archaeologically, Chinchero traces its origins back to the time of the Inca Empire (1450-1532) and was a pivotal location during the Inca civil war and Spanish conquest. Towards the end of the Empire, Chinchero was founded as a royal estate for the Inca ruler Topa Inca, in addition to his other estate at present-day Urquillos (Nair 2015:2). The name “Chinchero” described its location in the Chinchasuyu region¹ as well as built on the side (*chiru*) of a mountain (Ibid). Even after Topa Inca’s death, Chinchero still served as a royal sanctuary for the ruler’s mummy where inhabitants venerated him with fine foods and drinks (Nair 2015:3). Later, during the civil war between the rulers Atahualpa and Huascar, Topa Inca’s mummy was burned, and after the conquest in 1532 Chinchero became a Spanish colonial town (Ibid). Then in 1540 Manco Inca, on his way to Vilcabamba in retreat from the Spanish, set fire to the town of Chinchero in order to prevent the Spanish from accessing clothing, food, and supplies (Callañaupa Alvarez 2012:5). These events illustrate how Chinchero has served as a pivotal and important location in the Andes throughout history.

The town’s economy is based dually on farming and tourism. Beyond the urban center lie vast expanses of farmlands, fields of cultivation, and beautiful landscapes. The two lakes Piuray and Huaypo provide water for the inhabitants of Chinchero. The high altitude is apt for growing a wide variety of crops including potatoes, fava beans, quinoa, wheat, barley, and *olluco* and *oca* (types of potato). Farming is most often practiced for subsistence, although sometimes crops are traded at the Sunday market for fruits and herbs grown at a lower altitude in the Sacred Valley.

Like the rest of the Department of Cusco, the economy in Chinchero also runs on tourism. The main tourist attraction of Chinchero is the archaeological complex, which includes the plaza, Inca wall with trapezoidal niches, Spanish colonial church, Inca terraces, and neighborhood of

¹ The Inca Empire, called *Tawantinsuyu* in Quechua, was divided geographically into four (*tawa*) quarters (*suyu*). The four regions were *Chinchasuyu* (NW), *Antisuyu* (NE), *Qollasuyu* (SE), and *Cuntisuyu* (SW). The center point of the four regions and of the Empire as a whole was the city of Cusco.

adobe houses. The Committee of Tourist Services in Cusco (COSITUC, abbreviated in Spanish) oversees entrance to the complex. Along with multiple regional archaeological sites, Chinchero is included in the 130 *soles* (USD\$40) Cusco tourist ticket. The sale of these tickets forms a big part of the regional tourist economy. According to COSITUC, an average of 79,800 tourist tickets were sold each month in 2016, with most sold in the months of July and August (MINCETUR 2017a). In order to conduct my research in the complex and avoid paying this fee every day, I had to request a special researchers pass from COSITUC. Beyond the complex, local restaurants and lodging places offer their services to capitalize on passing tourists.

Chinchero is also well-known for its textile weaving traditions. It is the only town in the Cusco Department where tourists can see weaving demonstrations. The town includes over 47 Textile Centers (“*Centro Textil*” in Spanish) that offer such demonstrations and sell *artesanías* (“handicrafts”)² including both handmade and manufactured blankets, hats, scarves, bags, knick-knacks, and more. In addition to the Textile Centers, hundreds of vendors also sell *artesanías* at the Sunday market and daily at the plaza in the archaeological center. By stopping in Chinchero on their way from Cusco to Machu Picchu, tourists get a colorful respite from all the Inca stonework at the dozens of other archaeological sites around Cusco included in their tourist ticket.

It is important to note, however, that Chinchero is a tourist stop, not a destination (Chambi 2017). Tourists often lodge in the city of Cusco, pass through Chinchero during the day on the way to other tourist stops at Maras, Moray, Urubamba, and Ollantaytambo. Accordingly, tourists on average spend only a few hours in Chinchero, visiting the archaeological ruins and then one of many Textile Centers scattered throughout the streets of the urban area. Since much of the tourist demand in Chinchero focuses on *artesanía* sales, there are only a handful of hotels and restaurants—not nearly as many as in Cusco or Ollantaytambo where tourist flows are higher.

² This and all subsequent translations from Spanish are by the author unless otherwise noted.

At the numerous Textile Centers, women wear identical *traje típico* (“traditional clothing”) and demonstrate Chinchero’s traditional weaving techniques to tourists (See Figure 2). The presentation explains all the steps of weaving: washing the wool, spinning, dyeing with natural colors, warping, and finally weaving on a back-strap loom. Gendered divisions of labor are strongly demarcated in Chinchero. Farming—carried out by men—feed the family, while *artesanía* sales to tourists—carried out by women—provide cash flow.



Figure 2. Paulina explains to tourists how they weave on a back-strap loom at *Centro Textil Awana Llaqta Tocapu*. Photo by author.

Recently, Chinchero has been faced with multiple changes in the local economy and lifestyle. In the past few years the proliferation of Textile Centers has been extensive. With multiple Centros opening every year—indeed, over the course of one month I witnessed two new Centros opening—competition among vendors continues to rise. Another important factor of change comes from the plans to build the new Chinchero International Airport in the town. Although the megaproject has been promised for four decades, issues of corruption and conflicting political interests have stymied the airport’s physical realization. The expropriation of land for construction in 2013 resulted in a

rapid influx of money and a subsequent changing aesthetic; those who received payments soon built large, multiple-story houses of concrete and abandoned their small *adobe* mudbrick houses. The aura of change and uncertainty for the future was omnipresent when I arrived to Chinchero.

Thesis Organization

In conducting my ethnographic fieldwork in Chinchero, I sought an understanding of how these women thought the airport will change—and already has changed—their lives, lifestyles, and well-being. I focused on female weavers and vendors because they held a dual economic and cultural stake. They were the primary economic contributors to their households; and they possessed the knowledge of their unique weaving traditions and thus were protectors of their cultural heritage. In my research I utilized two anthropological techniques of participant observation and semi-structured interviews over the course of five weeks. My complementary methods allowed me to experience the women's daily lives alongside them at the same time as learn from their stated opinions and thoughts. Throughout my research and this thesis, I focus on the co-creation of knowledge with the female vendors. As I was first captivated by Chinchero when I was a tourist myself in 2014, in conducting my research I was genuinely curious to learn from them about their experiences.

In Chapter II, I explore how female vendors present a “commercialized tradition” of weaving in the Textile Centers. Although they still practice some elements of their weaving traditions, vendors are actively engaged in capitalist economies and markets. They are attuned to the tourist demand for a consumption of the authentic: their clothing, presentations, and merchandise reflect efforts to compose a narrative of continued pristine tradition unaffected by the forces of a capitalist modernity. In the realm of economic activity, the vendors have adeptly adapted their weaving traditions to market demands; they follow a set of economic rather than cultural values.

Next, I examine the female vendors' understandings of what it means to live well. In my research I use two contrasting measures of well-being: subjective understandings of the Quechua term *sumaq kawsay*; and the Cantril ladder-inspired question of individual life satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10 for a more quantitative analysis. For the vendors, living *sumaq kawsay* or a good life is firmly based on communal values, reciprocal social relationships, and harmony with the environment. Capitalist values of maximizing individual profits do not enter into their autochthonous conceptions of well-being. However, their life satisfaction scores revolved around different factors. Many vendors cited social issues, educational opportunities for their children, and the overall environment of economic uncertainty in Chinchero as affecting their scores. In response to both questions, most vendors reported they were satisfied with their lives and still living according to the principles of *sumaq kawsay*—at least for now.

Finally, in Chapter IV I turn to the issue of the airport and how the megaproject will—and already has—changed life in Chinchero. Political conflicts, corruption, and decades of postponement have resulted in great uncertainty over whether the airport will actually be built. Most vendors state opposition to the project, citing negative effects on their environment, community, and calm lifestyle. As a synecdoche for modernity, the airport has the potential to propel Chinchero towards an urban reality that threatens the pillars of *sumaq kawsay*; the prospects of economic development are not enough to assuage vendors' resistance. Although the airport has not yet materialized, its longstanding absent presence in Chinchero has already had innumerable effects on the local vendors' economic activities and mentalities towards the future.

This thesis contributes to the growing literatures on both the various effects of unfinished megaprojects and anthropological studies of well-being. By analyzing the outcomes of modernizing changes on both economic and social conceptions of well-being, I show that the evaluations of large development projects' effects must retain a more holistic focus. Moreover, change is not always

imposed from the outside; it can emerge from within the community. While female vendors have become active participants in market-based tourist economies—in some cases at the expense of preserving tradition and cultural heritage—they remain reluctant to relinquish their strong values of *sumaq kawsay*. The potential realization of the airport threatens to dramatically transform Chinchero into an international tourist destination, dismantle local ideas of living well, and erode the rich cultural heritage of the region.

CHAPTER II

A COMMERCIALIZED TRADITION: FULFILLING TOURIST DEMAND FOR THE “AUTHENTIC”

The vendors at *Centro Textil Qollorcb'aska* await their first tourist group of the morning. A mother cares for her one-year-old son, constantly checking what he has picked up from the dirt floor and put in his mouth. A teenage boy wearing neon orange soccer shoes is hunched over his cell phone watching *reggaetón* music videos. A *viejita* carefully spins wool on a drop spindle, her aged fingers moving slowly but adeptly. One woman squeezes shampoo from a disposable packet onto her long, wet black hair, bent over a small plastic bucket of hot water. Another laughs as she recalls their impromptu volleyball game yesterday. A third is knitting a bright blue hat, chatting with the others. A matted white dog licks his swollen, wounded paw where a car hit him this week. Suddenly, the tinny *reggaetón* music and conversation is interrupted by the low hum of motor and the crunching of pebbles underneath tires outside. “¡Grupo! ¡Grupo!” they all shout, rapidly jumping into action and dashing around to get ready. The phone slips into a pocket; the baby gets wrapped in a *lliklla*³ blanket and hoisted on his mother’s back; a *montera* hat is placed over wet hair. The mother sits down and fastens the back-strap loom to her belt and starts to advance the permanently unfinished blanket. The boy puts on a traditional *ch'ullu* hat and a blue vest and stands behind a table full of colorful *artesanías* for sale. Outside I hear the van door slide open and some approaching chatter in English. One woman sets a black ceramic pot on the adobe stove to boil, then runs to the back

³ Henceforth, the spelling and definitions of Quechua terms are based on those found in the *Diccionario Trilingüe Quechua de Cusco* (Hornberger S. and Hornberger 2013), unless otherwise stated. As a result of the vowel conflation of e-i and o-u sounds in Quechua, and because of the great regional variations of the language across the Andes, each term in Quechua can often be spelled multiple ways. The spelling of all term is based on Quechua from Cusco as printed in this dictionary.

kitchen to prepare tea for the guests on the electric stove. Another slides the wooden table full of dried herbs and balls of colored yarn to the front of the demonstration area. The *viejita* remains seated, silently spinning wool. I retreat to the back corner so as to not interfere with their work or disrupt their calculated performance of tradition. By the time the tourists start straggling in through the open front door, eyes passing over the colorful merchandise and textiles hanging on the walls, the women are in their rehearsed positions, ready to demonstrate Chinchero's weaving traditions.

...

Chinchero is one small town of the vast Andean region recognized for its rich textile tradition. Across much of present-day Peru and Bolivia, there is a great variety of patterns, designs, colors, and motifs, many of which date back to Inca and pre-Inca times. All of the pre-Columbian cultures, from Chavín on the north coast to Paracas near the southern border with Bolivia, practiced weaving for both practical and ceremonial purposes. Ritual burials of important rulers and individuals were wrapped in finely-woven *mantas* ("blankets").⁴ In more quotidian and utilitarian contexts, young children were wrapped in blankets and carried on their mothers' backs. Weaving was—and is—a central part of sustaining life in the Andes. Clothing kept people warm in the freezing nights, as well as distinguished social class⁵ and encoded meaning and wealth (Zorn 2004:54). Religious rituals involved finely-woven textiles to honor the deceased. Women were also deemed ready for marriage once they attained a certain level of mastery of weaving; those who did not weave were seen as lazy. Weaving quite literally tied together the social, religious, and political fabric of the Andes.

⁴ The Ice Maiden Juanita mummy, an Inca high mountain sacrifice at Mount Ampato, was found wrapped in and wearing finely-woven blankets and clothing. Other mountain sacrifices at Lulllaillaco on the border of Chile and Argentina also present woven masterpieces on the sacrificial bundles. For more information, see Reinhard 2005.

⁵ For example, Inca tapestry squares called *tocapu* distinguished a higher status. Only those who pertained to the royal or noble classes wore these unique geometric designs. For more information, see Silverman 2008.

In the Andean highland region today, Chinchero is one of the most well-known towns for traditional textile weaving patterns and methods. Previous anthropological research conducted in Chinchero has examined many aspects of life and history. Christine and Ed Franquemont were the first anthropologists to live in Chinchero and they studied weaving patterns and ethnobotany (Franquemont 1982; Franquemont 1986). They were also pivotal in the efforts to revitalize the weaving traditions through proto-Textile Centers. Art historian Stella Nair focused the Inca stone wall structures in Chinchero to study the historical landscape of the Inca estate (Nair 2015). During the pivotal moment when land was sold for the airport's construction, anthropologist Pablo Garcia conducted his fieldwork on the intersections of communal organizations, tourism, and weaving traditions (Garcia 2015). The existing research provides an in-depth background in the unique weaving patterns, social organizations, and history of Chinchero. Although the town has become a popular fieldwork site for Peruvian anthropology students as a result of the impending airport, the research body lacks a focused study on economic and social well-being.

In this Chapter, I explore the current state of weaving practices in the Textile Centers through an anthropological lens. Through a combination of participant observation and semi-structured interviews, I studied weavers' actions in the Centers and their perspectives on their jobs. Most women in Chinchero continue to weave and have not forgotten their traditional techniques, which form a valuable part of Cusco's cultural heritage. However, the social and economic dynamics around weaving have changed as a result of particular tourist demands. Now, weaving is more often seen as an economic means to provide for one's family rather than a cultural means of expression. As a result of a tourist demand for the authentic, women in the Textile Centers perform and sell a "commercialized tradition" in order to make a profit.

Weaving Traditions in Chinchero

The weaving process, when entirely carried out as it was traditionally, is demanding and time-consuming. The process begins with the raw material *millma* (“wool”) from either sheep or alpaca, depending on the desired softness and value of the finished product. Then the *shibur* (“dirty wool”) is cleaned with the *sajta* root, which the vendors at Textile Centers have dubbed “Inca shampoo” in their demonstrations. Next, the wool is spun into yarn using a *pushka* (“drop spindle”). In Chinchero, spun wool is Z-twisted; the yarn is spun in the “Z” direction as opposed to the “S” direction, which was only used for healing purposes (Callañaupa Alvarez 2012:70). To strengthen the yarn, it is usually spun a second time to produce a *q’anti* (“the union of two strings”). Spinning can be carried out at any point during the day, such as while cooking or caring for their children. Many women, particularly older women, always walk the streets of Chinchero with an armful of wool or yarn and *pushka* spinning by their side.

After the yarn is spun, the next step is dyeing it to obtain different colors. Traditionally in Chinchero, natural plants are used to obtain a wide variety of colors. The natural colors come from various leaves and plants found in various parts of the Cusco area. For example, green comes from the dried *ch’illka* leaf; yellow from the *q’oli* flower; purple from *matz morado* (“purple corn”); orange from the straw-like plant *qaqasunka*; and blue from the *q’iswa kuchu* plant, although today indigo is often imported from abroad. The *cochinilla* (“cochineal”) parasite found on cacti is used to dye yarn red. When mixed with a mordant or chemical additive such as lime or salt, the *cochinilla* can produce over 24 shades of red including pink and orange hues. While some of these plants can be found in Chinchero, others only grow in the Valle Sagrado at lower altitudes and must be bought or traded. The spun yarn is then dyed with specific plants in boiling water for multiple hours so the color remains on the yarn after it is removed and hung to dry.

Once the yarn is dyed, the next step is to do the *aulliy* (“warping” or *urdido* in Spanish). The strings are extended tightly and crossed between two stakes inserted in the ground; the distance between each stake determines the length of the finished textile. This step is when the design layout and combination of colors are selected. Most common in Chinchero are textiles that are double-faced, meaning that the designs are present on both sides of the textile. The warp is then attached to a back-strap loom to begin the *away* (“weaving”). On one end the *awa* (“loom”) is attached to a tree or post in the ground and on the other end is wrapped around the weaver’s back as she sits on the ground (See Figure 3). Using the *illawa* (“heddle”) that separates the warp from the weft, the weaver



Figure 3. Women weave *llikella* using back-strap looms at the *Centro de Textiles Tradicionales de Cusco*. They have their own *llikella* on their backs. Photo by author.

begins to *pallay* (“pick up”) the strings to create various designs before passing through the *mini* (“bobbin” or *trama* in Spanish). Depending on the size of the textile and the ability of the weaver, the entire weaving process can take up to a month, if not more. The most typical textile produced is the *lliklla*,⁶ the blanket used by women to carry items and children on their backs.

Traditional textiles from Chinchero present numerous weaving designs that are unique to the region (See Figure 4). The most distinctive is the *loraypo* design, featured prominently on *lliklla* blankets. Although its name has no meaning, it could come from the *lorapu* plant used for its anti-inflammatory qualities (Callañaupa Alvarez 2012:112). The *loraypo*, one of the most complicated designs, is a fusion of two other designs *q’eswa* (a zigzag pattern) and *q’uti* (an ‘S’ shape). One of the



Figure 4. A collection of *mantas* and table runners for sale at the Sunday market. They include the designs *loraypo*, *ñawi awapa*, *jakakuj*, and *q’eswa*. Photo by author.

⁶ The mountainous landscape of the Andes traditionally rendered the wheel a useless tool for transporting goods and materials. Locals thus instead carried heavy items on their backs in these *lliklla* blankets. Today, people in the Cusco region still carry heavy *q’ipi* (*bulto* in Spanish) on their backs up impressive heights in the high altitudes.

simplest designs is the *tanka ch'uru*, known as the mother of all designs because it is first one learned by young girls as they begin to learn to weave; it is also the first design that I was taught before advancing to four other patterns. Another popular one is the *jakakuj*, which comes from the pre-Inca Chimu culture and traditionally represents waves (Ibid). The design along the border of woven blankets is the *ñawi awapa* (“eye border”), so named because the design resembles eyes. The selection of designs reflects personal preference; typically, the finest designs were reserved for important rituals, burials, or gifts.

Textile Centers: Replicating a Business Model

Weaving was traditionally practiced in Chinchero for generations but it was not until the end of the 20th century that it began to be utilized as a tourist attraction and institutionalized through Textile Centers. The trend started in the 1970s with an informal group of women who wanted to recover forgotten designs, improve textile quality, and begin selling to foreign tourists (Callañaupa Alvarez 2012:139). In the 1990s, the group was officially established as an NGO as part of the *Centro de Textiles Tradicionales de Cusco* (CTTC), which was dedicated to the preservation of weaving traditions that were in danger of becoming lost. Currently, the CTTC coordinates such Centers in 10 communities around the Cusco area (Centro de Textiles Tradicionales Del Cusco n.d.). They all continue to promote and protect the region’s cultural heritage: women continue weaving using the same traditional techniques that have been practiced for generations, and even young girls can take weekend classes to learn how to weave traditionally. At the CTTC in Chinchero, a total of 42 women and 46 children participate and weave traditionally. The location in Chinchero has been called “the best artisan workshop in town” by Lonely Planet (Chinchero Attractions: Centro de Textiles Tradicionales n.d.).

However, as more Textile Centers opened to capitalize on tourist demand, they became more focused on the business side of weaving, rather than on producing high-quality handmade textiles. In this way, CTTC is now the exception rather than the rule; it is practically the only Textile Center that values preserving tradition over simply selling products and making a profit.

The majority of the Textile Centers followed an organizational model of a business association. An owner decides to open up his or her house to sell *artesanías* to tourists and will then contact women to be *socias* (“partners”) and sell their products in the Center. Typically, each *socia* earns what she sells from her merchandise at her post in the Center. The *dueño* (“owner”) may collect compensation through a percentage of sales or through other services such as cooking or cleaning in the Center. However, no one ever directly told me that she pays the *dueño*. Instead, their definition of an association seemed to be fluid and revolve more around mutual cooperation rather than strict economic compensation. The women who are invited to work at a Center are oftentimes friends or relatives and thus gain employment through their social connections. When tourism is low, women will often rotate between Centers, taking their products to another location in the hopes of making more sales.

The spatial layout of the Textile Centers is also remarkably similar. The entrance leads to an open patio of either dirt, pebbles, or grass surrounded by a perimeter of tables of merchandise (See Figure 6). Some shade is provided by roofs made of aluminum boards covered with dried straw—an aesthetic reference to traditional *paja* (“straw”) roofs but structurally reinforced with modern materials. Every Textile Center includes at least one demonstration area that consists of wooden benches, haphazardly covered with sheep’s wool for added warmth and comfort. These benches face an adobe stove and table with all the natural dyes laid out in baskets. In another grassy area sits a back-strap loom, fastened to a wooden pole, with a permanently unfinished textile for the



Figure 6. *Centro Textil Awana Llaqta Tocapu*. Includes demonstration areas for dying, warping, and weaving, surrounded by merchandise tables. Photo by author.

demonstration. The tables around the perimeter are covered in hundreds of *artesanía* products: hats, scarves, blankets, backpacks, pencils, headbands, gloves, dolls, keychains, llama figurines, *pantuflos* (“alpaca slippers”), and many other machine-made items that are identical to those sold all over Cusco and Lima. Many Centers also include llama and *cuy* pens for tourists’ amusement.

The vendors who work in Textile Centers selling their products are exclusively women. This is due to the traditional gender roles stipulating that women weave while men work in the *chakras* (“farms”). With the exception of a male *dueño* or a vendor’s young son—and the visiting tourists—the space of the Textile Center is completely occupied by women. In all of Chinchero there was only one man, Dalmesio, who sold textiles at the Sunday market and archaeological plaza. The rest of the vendors’ spouses worked in their farms or held administrative jobs. With ages ranging from mid-20s to mid-60s, the female vendors learned to weave from their mothers and grandmothers when they

were young girls. Most did not receive any advanced education; only one woman had studied hotel management and administration in university.

However, I found a generational difference with respect to education. All the women I spoke with who had children sent them to school. The female vendors remark they are not “*profesionales*” (“professionals”) but many hope that their children have the opportunity to receive an education and join a profession. For example, as one vendor Isabel explained, “*Si me gusta tejer. Porque con eso nos—mayormente nos ayudamos a que vayan a—a que estudian mis hijos*” (Yes I like to weave. Because it—basically it helps us so that—so that my children can study”). In this way, the vendors see their jobs selling at Textile Centers as an economic means to provide a better opportunity for their children. They work to make a living, not to preserve weaving traditions. They value education for their children in the hopes of providing a more stable or more lucrative professional career. This raises the question of who will work in the Textile Centers in the next generation and whether the tradition of selling will be continued.

Although the young girls came to work at the Centers after school—or to pass the time during the national teachers’ strike⁷—they wanted to become professionals, not vendors like their mothers. A few of the children themselves expressed interest in becoming doctors, nurses, psychologists, and environmental activists. Others whined about having to wear the *traje típico* while at the Center. Many of the children—young girls and boys—contribute economically to their family by selling keychains and *pulseras* (“bracelets”) on the streets or offering to narrate the history of Chinchero to passing tourists. Indeed, selling to tourists is engrained in their lifestyles; at one Center, a six-year-old boy was explaining the prices of some llama figurines to me when he proudly declared “*te lo regalo en 12 soles, eso es mi última oferta*” (“I will give it to you for 12 *soles* [USD\$4], that is my final

⁷ During my fieldwork, the SUTEP was staging a national teachers’ strike to demand higher wages. The strike ultimately lasted over 60 days.

offer”). Although the vendors’ children had grown up surrounded by weaving designs and are extremely accustomed to selling *artesanías* to tourists, many of them aspire to attain a professional career, in contrast to their vendor mothers or farmer fathers. For the children, weaving is a familiar activity but not a career; for the women, weaving is an economic means to provide for their family.

Performing Tradition for Tourist Demand

The deliberate spatial relocation of weaving into the Textile Centers in Chinchero has afforded a performative, commercialized quality to the weaving traditions. Given the national and international tourist audience, the women who work at the Textile Centers must offer memorable demonstrations of weaving techniques to those unfamiliar with it. The end goal is economic—to sell woven or machine-made products to make a profit. Across Chinchero, all the Textile Centers provided identical demonstrations of the weaving process and the vendors wear identical clothing. Even the YouTube online videos of the demonstration present the same performed culture; a simple search for “Chinchero weaving” yields almost 1,500 videos of identical demonstrations (Chinchero Textile Weaving - YouTube Search 2017). These videos can be viewed by both prospective tourists abroad and locals in Chinchero who wish to open their own Textile Center.

The commercialization of weaving has also been studied by anthropologists in other areas of the Andes. On the Taquile Island in Lake Titicaca, Elayne Zorn observes the interrelated nature of “the commoditization of handmade cloth” and tourism (Zorn 2004:12). She argues that although commoditization does not inevitably lead to a destruction of local cultures, it does increase the pace of change (Ibid). While Taquilean women may not have as much time to weave due to new educational and work pursuits, the sales of woven textiles to tourists brings in both positive and negative effects. Zorn also makes an important clarification on tradition: just because the women are practicing techniques similar to during Inca times does not mean they are frozen in time (Zorn

2004:53). With my research in Chinchero, I similarly strive to avoid characterizing the women as living exactly the same as they did in the past. Instead, I illustrate how the women actively participate in capitalist markets, are agents in the commercializing of their weaving traditions, and cater their demonstrations to tourist demand to maximize a profit.

Tourism oftentimes revolves around a search for a break from tourists' daily lives and realities. In this vein, anthropologist Walter Little has explored how international tourism in Guatemala demands to see an authentic living past of the Maya people. He explains:

Guatemalan tourism is similar to living history museums, where culture is both constructed and negotiated by agents of the tourism industry, tourists, and hosts. Guatemalan tourism can be conceived as a borderzone that is changing, moving, being forgotten, and remembered. As presented in tourism brochures and guidebooks, Guatemala as a living history museum is utopic, but the tour can be full of ruptures in the fabric of this ideal. Instead of being timeless and pristine, culture is constructed, and tourism discourses merely maintain myths of order. (Little 2004:62)

The “living history museum” is constructed to directly fulfill tourist demands for a performance of a cultural other that perpetuates “myths of order” (Little 2004:62). Although Little conducted his fieldwork among Maya vendors in Guatemala, many of the same overarching characteristics of tourist demand still hold in Chinchero. Through costumes and hidden manufacturing, vendors present their handmade weaving traditions as unaffected by contemporary forces in order to perpetuate the desired narrative of timeless continuity. Within a tourist gaze, vendors describe the properties of the “Inca shampoo”; without such a gaze, they discuss which brand of shampoo leaves their hair the silkiest.

The demonstration given by the vendors at every Textile Center all follow identical scripts. Although most vendors only spoke Spanish and Quechua, at least one or two vendors at each Center could give the demonstration in English. First, the women invite the tourists sit on the benches and serve them *muña* (a type of mint) or coca tea while they start explaining the traditional

weaving process. They use the *sajta* root to clean the dirty sheep's wool, spin a portion of it onto the *pushka*, explain the different native plants used, and then stir some spun yarn into a pot with *cochinilla* to dye it red. Not only are the procedures identical in each Center, but so are the jokes: the *cochinilla* serves as a natural lipstick that has been proven to last up to a thousand kisses; the *sajta* Inca shampoo prevents grey hairs but once they have appeared then it is too late; and a bone tool used to adjust the yarn while weaving came from a tourist who did not buy anything. Tourists always laughed at these jokes at each demonstration, while for the vendors and for me the constant repetition resulted in the jokes' hollowness and banality.

Next the women escort the tourists over to the area of the grass where a woman sits at the back-strap loom straightening out the woven textile and tightening the strings. Once they point out the *loraypo* and other designs, the women encourage the tourists to browse their products on display and purchase some souvenirs. The entire demonstration routine normally lasts 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the size of the tourist group and enthusiasm of the vendors. Tourists do not usually stay much longer than that since their stop in Chinchero is one of many on their guided day trips around Cusco. They hurry to make their purchases before hopping back into their tour bus or taxi to proceed to the next archaeological site.

While the weaving steps and techniques presented to tourists are accurate representations of Chinchero weaving traditions, some of the explanations of woven designs' meanings are inaccurate. For example, the *ñawi awapa* design is called "the eyes of the princess" even though the direct translation is simply "eye border." With the *loraypo* design, vendors point out the two lakes of Chinchero, Huaypo and Piuray, although this may be an imposed interpretation. The *jakakuj* design is known to represent waves of an ocean, as the pattern comes from the Chimú culture (Callañaupa Alvarez 2012:111), but vendors ascribe a different meaning and say the curves represent the claws of the condor. The CTTC has helped recover multiple designs that had been lost or forgotten.

Tourists' search for cultural significance contributes to the trend of ascribing different presented meanings of certain designs. Tourists—as well as anthropologists—are more satisfied to hear what a design symbolizes, even if it is erroneous, than to hear that the design has no meaning. This invention of symbolism has also been observed at other tourist destinations. In Oaxaca, Mexico, for example, anthropologist Ronda Brulotte notes that what *alebrije* vendors do not remember or know about an object's meaning, they invent (Brulotte 2012:126). When travelling and purchasing souvenirs, tourists fervently search for symbolism, even if later on they do not remember an object's significance. The “handmade” label also has a lot of symbolic capital when selling to foreign tourists. Globally, vendors imbue their merchandise with social or symbolic meaning in order to gain income. In Chinchero, the ascription of new meanings to weaving designs underlines how vendors in Textile Centers carefully cater their demonstrations to tourist demands in order to uphold a narrative of continued tradition and to maximize their profits.

Another element of the copied and replicated model of the Textile Center is the *traje típico* worn by the female vendors. At work, women always dress identically: with their hair in thin braids, they wear red *montera* hats, white blouses with blue embroidery, red jackets, black *pollera* skirts, *chuspas*⁸ purses, and black rubber sandals. This outfit has been the traditional Chinchero style for a while; even photographs from the early 1900s depict similar clothing (See Figure 7). Some aspects of their outfit, including the thin braids and *pollera* skirts, trace back to pre-Columbian times. Even though men do not usually occupy the space of the Textile Center, they too have their own traditional clothing: a woven *poncho* and a red knitted *ch'ullu* hat with a long tail that hangs down the back. These types of *ch'ullu*, with their distinctive long tail and animal designs, are autochthonous to Chinchero.

⁸ *Chuspas* are little woven purses that were traditionally used for carrying coca leaves in the Andes. Now the vendors in Chinchero mostly use the bags to carry their cell phones and cash.



Figure 7. “Hilanderas de Chinchero, Cusco”
by Martín Chambi, 1932. Courtesy of the
Archivo Martín Chambi, Cusco, Peru.

Although the *traje típico* worn by the vendors is presented to tourists as their traditional, handmade clothing, the garments are manufactured. The clothing at each Textile Center is identical, as women purchase the outfits either from a local shop in Chinchero or Cusco that specializes in costumes. The clothing has become symbols of a traditional, frozen past. Even the Peruvian Ministry of Culture has encouraged the local populations to wear *traje típico* in an attempt to preserve the region’s cultural heritage (Garcia 2017). However, most of the women at the Textile Centers remove the outfit when they leave work. On multiple occasions when I came across a woman on her day off at a Center, she wore jeans and sweaters, much like myself. Thus although the external semblance of the *traje típico* evokes tradition and extended temporal continuity, tourists do not learn of the true (hi)story because the tourist gaze is interested in the exterior clothing, not the person

underneath (Zorn 2004:51). In this way, much of the historical and cultural meaning of the *traje típico* worn at the Textile Centers is lost at the expense of fulfilling a tourist demand for a constructed authentic aesthetic. Vendors consciously wear *traje típico* and imbue weaving patterns with meaning for tourist benefit, yet report that they still enjoy sharing their cultural knowledge with tourists.

Returning to Little's (2004) point about a "living history museum," the Textile Centers present to tourists a curated view of their cultural traditions and lifestyles. For example, tourists are excited to see women in their *traje típico* but they do not realize the outfits' colonial origins or see the women take them off when they leave work. The identical weaving demonstrations at the Textile Centers also emerge to fulfill the tourist demand for immersion in another temporal and cultural reality—however constructed or replicated. This does not necessarily imply that the women working at the Centers do not have agency. The women decide to work at the Centers for economic motives, and in order to maximize profit they cater to tourist demands for the authentic. In addition to the *artesanías* and handicrafts, vendors are also selling to tourists a certain performed authenticity. In the words of the owner of the *hospedaje* where I stayed, the women are telling tourists "así vivimos" ("this is how we live") instead of "así vivíamos" ("this is how we used to live"). The tourist gaze demands a shift towards the authentic, traditional past, and the women are some of the primary agents who fulfill the tourist demand.

Economic Competition

Due to the rapid proliferation of Textile Centers in the urban area of Chinchero, many of the vendors with whom I spoke expressed the issue of competition. Some vendors recounted that the number of Centers had doubled in the last year. Since the organization, spatial layout, costumes, and demonstrations of each Textile Center are identical, there is strong, direct competition between all of them. Furthermore, they are all competing for the same customer—tourists who pass by

Chincheró for rarely more than a couple of hours. The location of each Textile Center is important. Generally, Centers closer to the entrance to the archaeological center experience more tourist foot traffic between the ruins and the tour bus. Numerous other Centers are located on busy paved roads and easily visible to passing taxis and buses. Each block of the major paved roads was home to multiple Centers—two or three are often located directly next to or across the street from the other.

The most effective way that Textile Centers combated the steep economic competition is by working on commission with tour guides and tourist agencies. Through contacts with family or friends, the *dueños* at Textile Centers get in contact with guides and agencies in order to ensure tourists visit. To get a tour guide to agree to come to a certain Center, he or she is guaranteed a commission of sales brought in from the group. Many vendors—at Textile Centers as well as at the archaeological plaza—told me about the commission that tour guides receive, although no one cited a specific percentage. By working on commission, many Textile Centers offer products at higher prices than at the archaeological plaza. It was so crucial to have contact with an agency that two women I interviewed asked me directly if I knew how to put them in contact with an agency to do business. One of them, Ermenegilda, lamented that if only she had contact with an agency, she could finally have more tourist sales; without any contact she was barely making ends meet. As an extra incentive to agencies, vendors at a Center serve lunch, tea, and bottled soda to the tour guide and the bus driver while the tourists watch the demonstration. For this reason, all the Centers included a kitchen or dining room off to the side and slightly hidden from view. Providing a meal to the tour guide had the social, familiar guise of inviting a close friend to eat, when in reality it had an economic purpose.

Tourists who arrive in a group with a tour guide generally spend more money than individual tourists in Chincheró. From what I observed, the bulk of income afforded to a vendor at a Center comes from tourists arriving in a large group with a tour guide. The tour guide first brings his or her

group up to the archaeological ruins, and then, in the words of a vendor named Hilda, the tour guides hurry them “*como ovejas*” (“like sheep”) to the Textile Center so they can get their commission. By rushing a tourist group along and not permitting them to examine the *artesanías* sold in the archaeological plaza, the tour guide ensures that his or her group does not notice that items sold at the Textile Centers cost more than those at the plaza. Individual tourists or couples who arrive by taxi wander through the streets and the Centers longer, but do not necessarily purchase more at a Center. I noticed that individual tourists are more likely to wander around the archaeological plaza and make their purchases there. As a result, the tour guides are important agents in the *artesanía* and textile industry in Chinchero. They actively promote the narrative of authenticity and preserved weaving traditions at the Textile Centers since it is in their best personal economic interests to do so. By telling tourists that a certain Center has the best quality textiles or is the only one where they women still live traditionally like in the past, tour guides are playing into the tourist demand for the authentic while simultaneously lining their pockets with extra cash.

Commissions to tour guides at the Centers are generally hidden from view from the tourists in the group. Once all the tourists are back on the bus, hurried along to get to their next destination, the tour guide goes into the adjacent dining room with one or two of the female vendors, carrying a small woven purse full of bills. There, hidden even from my view, the women calculate how much had been sold and how much they owed to the tour guide. Then, the guide runs off to the bus, Inca Kola bottle in hand, and the bus races off. Consequently, tourists are not aware that with each purchase they continue to pay their tour guide. Even when I was a tourist visiting Chinchero for the first time with a tour guide four years ago, I did not notice if my guide received a commission or not. This pivotal moment in the business negotiation occurs in a private space so as not to reveal the complex economic forces at play. Economic relations and networks remain hidden behind a guise of tradition and close social ties.

After a tourist group leaves, then the female vendors at the Textile Centers openly coordinate finances. The same procedure occurred at each Center I observed. One woman opens a small colorful lined paper notebook and starts noting how much each vendor had sold. Called out by name, one by one the women respond with numbers—lower numbers in Quechua and higher numbers in Spanish. The amounts are scribbled in pen in the notebook. Out loud they calculate how much they paid the tour guide and how much they still owe the *dueño*. The tallies in the notebook look disorganized and hard to read, as they often flip between pink pages to calculate earnings from just one week. Any amount owed from one vendor to the other—if one woman lent an item to another to sell—is paid at this time in cash. Even though the commission payment to the tour guide is done in private, the women coordinate their finances freely in front of me. Since the tourists have already left, the vendors can complete their economic transaction openly. There is no more need to worry about rupturing the “living history museum” since the performance of commercialized tradition is over and the tourist gaze has disappeared. This juxtaposition—of commission payments in private spaces and vendor sales calculations in open spaces—points toward inherent power dynamics within the occult economic network of vendors, Textile Centers, and tourist agencies.

The vendors felt steep economic competition between Textile Centers this year in particular as a result of the low tourism. When I asked vendors how work was going, many of them lamented the decrease in tourism; they were only getting one or two groups a day, if any. Even though the winter months of May, June, and July in the dry season usually comprise the high months of tourism in the Cusco area, the tourist traffic better resembled that of the rainy season. Overall, tourism decreased in 2017. According to the Dirección Desconcentrada de Cultura de Cusco, tourist visits to Machu Picchu declined 4.5% from 2016 to 2017 (Neyra 2017a:n.p.). Vendors that I spoke with highlighted a few reasons to explain the decline in tourism. First, they attributed the decline of international tourism to the “*huaycos*” (“floods”) that occurred earlier in 2017 in northern Peru as a

result of the El Niño phenomenon.⁹ The female vendors explained to me that many people abroad who heard about “*inundaciones*” in Peru must have cancelled their tickets, not realizing that Cusco remained unaffected by the unusually heavy floods.

Another factor that was often brought up was that of the teacher strikes. When I first arrived to Chinchero, the national teachers’ union SUTEP initiated a national strike to demand a pay raise. The strike ultimately lasted over 60 days and paralyzed over 70% of public schools across Peru (Huelga de Maestros 2017). Furthermore, a collection of complaints joined together on July 12-13 for a regional strike in Cusco. On these two days, teachers, minors, and others hit the streets together across the Department of Cusco. They burned tires, swarmed the airport in Cusco, and dumped big rocks and boulders on the highways leading into and out of the city. On these two days, since cars could not exit or enter Cusco, the town of Chinchero was silent. All stores and Centers had their doors closed; not a single tourist van pulled up to the archaeological ruins and the streets were empty. As a result, many vendors lamented how the strikes were “*perjudicando a nosotros*,” (“harming us”) because tourists could not enter Chinchero, let alone visit the Textile Centers to purchase *artesanías*. Indeed, an editorial article in Lima’s newspaper *El Comercio* pointed out the irony that the protests were in favor of the airport but were ruining the plans of tourists’ currently in Cusco (Editorial: Paros Con Paradojas 2017). Walking around the town on the days of the regional strike, I realized just how dependent the town is on tourism; without it, Chinchero looks like a ghost town. In order to deal with the decreased tourism, many vendors moved from Center to Center in the hopes of securing a position at a Center with more contacts with agencies, more tourists, and more income. Towards the end of July, Isabel, who recently opened a Center in her house in the archaeological center, began to work at the Inca Tambo hotel in Urubamba because there were

⁹ The El Niño phenomenon, named because historically it often happened around Christmas, occurs every few years on the western coast of South America. Due to a warmer current at sea, it rains heavily on the coast of Peru causing massive inundations and floods.

simply not enough tourists visiting Chinchero. Overall, the strikes exacerbated the economic risks that the vendors faced working at the Textile Centers.

Despite the high competition between Textile Centers, however, I did not notice much innovation among vendors and the Centers. Perhaps the primary example of this creative hesitance is evident in the identical Textile Centers—where everything from spatial layouts, demonstration scripts, costumes, and merchandise are the same. There are opportunities to innovate design, structure, or interactions with tourists, but few of them are realized. Only at one Textile Center did a woman tell me they used to export their textiles until they lost communication with their contact abroad. Opening and maintaining a Center is expensive, so the people of Chinchero minimize their economic risk and replicate the model that they see is performing well. As subsistence farmers with restrained cash flows, the vendors cannot afford taking more risks by engaging in untested ventures.

However, as artists and weavers, the women working at the Textile Centers can be creative. They can combine different colors and designs to create unique woven textiles. This arena for creativity is hampered by the fact that many vendors now purchase machine-made textiles to sell, rather than design and weave them themselves. Those that do weave their own textiles experience what Antrosio and Colloredo-Mansfeld (2015) observe in artisan markets in Ecuador: rapid and prolific copying. As a result of the open space of market plazas and limited intellectual property laws, copying or “disloyal competition” are common among artisans but can also fuel more innovation (Antrosio and Colloredo-Mansfeld 2015:89,90). I noticed a similar phenomenon in Cusco. A vendor at a tourist shop started knitting and selling llama hats with loose strands of yarn resembling llama fur. Soon, other tourist shops even in nearby towns started selling similar renditions—copies—of the unique llama hat. Without legislation, vendors, weavers, and artisans, resort to copying when they see an item or business model that is bringing in tourists and increasing income. This explains why when one person opens a Textile Center, everyone wants one too. The

resulting environment of high economic competition requires vendors to cut costs in order to remain profitable.

Vendors, Not Weavers

Due to their values, actions, and settings, I maintain that the women who work at the Textile Centers in Chinchero are better classified as vendors, rather than weavers. For the most part, they focus their attention on economic matters, rather than on preserving weaving traditions of their cultural heritage. The women assess tourist demand and cater their service to what the tourists want to see—an authentic, traditional past that continues untouched into the present. The women aim to maximize profit by minimizing production costs of time, money, and labor. Synthetic yarn is cheaper to buy than sheep or alpaca wool; purchasing yarn balls that are already dyed and spun save hours of work; and buying a blanket already woven by someone else saves weeks of lower back- and eye-strain. By purchasing yarn and woven textiles either partially or fully completed, female vendors have more time and energy to focus on other matters.

Tourist demand for inexpensive souvenirs has also contributed to the trend towards using more synthetic fibers and manufactured textiles. Increasingly, tourists to Cusco and Chinchero are looking for cheap items; they do not want to spend more than a few *soles* on a souvenir. Also, tourists often arrive to barter and argue down prices in order to get a better deal. Given their limited budget, as well as their limited luggage space, many tourists look to purchase small items such as a hat, scarf, gloves, or a machine-made alpaca *chompa* (“sweater”). Since tourists do not generally spend more than 20 or 30 *soles* (USD\$6-9), vendors must respond to their economic demands and offer items that are cheap. In order to lower prices, one or more steps in the traditional weaving process must be skipped. Ultimately, I observed that tourists at the Textile Centers usually purchase machine-made items such as *ch’ullus*, hats, scarves, backpacks, and *chompas*, which are the same mass-produced items that can be found anywhere in Cusco or Lima. Very rarely did a tourist purchase a

handmade *manta* or table runner, the handmade weavings of Chinchero that are sold for anywhere between 200 to 400 *soles* (USD\$60-120). Although even these blankets are often machine-made to cut costs and then advertised to tourists as handmade.

Somewhat contradictorily, tourists search for cheap items but also yearn to purchase something handmade and of alpaca wool—or better yet, baby alpaca, which is the softest and most expensive camelid fiber. In order to bridge the gap between their incongruous desires, female vendors at the Textile Centers sell synthetic hats as made of alpaca and machine-made blankets as handmade. A few women I spoke with also lamented how tourists do not appreciate handmade textiles and are only in search of a bargain. Tourists want the symbolic value of something traditional and handmade, but do not appreciate the effort, time, and skill needed to produce such a textile—which require corresponding financial compensation. In response to tourist demand for cheap “handmade” items, vendors cut corners in the weaving process. They actively commercialize their weaving tradition in order to address changing and contradictory market demands.

Another more basic reason for the semantic qualification of “vendor” is revealed through the women’s day to day activities. From what I observed, the women who work at the Textile Centers spend most of the day simply relaxing, not weaving. With only a few exceptions, all the Centers were social spaces and hangout areas when tourists were not present—which was most of the time.¹⁰ As demonstrated in the opening anecdote of this chapter, women only scrambled to perform the steps of traditional weaving once tourists arrived. Without a tourist gaze, the female vendors simply pass the time—they chat, snack on *tarwi* (lupin beans), braid each other’s hair, check their cellphones, or even play volleyball. Occasionally the women, particularly older ones, weave little belts of a single design or knit crocheted hats with synthetic wool to pass the time. From my

¹⁰ Out of all the Textile Centers I visited during the five weeks I conducted fieldwork in Chinchero, only two of them ever had tourists present when I arrived.

observations, only very rarely would a woman sit at the back-strap loom and advance the traditional *lliklla* without the presence of tourists—and when they did, they usually only weaved for a brief period of time. Although the women know how to weave numerous designs and have been weaving since they were little girls, they are no longer weaving all day as a result of changing market and tourist demands. From the tourists' viewpoint, these women are weavers. From what I saw after tourists left, these women are better designated as vendors. This semantic shift is significant because they assume the role of a “weaver” in the presence of tourists, through costumes and performed demonstrations, in order to sell a product—an authentic past still alive today, a “living history museum” of cultural tradition.

The issue of tourist demands and disingenuous representations of synthetic, machine-made items as handmade alpaca ones, of past traditions as present livelihoods, ultimately revolves around an issue of conflicting values. It is difficult to expect the vendors at Textile Centers to value preserving their weaving traditions, their handmade woven designs, their cultural heritage, if tourists do not value it—economically or morally. In streamlining the weaving process, the vendors are more motivated by economic incentives—of maximizing profits—than by cultural incentives to preserve tradition, which generally do not result in remuneration. More compelling economic values also influence female vendors to perform the role of “weavers” for tourists, to don the *traje típico* every day, to repeat banal jokes during demonstrations. Strongly dictated by economic values, female vendors have modernized and commercialized Chinchero's weaving traditions in order to gain income and make a living and provide a better future for their children.

Clearly the women who work at the Textile Centers are extremely involved in the modern market economies of tourism and capitalism. They cater their demonstration, products, costumes, and presentations to the tourist demand to experience an authenticity that continues unaltered from the past into the present. Only within the tourist gaze are the female vendors seen as “weavers.” The

women are agents in utilizing their weaving traditions to make a profit, even if they are deceptive in their (re)presentation of their lifestyles and livelihoods to tourists. The female vendors at the Textile Centers not only perform a commercialized weaving tradition to satisfy tourist demands and make a profit; they have also actively commercialized the tradition.

In their book, Antrosio and Colloredo-Mansfeld refer to their observations of artisan creativity in Ecuador in altering traditional designs and styles. They summarize their findings:

We find neither blind adherence to tradition nor constant innovation, but people who must perpetually adjust and work skillfully with materials. In short, the turn to anthropological analysis and ethnographic fieldwork helps to dislodge some of these persistent dichotomies. (Antrosio and Colloredo-Mansfeld 2015:24)

Their observation is also a fitting explanation for the vendors in Chinchero who merge the traditional—weaving—with the modern—market demands. The women who work at the Textile Centers, selling to tourists and presenting their unchanged tradition as a continued authenticity, are inherently fusing these two “persistent dichotomies” of traditional and modern, backwards and forwards, past and present. In the space of the Textile Center, women utilize their weaving traditions in order to make an economic profit. They are active agents as they directly contribute to their families’ cash flow. Their job is to sell to tourists, to provide aesthetic and material products in response to the tourist demand for the authentic and traditional. With the exception of the CTTC, all the Centers in Chinchero purchase textiles woven by someone else or by a machine in a calculated economic effort to cut costs and maximize profits. It is not that the women have a disregard for their weaving traditions, but rather that they find more value in utilizing their heritage for economic gain given their risk exposure and specific tourist demand. Thus in the economic realm, vendors in Chinchero have successfully fused their weaving heritage with tourist market demands to create a performed “commercialized tradition” of weaving. In the next chapter, I will explore to what extent vendors’ conceptions of well-being are affected by modernizing forces.

CHAPTER III

SUMAQ KAWSAY AND WELL-BEING

A small group of tourists leaves the *Centro Textil Awana Llaqta Tocapu*, climbing back in their tour van toting multiple plastic bags bursting with souvenirs. The women begin re-folding the *chompa* alpaca sweaters they had tried to entice the tourists to purchase, returning them to the neatly organized piles of colorful merchandise. It is 10 AM and the bright sun has only just emerged to warm us after the chilly morning. As the women flip their *montera* hat upside down to shield their eyes, they meander across the grass over to the kitchen, gesturing for me to come along. All eleven of us sit around the long wooden table covered with a plastic tablecloth. “¿Has probado el plato típico de Chinchero, el *chiri uchu*?”¹¹ Marleny asked me, smiling; I shook my head no. Although I had only just finished breakfast, I could not refuse their generosity. Two women began passing out plates piled high with food: *cuy*,¹² chicken breasts, potatoes, *canchita* popcorn, squash fried dough, seaweed, pink sausage, fresh cheese, hot peppers, and tomato slices. As I struggle to cut my chicken with a fork, the other women laugh and explain “*el chiri uchu se come con las manos.*” They all start chatting in Quechua, too quickly for me to understand. Their boisterous laughter signals each joke and amusing story recounted. Although I cannot understand the words uttered from their lips, I perceive that these women, all close friends, enjoy each other’s company during the shared meal.

...

¹¹ *Chiri uchu* in Quechua means “cold pepper” and is the iconic typical dish from Cusco consumed for the Corpus Christi holiday. It dates back to Inca and colonial times, and consists of ingredients from both the highlands and jungle regions of Peru.

¹² *Cuy*, or guinea pig, is a staple in many Andean highland diets as it is a lean meat high in protein. Guinea pigs are kept in household pens and are frequently consumed either chargrilled or roasted on a stick. Many tourists who visit Cusco are simultaneous eager to try *cuy* and appalled by the commonplace consumption of what they consider a lovable pet.

The female vendors I describe in Chapter II all have certain understandings of what it means to live well. By presenting a performed authenticity to fulfill tourist demand, the vendors uphold economic values based on maximizing profits and gaining income to support their children's education. However, in addition to the economic values I observed, the vendors describe another value system based on community, reciprocity, and environmental harmony. Their descriptions of the Quechua term *sumaq kawsay*, "well-being," revolve around these concepts, which at times are discordant with their actions in the space of the Textile Center. In order to evaluate how the vendors think the airport would change their well-being and life satisfaction, addressed in Chapter IV, I first have to understand their definition of *sumaq kawsay*, their idealized vision of how the best possible life should be.

This Chapter presents the vendors' stated autochthonous conceptions of well-being. In my fieldwork methodologies, I incorporated two contrasting measurements of well-being: subjective understandings of the Quechua term *sumaq kawsay* as well as more objective, scaled ratings of life satisfaction. After presenting theories of well-being and problematizing research methods in distinct worldviews, I turn to my findings. The female vendors' ideas of what it means to live well are based on values of community, social and environmental harmony, and reciprocity. Overall, they are satisfied with their lives and believe they are still living by the principles of *sumaq kawsay*, at least for now. The temporary aspects of their responses allude to a larger uncertainty for what the future will bring in Chinchero.

Well-Being: Origins and Measuring Across Worldviews

The concept of well-being has a long history of studies across a variety of disciplines. The idea goes back to Aristotle, who in his work *Nicomachean Ethics* discusses the concepts of the good as the aim of action, virtue, pain and pleasure, and, most famously, *Eudaimonia*. This Greek term is

defined as an all-encompassing well-being, a long-term satisfaction, or authentic happiness; it exists in distinction to hedonic happiness, which refers to a more fleeting emotional state more characteristic of quotidian activities (Aristotle 2009). Since the time of Aristotle, a number of scholars in various disciplines have analyzed the concept of well-being and offered contrasting interpretations of what the term means. For example, philosopher and economist Erik Angner proposes the term “well-being simpliciter” to signify the broadest sense of well-being rather than in only one discipline or faction of life (Angner 2012). In contrast, international development scholar James Copestake defines well-being as “a state of being with others in society where (a) people’s basic needs are met, (b) where they can act effectively and meaningfully in pursuit of their goals, and (c) where they feel satisfied with their life” (Copestake 2008:3). In the realm of psychology, Daniel Kahneman makes the distinction that positive and negative subjective feelings are not necessarily opposites and that these feelings are affected by life aspirations and adaptive preferences (Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz 1999). These varying definitions of well-being, when taken together, allude to an overarching, broad state of existence characterized by an authentic satisfaction and by having the ability to reach one’s life goals.

In these definitions, well-being measures something subjective since each individual’s life goals revolve around their unique values of what it means to live well. Values include things of relative worth or merit from sociological, economic, and linguistic realms (Graeber 2001:1-2). While one individual may value making a profit, as in the economic realm, another may value maintaining strong family unity. These values can be influenced by outside factors such as religious doctrine, education, and life experiences, yet vary on individual levels. Another way to examine how values can vary is through the definition of that it means to live a good life. Anthropologist Edward Fischer has theorized that the “good life” concerns three factors: objective material concerns such as income, health, and physical security; subjective factors such as agency, fairness, dignity, and

meaningful life projects; and instrumental social elements such as opportunity structures, family, and community networks (Fischer 2014:210). Therefore, in addition to economic and social factors, what individuals value as meaningful, just, or ideal also impacts their evaluations of well-being.

Recent shifts have broadened the scope of measuring well-being to include a more holistic approach. In the 1980s, economist and philosopher Amartya Sen proposed the influential “capabilities approach” that defined economic development based on human capital development and the expansion of real freedom. According to this model, poverty is seen as the deprivation of capabilities, so economic growth must include more than simply increasing income (Sen 2000). Sen’s approach to development revolves around the three central concepts: functioning, the various things a person may value being or doing; capability, the freedom to enjoy various functionings; and agency, the ability to pursue goods that one values and has reason to value (Alkire and Deneulin 2009). The capabilities approach represents a more holistic view of development that responds to the traditional neoclassical economic models’ failure to eradicate poverty in developing countries. While Sen’s approach still originates within a Western economic viewpoint, it represents a step towards broader policy effectiveness since it aims to be applicable in diverse communities, cultures, and societies. Holistic elements inspired by Sen’s work have been institutionalized into the national development programs of the Andean nations of Ecuador and Bolivia.¹³

Anthropology also has much to offer for the study of well-being across the globe. Through long-term fieldwork and extended periods of study, anthropologists seek to understand cultures and societies different from their own either through ethnographic research or through the study of material culture, language, or biological remains. Bronislaw Malinowski declared the ultimate purpose of anthropology is to understand the point of view of those being studied (Malinowski

¹³ For a review of the concept of well-being in Ecuador’s development policies, see “Buen Vivir” by Domínguez, Caria, and León (2017). Bolivia’s development report for 2016-2020, “Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social en el Marco del Desarrollo Integral para Vivir Bien,” outlines how the state is guided by a focus on holistic well-being.

1936). While sociocultural anthropology has been “institutionally averse” to studying well-being, anthropologists such as Neil Thin have urged the discipline to do more to theorize on well-being in diverse cultural contexts (Thin 2009: 24). Contemporary anthropologists have begun to expand upon studies of well-being in a variety of contexts. Edward Fischer has written about the discipline’s unique ability to study the interplay between stated and revealed preferences, which illustrates how individuals’ conceptions of an ideal well-being differ from their lived realities (Fischer 2014). Arjun Appadurai has also explored many ideas relevant to the study of well-being, including the relation between modernity and the importance of the capability to aspire to lift people out of poverty (Appadurai 2013). Even though the discipline has only recently embraced the study of well-being, anthropology inherently has a lot to offer given its focus on cross-cultural understanding. In this way, my ethnographic fieldwork contributes to the growing literature of anthropological studies of well-being.

Since anthropologists must try to set aside their preconceptions and biases in order to achieve cross-cultural understanding, they are particularly well-positioned to impartially study different worldviews. Defined as a particular philosophy of life or conception of the world, a worldview varies greatly across different societies and affects what individuals in that particular society value and how they think. Worldviews are also affected by the histories, cultural traditions, and pasts of a given region. For example, David Carrasco’s similar term “cosmovision,” which refers to the Mesoamerican view of time and space in relation to ritualized representation, incorporates the ancient Aztec ideology of an interconnected cosmos in which past and present, land and sky, humans and gods unite at central temples during ritual activities (Carrasco 1998). In setting aside biases and openly studying other worldviews, anthropologists avoid disseminating an ethnocentric perspective. It is crucial to avoid ethnocentrism because it can objectify different cultures as an “other” for a specific self-fulfilling purpose. For example, Edward Said points out how the Occident

was a concept invented by the West to perpetuate cultural domination in Asia (Said 1979). In this way, studies of different cultures and societies have an inherent need for openness and understanding in order to avoid ethnocentric extrapolation.

Communities and cultures across the globe, including Chinchero, have specific worldviews and perspectives related to well-being that are distinct from Western beliefs. In his book *Life Within Limits*, Michael Jackson examines how in Sierra Leone well-being varies by person, place, time, and age, but is intimately related to having hope and a yearning for something more (Jackson 2011). In the South Asian religious and ethical tradition of Jainism, true self-realization is possible through escape, non-violence, and strict self-denial and dietary restrictions (Laidlaw 2008). These examples illustrate the extent of variability of definitions and conceptions of what it means to live and be well across social and cultural borders.

In order to properly understand these nuanced notions of well-being, anthropologists must study them from within the worldview and in the local vocabularies. Linear translations between languages do not always capture the full nuanced complexity of a term.¹⁴ Instead, unique terms must be studied and evaluated in their original language in order to preserve their denotations, connotations, and significance for the relevant culture. Many anthropologists and researchers have examined terms that signify concepts similar to “well-being” in English. Anthropologist Beth Conklin explains how for the Wari’ in the Brazilian Amazon, well-being is conceived of as the collective health of the entire community rather than on an individual scale; their term closest to well-being is *hwara opa’*, which signifies health, vitality, or the strength that enables productive work (Conklin 2015). In Japanese, the corresponding term is *ikigai*, which means “that which makes one’s life worth living” and as a result can denote different values, people, or causes for each individual

¹⁴ Numerous languages have terms that have no direct translation into other languages. Psychologist Tim Lomas’ Positive Lexicography Project, available online, provides a comprehensive list of such untranslatable terms in 87 languages. See www.drtilomas.com/lexicography for more information.

(Mathews 2009). In the Peruvian Amazon, the Ashaninka people of the Bajo Urubamba River use the term *kametsa asaiki*, meaning to live well, beautifully, or peacefully (Sarmiento-Barletti 2015). In order to better understand the concept's untranslatable nuances, I used the Quechua word in conducting my interviews. After reviewing my research methodologies, I will let the women I interviewed define *sumaq kawsay* in the subsequent sections.

Research Methods: Subjective and Objective Measures of Well-Being

In order to approach holistic understandings of weavers' livelihoods, a few methods are necessary to measure their subjective and objective well-being. Subjective well-being is based on individuals' explanations of values and qualitative perspective of what it means to live well and whether they think they are living well. To measure this, I asked the female vendors what they understood by the Quechua term *sumaq kawsay* (“¿Qué se entiende por este término?”) and how they would describe such a life (“¿Cómo describiría una vida así, *sumaq kawsay*?”). As a result of my limited Quechua language abilities, I conducted my interviews in Spanish. Nevertheless, I used the term in Quechua in my questions in order to better approximate my understandings to their own worldview and value systems. Since subjective well-being depends on culture, it is vital to strive for an emic and post-hoc methodology (Yamamoto, Feijoo, and Lazarte 2008). In order to gauge their opinions on the impact of the new airport plans, I also asked them if they thought they were living “*así, sumaq kawsay*” (“in this way, *sumaq kawsay*”).

On the other hand, objective well-being can be quantified numerically. As a result, it can be more convenient for comparisons among large collections of response data. For example, Cantril's ladder rates an individual's happiness on a scale of 1 to 10, as if on steps on a ladder, with 10 as the happiest and 1 as the least happy. In my research, I used a Cantril's ladder-type question to measure life satisfaction. I use the term “life satisfaction” rather than “happiness” because it more accurately

alludes to an all-encompassing, long-term sentiment of *Eudaimonia* rather than a fleeting, daily emotion of happiness. In this way, although distinct from well-being, the term “life satisfaction” alludes to the same notion, the same comprehensive evaluation of one’s whole life. In my fieldwork, I asked vendors to rate their life satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10 (*“En una escala de 1 a 10, ¿cómo calificaría su satisfacción con su vida?”*). If they asked me to clarify in which domain—at home, at work, or in the community—I instructed them to give one overall score. Next I asked them to explain why they chose the number they did. This follow-up question helped ensure the women understood my question and had thought through their answer.

These two interview questions, which used subjective and objective measurements of well-being, targeted their conceptions of *Eudaimonia* and overall life satisfaction. Over the course of the five weeks, I complemented their interview responses with my ethnographic observations of their actions, dialogues, and daily lives. Participant observation enriched my findings as I spent a lot of time with the weavers and vendors in the Textile Centers and in the archaeological plaza. There, I participated in the same activities as the vendors: we wove thin *jákima*¹⁵ belts and bracelets; we chatted and made jokes; we shared meals and snacks; we listened to music on their cellphones; and we waited for tourist groups to arrive. In each of these activities, I observed and later wrote fieldnotes about how they filled the hours spent waiting for tourists, what kinds of things they talked about, and the economic and social dynamics in the Textile Centers. My observations helped corroborate their interview responses.

Although the methods of ethnography afford an intimate perspective of local life for the researcher, it is important to note that the ethnographer remains an outside body. As such, it is

¹⁵ *Jákima* belts are thin woven strips about one to two centimeters in width that present one woven design. They are the first way young girls, and myself, learn to weave certain designs after learning to make smaller bracelets. Once a weaver has mastered a *jákima* of a certain design, she can move on to thicker belts or blankets with multiple woven designs.

impossible to gain a complete understanding of what is going on in the minds of the local vendors and weavers, no matter how long is spent interviewing, participating, and observing. As anthropologist Pablo Garcia noted of his research in Chinchero, anthropological fieldwork is full of “misunderstandings, inequalities, and imbalances” between the observer and the observed, between the researcher and the subject (Garcia 2015:13). In my own fieldwork I also noted these power imbalances. I attempted to circumvent their problematic implications by instead striving for the co-creation of knowledge. Overall I based my understandings of their lives, aspirations, and conceptions of well-being through what they themselves told me in their own words.

Linguistic and Historical Origins of *Sumaq Kawsay*

The dictionary definition of *sumaq kawsay* is similar to “to live well” and “well-being.” When defined literally, *sumaq* is an adjective that means “good, pretty, kind, delicious, tasty” and *kawsay* is a noun meaning “life, health” as well as a verb meaning “to live” (Hornberger S. and Hornberger 2013:108; 38). Beyond these simple linguistic denotations, the term presents a wide range of interpretations (Lechón 2017:156). Scholars have interpreted *sumaq kawsay* to mean “*nombre desnudo*” (“bare noun”), “*palabra usurpada*” (“usurped word”), “*utopia en construcción*” (“utopia in construction”), “*tradición inventada*” (“invented tradition”), and “*fenómeno social*” (“social phenomenon”) (Hidalgo-Capitán et al. 2012; Kowii et al. 2014; Acosta 2010; Viola Recasens 2014; Cubillo-Guevara and Hidalgo-Capitán 2015:1). These diverse interpretations point towards the open and perhaps vague nature of the term.

The Quechua term *sumaq kawsay* and its equivalent in Bolivian Aymara, *sumaq qamaña*, have been criticized over their linguistic origins and significances. Anthropologist Rubén Darío Chambi Mayta reveals that the term’s historical-political origins rest in the Latin American Left after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Chambi Mayta 2017:101). At this point the Left identified indigenous peoples as

the new actors of an alternative capitalist model because they were seen as uncontaminated by the market (Ibid). Since its origin, the term *sumaq kawsay* has been situated in opposition to capitalism, an observation that has important implications for understanding the economic well-being of vendors in Chinchero. Another critique of the term points to its sociocultural origins in *indigenismo*, a 20th-century political, cultural, and literary movement in Peru and other Latin American countries. The movement sought to valorize indigenous populations in the face of external exploitation and to place the issue of the “*indio*” at the center of modern political debate. The concept of living well—“*buen vivir*” in Spanish—emerged in the 1990s out of workshops held by a group of intellectuals¹⁶ in La Paz (Bold 2017:114). In this way, the term did not emerge in an autochthonous way from the language speakers themselves. Rather, it was imposed upon their language and livelihoods by an outside urban group from different social, economic, educational, ethnic, and racial classes.

Consequently, the Quechua term *sumaq kawsay*, along with the Spanish “*buen vivir*,” have been criticized to be what historian Eric Hobsbawm has called an “invented tradition” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992). In the neighboring Andean country of Ecuador, *buen vivir* can be viewed as an “empty signifier” that was co-opted by the Citizens’ Revolution (Domínguez, Caria, and León 2017). Despite the dubious, external origin of the term, it has begun to embody many economic and political efforts aimed at improving the lives of those to whom the term is believed to have belonged. Furthermore, although the term may have been invented externally, both of the words *sumaq* and *kawsay* form part of the quotidian lexicon of Quechua. The term was thus constructed using language elements, meaning that native Quechua-speakers are able to understand and define it based on its lexical components. Furthermore, as my interview findings will demonstrate subsequently, the vendors in Chinchero have composed their own individual understandings of what

¹⁶ The group of intellectuals included Simon Yampara, Javier Medina, Dominique Temple, and Jacqueline Michaux.

sumaq kawsay means. Although the term originated as an empty signifier, the vendors have filled it with their own meaning.

Another critique of the term *sumaq kawsay* points to the perpetuation of dichotomies. These historical, spatial, and racial separations include the colonizer/colonized, Western/traditional, white/indigenous, urban/rural, and Lima/Cusco. In my research, I do not view *sumaq kawsay* as in dichotomous opposition to capitalist development. Instead, the vendors synthesize elements of their economic activities with what they think it means to live well. As discussed in Chapter II, the vendors are active participants in market economies and capitalism is not something foreign to their daily lives. Additionally, my comprehension of the term *sumaq kawsay* comes from the weavers and vendors themselves. I did not explain to them what the term meant, but rather let them describe it in their own words. The definition of the term was not imposed upon them, but rather the vendors themselves had agency in elaborating their own definitions. As will be covered subsequently, many of the main elements of the term's meaning reflect longstanding Andean values and concepts mixed with some economic values. To perpetuate a binary of urban/rural is to deny the rich mixing of ideals, values, and experiences that are the reality in much of the Andes.

Female Vendors' Understandings of *Sumaq Kawsay*

Given the problematic origins of the term *sumaq kawsay*, I let the women themselves define the term and explain its connotations and denotations. In my research, I asked “¿*Qué se entiende por el término?*” to a total of 42 female vendors selling at Textile Centers, the archaeological plaza, and the Sunday market. All of their responses highlighted numerous aspects and values in common. Their basic definitions were similar to the direct translation of the term: “*vivir bien*,” “*vivir bonito*,” “*buena vivencia*,” and “*vivir tranquilo*.” Each of these simple definitions, when taken together, allude to a concept of “to live well, prettily, and peacefully.” Other popular qualifiers highlighted the

importance of living “*en unión*,” “*en paz*,” and “*en armonía*” (“in unity,” “in peace,” and “in harmony”). Although I conducted my interviews in Spanish, vendors provided explanations in both Spanish and Quechua. Some vendors expanded upon their definitions with Quechua adjectives such as “*munay kawsay*” (“lovely life”) and “*allin kawsay*” (“happy life”). From their explanations both in Spanish and Quechua, their collective definition of *sumaq kawsay* preliminarily revolves around the same concepts of living well and happily as the English term “well-being.”

One vendor provided a popular Andean refrain in her definition. Antonia, the owner at *Centro Textil Llimpikuna* near the entrance to the archaeological complex, described the basic pillars of how to live *sumaq kawsay* as “*ama qilla, ama llulla, ama sua*” (“do not be lazy, do not lie, do not steal”). She was the only vendor to provide a definition based on negative stipulations. This three-pronged saying is recognized and can be heard across the Andes, from Bolivia to Ecuador (Chambi Mayta 2017:101; Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002:637). Antonia’s response contains what Ecuadorian anthropologists and lawyers call the “three basic principles of Quechua justice and culture” (Lema et al. 2000:20). In his 16th-century account of Inca life, *Comentarios Reales*, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega explained how the Inca rulers imposed these three laws on its citizens as a means of harsh discipline (Vega 2009). In this way, Antonia’s response cites rules for acceptable social behavior in a community. Antonia understands *sumaq kawsay* through communal social standards encoded in another popular Quechua phrase.

Beyond the simple definition of the term, all the vendors I interviewed highlighted a common theme of community as an important element of *sumaq kawsay*. Numerous vendors supplemented their definitions of “to live well” with the qualifiers “*entre familiares, entre vecinos*” (“among family, among neighbors”) and “*en familia*” (“in the family”). For them it was not enough to live well alone; *sumaq kawsay* depended on happiness and wellness achieved with others—both family and community members. Indeed, when they questioned me about myself, a female

researcher travelling alone, they always asked whether my mother and father were still alive and well. In their minds, a big part of my well-being revolved around my parents' well-being back home. It was crucial for every individual to “*llevarse bien con todos*” (“get along with everyone”). One woman provided the definition “*una convivencia buena*” (“a good coexistence”), which uses the prefix “con-” to denote a sense of community and interpersonal relations. To further highlight this fact, many of them also responded to my question in the plural tense, rather than the singular tense. They stated that the term means “*que vivamos en armonía*” (“may we live in harmony”), “*no peleamos con vecino*” (“we do not fight with our neighbors”), “*vivimos bien, nosotros en armonía, no peleamos, no discutimos*” (“we live well, all of us in harmony, we do not fight, we do not argue”). From the grammatical and syntactical elements of their responses, it is evident that *sumaq kawsay* revolves around peaceful existence in the community and among a plurality of people. Some respondents also highlighted the importance of living in harmony with the environment, thus extending the understanding of community to include nature as well as people. In English and within a Western worldview, well-being often revolves around an individual's happiness and satisfaction; this individuality directly contrasts with the importance of a plural and communal well-being that the female vendors explained.

Continuing with the strong values of community, many vendors also highlighted reciprocity as another important feature of *sumaq kawsay*. Reciprocity is the notion that someone who performs a service for another must be compensated with another service in return. These exchanges represent a central part of intimate relations that tie together many Andean communities in both Peru and Bolivia (Bold 2017:115). Marleny, the director of *Centro Textil Awana Llaqta Tocaapu*, also described the importance of reciprocity when she stated “*hoy día por ti y mañana por mí*” (“today by you, tomorrow by me”). The most common example of these obligations revolved around food and products from one's *chakra*. By sharing crops between family farms, community members can

diversify their diet at the same time as they strengthen communal ties at social events such as marriages and birthday celebrations. Dalmesio, the only man who sold *artesanías* in the archaeological plaza and in the Sunday market, explained the importance of *ayni* and *mink'a*. These Quechua terms refer to two distinct forms of labor reciprocity that have been central components of community life in the region since before the time of the Inca. *Ayni* means “cooperative labor” and refers to a relation of equal value between community members. *Mink'a* or “reciprocal arrangement” refers to a communal obligation in which every member had to contribute. A few respondents also used the Spanish verb “*compartir*” (“to share”) to reflect the importance of communal relations. For them, it was important to share both with those inside and outside of the community of Chinchero. They enjoyed sharing ideas and conversations with tourists who visited their Textile Centers, as well as sharing labor and work obligations with local neighbors. This was a central parts of the female vendors’ conceptions of what it means to live well, to live *sumaq kawsay* among their communities.

Here it is important to note the relation between health and well-being. In many Western definitions of well-being, health is a significant factor. Some international measures revolve around access to health care as a proxy for development and well-being. For example, the UNDP’s Multidimensional Poverty Index calculates a score using three factors: health, including nutrition and child mortality; education; and standard of living (Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) | Human Development Reports n.d.). However, no vendor whom I interviewed mentioned health (“*salud*”) as important to her conception of *sumaq kawsay*. This trend could be a result of the relative healthiness of the population I observed during my fieldwork. Despite the high altitude and freezing temperatures at night, the vendors only suffered from the occasional cold. It could also reflect different local understandings of what it means to be healthy. The only references to health I observed in Chinchero were local pharmacies offering pregnancy tests (“*exam de embarazo*”) on their printed red signs. Numerous women I met who were in their mid-20s, around my age, already had

children; most had their first child at 18 or 19 years old. The topic of reproductive health represents another potential area of investigation in Chinchero, one beyond the scope of my thesis.

After the women explained what they understood by the concept of *sumaq kawsay*, I asked them whether they thought they were currently living according to the values and standards they just outlined (“¿Usted piensa que está viviendo así, *sumaq kawsay*?”). A few of the vendors wanted me to clarify whether I was asking about their lives in the spheres of family, work, or community as a whole. Given my research focus on an overarching *Eudaimonia* and well-being, I clarified I was asking about their overall well-being, not confined to any one sphere at home or at work. Of the 39 women I asked, the vast majority of them replied affirmatively (82%) that they were living according to the values expressed by the concept *sumaq kawsay*. The main explanations of their affirmative answers came from family matters. They said they live happily in unity with their family (“*somos bien unidos*”) without problems or arguments (“*siempre sin ningún problema*”). Others mentioned pride in the professional achievements of their grown children (“*ya tengo ya grandes hijos*”) as well as getting along well with their children. Four women responded that they live well according to *sumaq kawsay* only sometimes or in certain contexts (10% of sample size). When talking specifically about in work spheres, the vendors hesitated the most to affirm they were living well. These vendors explained the economic constraints of decreased tourism at the Textile Centers, citing that some days go poorly and they do not make many sales (“*días que nos va mal*”). One vendor, Ermenegilda, explained that “*solamente cuando no hay turista no más estamos tristes, nada más*” (“only when there are no tourists are we sad, that’s all”). This expressed sadness when tourists do not visit is not only because of decreased sales and economic income, but also because of the emotional effects of waiting all day for a visitor.

A few women also explained how recent changes in Chinchero have affected whether they are living *sumaq kawsay*. Climactic changes and odd weather patterns threatened their livelihoods and ability to sustain themselves from the crops of their *chakras*. Other modernizing changes such as

increased cell phone and internet usage posed a threat to communal ties as well. For example, Marleny once lamented “*el internet ha llegado como una plaga*” (“the internet has arrived like the plague”) when her son left the dinner table to use the computer. When I asked vendors whether they thought they were living well, I was struck by the tone of uncertainty for the future. Some vendors were unsure of what would happen later, saying that they are living well “*hasta el momento*” (“until now”) and “*hasta ahora seguimos manteniendo*” (“up until now we continue to maintain”). The temporal aspect of their responses highlights how currently they are still content with their lives and continue to live by the values of *sumaq kawsay*, but they are not as sure how life will change in the future. Chapter IV will further explore how the conflation of modernizing changes and the arrival of the new Chinchero International Airport affects the vendors’ uncertain perspectives of the future.

One woman’s thorough explanation of *sumaq kawsay* highlighted each of the principal themes of reciprocity, community, and uncertainty for the future. Isabel recently opened a Textile Center in her house in the archaeological center, after having worked in other Centers previously. When I asked her what she understood from the term, she responded:

De este término, sumaq kawsay, se puede entender, no... que vivamos en armonía, ¿no? En armonía. Sumaq kawsay así es para nosotros, no, no peleamos; sí no, no peleamos con vecino. Vivimos junto. Cuando uno tiene un día especial o un cumpleaños, invites a tu vecino a una comida, a la vecina, al vecino. Igual ellos tienen algún compromiso, su cumpleaños, te invitan a ti también. Así. Así es lo que vivimos en la vecindad. Siempre. Un navidad nos alcanzamos—yo cocino esto, ella alcanza, yo cocino eso para compartir, así compartimos. Siempre. Cualquier compromiso que tiene, siempre nos alcanza la comida a los vecinos. Pero poco a poco ni eso va a haber, se va a perder, poco a poco—yo pienso. Porque, con el tema del aeropuerto, ¿quién estaría a ser tu vecino? También no creo que ellos sigan los vecinos. ¿De dónde todavía vendrán la gente? Pienso que podría perder...

From this term, *sumaq kawsay*, it can be understood that... that we live in harmony, right? In harmony. *Sumaq kawsay* thus means for us that, that we don’t fight; yes, that we don’t fight with neighbors. We live together. When someone has a special day or a birthday, you invite your neighbor to a meal, both women and men. They too have an agreement, for their birthday they invite you too. This is what we live among our neighbors. Always. For Christmas too we make it work—I cook this, she makes that, I cook this to share, and in this way we share. Always.

Whatever agreement there is, we are always able to share a meal with the neighbors. But little by little not even this will last, it will be lost, little by little—I think. Because, with the issue of the airport, who will still be here to be your neighbor? Also I don't think that they will still be our neighbors. From where will the people come? I think this could be lost...

Isabel explains the importance of sharing with neighbors in order to live in harmony. In her description she also switches from first person plural (“*vivamos en armonía*”) to second person singular (“*invites a tu vecino*”). This grammatical tactic highlights the importance of a plurality of people—us and you as well, together. The social ties are strengthened primarily through food; through sharing crops from each family *chakra* farm, everyone shares resources for an important event or celebration. Isabel also mentions the reciprocal obligations (“*compromiso*”) that require neighbors to return the favor and uphold the agreement to share resources. Finally, she expresses uncertainty around the preservation and continuity of this custom. Isabel considers that gradually (“*poco a poco*”) it will be lost (“*se va a perder*”) as a result of the influx of new, foreign people with the construction of the airport. Overall, her description of *sumaq kawsay* is firmly grounded in the temporary present. The people of Chinchero live well now according to their communal reciprocal values, but the airport has the potential to cause the communal pillar of *sumaq kawsay* to crumble.

Life Satisfaction: A Contrastive Measure of Well-Being

In addition to the female vendors' descriptions of the meaning of *sumaq kawsay*, during my interviews I also asked them what they thought about their life satisfaction. To contrast their subjective understandings of living well, I asked them to rate their life satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10 to obtain a more objective measure of their overarching *Eudaimonia*. While my earlier interview question addresses a qualitative assessment of living well, this question focuses on a quantitative assessment that is more appropriate for aggregate data comparison. For this question about life satisfaction I interviewed 40 female respondents, 34 of whom gave numerical answers on the scale

of 1 to 10. Of these numerical responses, the mode was 8, the average 7.5, and the range of responses from 4 to 10. While no one told me they were completely dissatisfied with their lives (score of 1), six women reported they were completely satisfied (score of 10). The other six women who did not provide me with a numerical answer also varied in their reported satisfaction. Three simply gave me an affirmative answer (“*sí*”), one said she was not satisfied (“*no*”), and two reported mixed satisfactions (“*sí y no*”). Overall, their responses varied significantly between partially unsatisfied and completely satisfied, but principally clustered around a net positive satisfaction. The vendors’ average score (7.5) was significantly higher than the national average score in Peru (4.8) reported in the 2017 World Happiness Report (Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs 2017; Ortiz-Ospina and Roser 2017). This incredible difference in reported life satisfaction indicates that the case of vendors in Chinchero is unique and warrants an in-depth examination of the reasons behind their scores.

In their explanations of their ratings, the vendors I interviewed highlighted a few common factors that affected their scores both negatively and positively. One of the most commonly-stated positive factors affecting their life satisfaction was a lack of social and environmental problems in Chinchero. Many emphasized how life in Chinchero is safe, “*libre*” (“free”) and “*tranquilo*” (“calm”). They talked about being able to let their children play outside in the streets and walk to school alone. They praised the fact that their town was free from “*drogadición*” (“drug addiction”), “*delincuencia*” (“crime”), and “*robo*” (“robbery”). These social problems were commonly associated with urban life they hear about on the television and radio. Indeed, many female vendors contrasted life in Chinchero with the dangers and stresses of life in the large metropolitan centers of Cusco and Lima. Numerous women also mentioned the lack of “*contaminación*” (“pollution”) in Chinchero, praising the clean air and relative absence of automobile traffic. The strong importance of these positive factors—of the lack of social and environmental problems—shows how these vendors’ life satisfaction is deeply rooted in their calm, rural, non-urban environment.

Another commonly-stated positive factor revolved around the educational and professional success of the vendors' children. For example, Isabel expressed satisfaction that with her job selling *artesanías* she is able to “*sacar adelante a mi familia*” (“have my family get ahead”). Another vendor at a Textile Center, Nieves, told me she was proud of her children who are all grown up and moved back to Chinchero after working in Lima. Victoria, who sells at the Sunday market, also echoed this pride, saying “*estoy orgullosa de que mis hijos han estudiado, que hemos hecho algo, sí, trabajando como sea porque nosotros somos comerciantes*” (“I am proud that my children have studied, that we have become something, yes, working however we can because we are vendors”). This pride in the achievement of their children not only comes from their strong values on the family unit. It also comes from their ability to economically support their children in attaining more professional opportunities, which they had not achieved. In this way, many of the vendors did not think their jobs selling to tourists were as respectable as their children's professional occupations as lawyers, teachers, and nurses. While numerous women mentioned their pride in the educational and professional attainment of their children, they spoke about it in the singular tense. This grammatical shift from how they talked about communal *sumaq kawsay* shows that they think about personal economic gain and family occupational opportunities on individual terms.

In contrast to the positive factors of their children's educational attainment and the absence of social and environmental problems, many female vendors also pointed to a variety of negative factors affecting their life satisfaction scores. The primary justification for not rating themselves as “completely satisfied” revolved around quotidian limitations stemming from an economic uncertainty. Many vendors said they are satisfied but of course nothing ever goes perfectly; problems can always arise within the family or with bad harvests in their *chakra*. With respect to their farming activities, a few vendors mentioned the changes in weather patterns as negatively affecting their life satisfaction. Yavana, a vendor in the archaeological plaza, explained how “*el medio ambiente está*

cambiando bastante” (“the climate is changing a lot”). She said in the winter months of June and July it should freeze at night with clear skies, but this year the weather was very cloudy with moderate to warm temperatures. Since the farmers are greatly affected by environmental fluctuations, vendors who depend on crops for sustenance qualify their satisfaction response to include these risks.

Other negative factors consisted of mundane, local issues. One such factor that many vendors mentioned was the national teacher’s strike. They were frustrated that their children were not going to school for weeks and that the strike was also negatively impacting the number of tourist visits to Chinchero. Contrastingly, only one vendor I interviewed mentioned a lack of infrastructure as affecting her life satisfaction; Pamela suggested better communication networks and a medical hospital would improve her life satisfaction in Chinchero. With the exception of this mention of infrastructure, the stated negative factors are based on temporary time scales. This temporary quality is incongruent with the fact that life satisfaction rankings avoid measuring a temporary, hedonic emotional state.

However, I argue that the negative factors they mention are indicative of a larger environment of economic uncertainty. As farmers and vendors, these women are exposed to high risks involved with changing weather patterns and fluctuating tourist flows. Their daily experiences dealing with economic and environmental risks prevented numerous vendors from responding with complete satisfaction. Although they may energetically affirm they are living *sumaq kawsay*, they are not completely satisfied because of the persistent possibility for economic adversity.

When the vendors explained their life satisfaction scores, many of them mentioned how economic factors come into play with their satisfaction on an individual level. Although some women mentioned the low tourism levels during the normally high season as a reason contributing to their dissatisfaction, others established a dichotomy between economic gain and their sentiments of satisfaction. Sapayra, a vendor at a *Centro Textil Illary*, clearly stated “*el dinero no es mucho para mí*

hacerme feliz” (“money isn’t very important to make me happy”). For Sapayra, who rated her life satisfaction with a score of 10, her happiness did not depend on how much money she earned from selling to tourists. Her use of the singular tense illustrates the individual nature of economic values, in contrast to plural communal values. Another vendor in the archaeological plaza, Isabel, made a distinction between her job and her life satisfaction. She explained “*no es que es buen negocio... más que todo es por el ambiente*” (“it’s not that this is a good business... more than anything it’s because of the environment”). She explicitly noted that economic gain was not as important as the social and environmental setting of Chinchero in affecting her score. This dichotomy between having money and having happiness reflected the communal, social elements of *sumaq kawsay* they described earlier.

The distinction between money and happiness also revolves around the possession of land. One vendor named Rumiñawi clearly told me “*no nos falta nada*” (“we don’t lack anything”) and “*no tenemos plata pero tenemos comida de la chakra*” (“we don’t have money but we have food from the farm”). Her statement illustrates how even though they are in poverty, their self-sufficient farming practices make them less dependent on capital income in order to eat. Rumiñawi’s score of 8 reflects how for her, money is not as crucial to live well as living in harmony with the land she cultivates. Vendors’ economic independence, their freedom from worrying over capital income, comes directly from the ownership of farmland and the ability to harvest food. For them, land is wealth.

Overall, when explaining their life satisfaction scores the female vendors mentioned more economic factors than they did when they defined *sumaq kawsay*. A few vendors specifically mentioned financial capital as something that was not crucial to their life satisfaction. Although their economic activities revealed they were concerned with maximizing income at the Centers, most vendors denied that money made them satisfied. Instead, vendors’ explanations continued to revolve around social and environmental factors. Community, tranquility, their children’s professional

opportunities, and an absence of social problems in Chinchero formed the basis of vendors' high life satisfaction scores.

Living Well in Chinchero?

There are many ways to measure well-being. Measurements can stem from a Western worldview with economic measures of development or from other value systems revolving around social ideals. Evaluations can be either objective, as with a Cantril's ladder scale of 1 to 10, or subjective, as with a qualitative description of the lived ideal. A combination of methods is crucial in order to synthesize contrasting responses into a unified whole. Also important is a culturally- and linguistically-relevant evaluation catered to the population being surveyed. This allows for a co-created, more emic perspective from within their worldview, rather than from an external, imposed standpoint. Using the tools afforded from the discipline of anthropology, I measured the female vendor's well-being through such a lens.

My findings on *sumaq kawsay* descriptions and life satisfaction scores reveal many common themes of what it means to live well. In their definitions of the Quechua term, the vendors stressed the importance of community, reciprocity, and harmony. For them, *sumaq kawsay* was not an individual state but rather dependent on the social relations with members of the family and the community. Another important aspect was environmental harmony; they wanted to live at peace with nature, particularly given their dependence on their *chakra* farms for food. In terms of their life satisfaction, many vendors spoke about their pride in their children's educational attainment and the peaceful, safe lifestyle of Chinchero. They were content with the absence of violence, robberies, drug addiction, crime, and pollution, which they condemned as terrible aspects of urban life in Cusco and Lima. Overall, the vendors' ideal of a good life revolves around communal harmony and tranquility and their life satisfaction is significantly higher than national averages.

Vendors' responses revealed a few distinct differences between these two measurements of well-being. While vendors spoke in the plural tense when discussing *sumaq kawsay*, when they explained their life satisfaction scores they cited more individual matters such as income restraints or their children's education. Economic concerns were never raised when talking about *sumaq kawsay*, yet were occasionally mentioned when I asked about their life satisfaction. Although vendors explained that monetary capital was not the most important thing to make them happy, their ratings of life satisfaction were negatively influenced by risks stemming from the environment of economic uncertainty in Chinchero. In this way, their economic actions in the Textile Centers contrast greatly with their stated non-economic conceptions of *sumaq kawsay*; weaving was an economic means of providing profit but did not provide well-being. While their stated descriptions of *sumaq kawsay* did not revolve around capitalist forces, their actions and life satisfaction scores illustrate the reality that they live and participate in market-based economies.

Despite the slight differences in these two measurements, the majority of vendors with whom I spoke affirmed that they were still living “*así sumaq kawsay*” and that they were mostly satisfied with their lives. However, their visions on the future of their well-being remained uncertain. Many vendors qualified their responses with temporal restrictions: they were living well now but were unsure what would happen in the future. As a result of many modernizing influences, including the plans to build the Chinchero International Airport, vendors were not sure they could continue to live according to their communal values, till their farms, let their children and animals wander freely in the streets. In the subsequent Chapter, I will explore how the women think the airport plans will affect—and have already affected—their well-being in both economic and communal spheres.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHINCHERO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

One Saturday morning Walter agreed to take me for a walk up to the original town. As we ascended the steep hill, I was out of breath while he effortlessly narrated what life was like in Chinchero when he was a child. As we entered the archaeological complex, the paved roads turned into narrow paths of grass and dirt. We passed multiple adobe mud brick houses, some with smoke emanating out of the roof from breakfast preparations, others with collapsed tile roofs and overgrown with weeds. The paths we walked were unmarked, the terrain uneven and only passable on foot. The further we walked into the original town, the more I felt like I had entered another time period. Unlike the lower areas of Chinchero, the adobe brick neighborhood was free of honking cars and *huayno* radio music. The silence up here was only interrupted by the gentle whirr of the wind against the trees, the soft crunch of dirt beneath our shoes, and the harsh click of my camera. We paused our climb to turn around and admire the view. From above, I could clearly see the spatial and temporal growth of Chinchero. The adobe brick houses and empty grass paths led down the hill to wide, paved roads lined with two- to three-storied buildings of brick and concrete. Then, on the other side of Calle Pumacchahua—with its traffic of cars, trucks, and tour buses—lay the empty sprawling *pampa*¹⁷ of farmland sold for the airport. My gaze drifted across Chinchero's past, present, and future. The empty expanse of fertile land in the distance was fallow, waiting, unsure if it would be impregnated with the seeds of potatoes and quinoa or the seeds of change.

...

¹⁷ *Pampa* means “plain, flat area, ground” in Quechua.

The biggest question facing life in Chinchero in 2017 was the issue of the new airport. Although discussion of the construction of the Chinchero International Airport first arose over four decades ago, in recent years the megaproject has become even more imminent. In 2013, land in the *pampa* was expropriated for the airport's construction. This prompted contentious local and national debates over political will and tourist economies. Additional local infrastructural projects have emerged to accompany the expected airport, including a new highway. Due to corruption, political conflicts, and poor planning, however, the megaproject has been continuously postponed. Now, the physical and spatial layout of the town represents the temporal changes and uncertain future of Chinchero (See Figure 8). The empty *pampa*, caught between a promise of progress and an unfinished reality, represents the airport's absent presence.



Figure 8. View of Chinchero facing the future. In the foreground are the traditional adobe mud brick houses. In the near distance is the urban center and in the far distance is the empty *pampa* where the Chinchero International Airport is planned to be built. Photo by author.

Although the airport has not yet been built, I observed that it was still very much present in Chinchero in other ways. Local inhabitants were adapting their economic activities to capitalize on potential increased profits in the future. Some were constructing *hospedajes* to rent to the construction workers and tourists that the airport would bring. Others were investing in new cars to work as *taxistas* to drive tourists around the region. The town's overall aesthetic was changing with more concrete buildings and paved roads. Many residents were simply preparing mentally for the changed lifestyle, community dynamics, and urbanization that would come with the airport. Just as the unfinished airport has already appeared online on Google Maps and Wikipedia, it has also cemented itself in the mentalities of the local inhabitants of Chinchero.

Unfinished megaprojects, such as the one in Chinchero, have concrete social, political, and environmental effects despite never being physically realized. Numerous academics have studied such phenomena across the globe, calling them “shelved futures,” “present absences,” “unbuilt environments,” and “non-present presences” (Rowe 2017; Powell 2011; Oberdeck 2005; Peyton 2011; Peyton 2017; Jewell 2017). This growing body of literature focuses on various types of incomplete infrastructures and many kinds of engendered effects of these potentialities. In general, megaprojects are future-oriented and oftentimes revolve more around promise, hope, and possibility rather than the actual fulfillment of that promise (Hetherington 2014; Hetherington and Campbell 2014). In the case of Chinchero, the unfinished airport follows political and economic motives geared towards future development, regional economic gain, and infrastructural improvements. Yet it has simultaneously resulted in social, communal, and aesthetic changes that pose risk for the preservation of local traditions and ways of life.

This Chapter examines how the absent/present airport has already affected vendors' livelihoods and well-being. I focus specifically on vendors at Textile Centers and the archaeological plaza because they hold two stakes in the future of the airport: they are active participants in market

economies that depend on tourist flows, and they possess the cultural knowledge of weaving traditions that could be forgotten. After reviewing the historical trajectory of the Chinchero International Airport and its economic and political rationales, I analyze vendors' interview responses of uncertainty and opposition to the project through the theoretical framework of unfinished megaprojects. They view the main pillars of *sumaq kawsay*—community, environmental harmony, and reciprocity—as directly threatened by the airport's narrow vision of development and progress. Airports, which facilitate the movement of people, jeopardize the vendors' calm lifestyles with an impending urban reality. Vendors furthermore do not think the airport would bring them social or economic benefits. By responding in the present and plural tenses, vendors illustrate how they are already collectively affected by the airport's absent presence. Overall I argue that the vendors view the unfinished airport as the embodiment of an urbanizing and modernizing change; a force that endangers their well-being.

The History and Recent Progress of the Airport Megaproject

The idea of building a new international airport in the Department of Cusco first arose almost four decades ago. Anthropologists who conducted fieldwork near Chinchero in the 1980s recall hearing about the imminent arrival of the airport and the promise of modernity (Urton 2017). Many vendors first heard about the airport plans from their grandparents. At *Centro Textil Urpi*, one vendor named Chaska said decades ago her grandmother received informational pamphlets in Quechua that explained how the airport would improve their lives. As the project gradually developed from an empty promise to more organized plans, local inhabitants continued to wait and grew more uncertain. Although the airport is not physically present yet, it has been present in the minds and imaginaries of multiple generations in Chinchero.

Over the past 40 years during which the arrival of the new international airport in Chinchero has been heralded, the project has progressed beyond mere verbal awareness. On August 22, 2012, the government of President Ollanta Humala approved a resolution that allowed for the expropriation of land in Chinchero for the construction of the new Chinchero International Airport (Garcia 2015:203). The land belonged to the *ayllu* Yanacona, one of 14 communal groups in Chinchero. Yanacona's land consists of the large *pampa* situated on the western side of the urban area of Chinchero, across the main road Calle Pumacahua that connects the city of Cusco from the south to Urubamba to the north. The large *pampa* was used for farming and its natural openness juxtaposed with the urban and constructed center across the main road.

The sale of Yanacona lands to the Regional Government was finally completed in January 2013. The Yanacona decided to sell their land for a combination of regional, political, and economic factors. Anthropologist Pablo Garcia conducted his fieldwork in Chinchero during the pivotal moment when the Yanacona community grappled with the issue of selling their land. As reasons why the Yanacona agreed to sell their land, Garcia cites the Regional Government's long-term publicity of the airport as synonymous with regional progress and economic opportunity; furthermore, the limited economic alternatives to agriculture and farming in Chinchero made the promise of jobs and prosperity seem attractive (Garcia 2015:205-7). The farmers also had political and contract obligations. They were obligated to sell their lands not only because of the 2012 expropriation decree, but also as a result of the airport's designation as a project of "national interest" (Torres Seoane 2017:n.p.). The transaction was finally completed at a rate of \$80 per square meter of Yanacona land. Since then, the Regional Government has continued buy land now at a rate of \$300 per square meter according to some local accounts.

The Peruvian agency Kuntur Wasi ("house of the condor" in Quechua) originally signed the contract with the Ministry of Transportation and Communication to construct the airport. In 2014,

the agency made a better offer to the Peruvian state than its competitors; it requested a co-financing of US\$264.7 million but promised to repay 100%, while other agencies only offered to repay 44% (Kuntur Wasi Iniciar  Obras 2014:n.p.). However, in 2017 the Peruvian state rolled back on the agreement, citing the failure to cap interest rates would raise the cost to the state to \$1.12 billion (Post 2017:n.p.). Subsequently, Kuntur Wasi has been swarmed with corruption allegations. In October 2017, an investigative order was issued to examine the agency as a case of organized crime (Chincheru: Fiscal a Investiga Kuntur Wasi 2017:n.p.). According to the BNamericas website, the project has been suspended (Chincheru-Cusco International Airport (AICC) 2017).

Public announcements and news coverages report that Kuntur Wasi is no longer in charge of constructing the airport. Yet during my fieldwork in 2017, the Kuntur Wasi Office of Community Relations was still open in Chincheru and the agency’s website continued to boast the slogan “*Un proyecto de infraestructura. Una v a de desarrollo*” (“An infrastructural project. A path to development”) (Kuntur Wasi 2016:n.p.). On February 10, 2018 the prospects of the project changed yet again. The Minister of Transportation and Communications Bruno Giuffr  announced that the Peruvian government had recuperated the 357 acres of airport land from Kuntur Wasi and plans on advancing the airport’s construction as a public work (Salcedo 2018:n.p.). His announcement further contributes to the sense of uncertainty about the airport given the history of poor planning, corruption allegations, political conflicts, and unfulfilled promises.

The plans for the international airport are quite extensive (See Figure 9). According to the construction plans, the landing runway will be 4 kilometers long and 45 meters wide, while the passenger terminal will have an area of 40,000 square meters (Cusco Tendr  Desarrollo Econ mico 2017:n.p.). The length of the runway accommodates large commercial airlines seating up to 320 passengers, as well as cargo aircrafts (Peru: Chincheru Int’l Airport 2017:n.p.). Overall, the entire area of land needed for the future airport amounts to 359 hectares (L pez Aguilar 2017a:n.p.). These



Figure 9. Diagram of Planned Location for the Chinchero International Airport. Map by Author.

plans come with a hefty price tag: the project requires the investment of US\$530 million (Así Será El Aeropuerto Internacional de Chinchero 2017). The project is expected to foment economic growth and create job opportunities. An estimated 2,500 jobs are to be created by the construction of the airport and it is expected to generate over USD\$63 million during its 35-year concession (Peru: Chinchero Int'l Airport 2017:n.p.).

The airport plans have also been accompanied with additional local infrastructural initiatives. One such complementary project is the construction of an express highway to accommodate the increased tourist traffic from the airport. The highway is planned to connect the city of Cusco with the towns of Poroy, Chinchero, and Urubamba. The roads currently in place are narrow and only two lanes wide. Although the winding roads provide scenic views of the valley and mountains, they make the 30 km journey from Cusco to Chinchero last around 1 hour. The goal of the new highway is to expedite the travel time to 15 minutes. During my fieldwork I met an engineer who was working on the investigative team for the new highway. He explained they had already completed

the topographic analysis and next would take samples of the earth to test its weight-bearing abilities. Similar to the airport plans, the highway project's start date also continues to be pushed back amid setbacks and slow progress.

Political and Economic Rationales for the Chinchero International Airport

There are multiple reasons for the construction of a new airport in Cusco. The first reason stems from the need to better serve the increasing number of tourists visiting Peru and Cusco. Over the past six years, the Jorge Chávez Airport in Lima has seen an increasing number of international arrivals in all months of the year; July 2017 saw the highest number ever recorded of 217,923 arrivals (MINCETUR 2017b). Many of these tourists then fly to Cusco to visit Machu Picchu. Each day, an average of 3,000 tourists come to Cusco (Peru to Build Major Airport near Machu Picchu 2012). The current airport in Cusco is the Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport. Built in 1964 and located in the middle of the city, the airport is very small and outdated. It has only one terminal for all incoming flights and the runway is too short to accommodate larger planes coming from the United States or Europe. While the current airport in Cusco can accommodate 2.5 million passengers each year, the Chinchero International Airport is planned to receive 6 million a year (Peru: Chinchero Int'l Airport 2017:n.p.). The new airport would also include international flights from neighboring Latin American countries including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Panama (Ibid). This demand for direct international flights to Cusco already exists; in 2017, the Colombian airline Avianca began to offer direct flights from Bogotá, Colombia to Cusco (Chambi 2017). The Chinchero International Airport would not only address this issue of larger tourist flows, but also signal a step forward in the inadequate Peruvian airport system.¹⁸

¹⁸ Of the more than 230 airports in Peru, only 24 of them have scheduled flight services and only 3 of those are international airports. For more information, see Dunnell 2017 and Aeropuertos del Perú 2017.

Another motive comes from a regional economic debate over income from the tourist industry. The most-visited tourist attraction in Peru is the ancient Inca citadel of Machu Picchu, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. In 2016, the Peruvian Ministry of Culture registered over 1.4 million visits to Machu Picchu, of which around 1 million were foreign tourists (MINCETUR 2017a). Tourists who travel internationally to Peru in order to visit Machu Picchu, located in the Department of Cusco, must first fly into the Jorge Chávez International Airport in Lima. As a result of the intentionally inconvenient scheduling of connecting flights to Cusco, many tourists spend at least a few days in Lima before finally arriving to Cusco. According to PromPeru, tourists stay an average of 3 nights in Lima before spending 5 to 6 nights in Cusco (Villanueva 2017:n.p.). In this way the Lima tourist industry gains income from hotels, restaurants, city tours, and taxi services. Officials in Cusco views this tourist spending as money lost for their region. They argue that since tourists primarily come to see Machu Picchu and the archaeological ruins of Cusco, then a greater share of income gains from tourism should go to Cusco, not Lima. In this way, the airport has also become a central part of the political debate between centralism and regionalism. The conflation of the airport and a pro-Cusco regionalist sentiment has also resulted in the labeling of those against the airport as those against the development of the region. Consequently, the political and economic arguments in favor of the Chinchero International Airport focus on bypassing Lima, increasing the local gains from the Peruvian tourist industry, and accommodating larger tourist flows.

As a result of these debates, the Chinchero International Airport has become a crucial topic of national political interest. Numerous presidential and regional political candidates have blazoned the airport plans as a promise for development. Politicians have used the issue as a clientelistic promise during elections in order to win votes. More cynically, they also champion the large development project to have their name on the inaugural plaque in order to stroke their egos and establish a political legacy (Villanueva 2017:n.p.). During my fieldwork I noticed that trees and

electricity posts along the main road leading from Cusco to Chinchero were lined with numerous printed banners announcing the airport. The bright red banners read “Aeropuerto Internacional de Chinchero - Gracias PPK” (“Chinchero International Airport - Thank You PPK”) and included the logo of the Ministry of Transportation and Communication. PPK stands for Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, the current President of Peru who was elected in 2016 as part of his own party, Peruanos Por el Kambio (“Peruvians for Change”). Kuczynski is one of many presidents who has used the airport on his campaign ticket as a promise for progress. Indeed, five sitting presidents have laid the first stone commemorating the beginning of the airport’s construction. Many vendors mentioned this fact in order to illustrate the ineffective state of Peruvian politics.¹⁹

Local politicians have also invoked a regionalist sentiment in justifying the need for the new airport. The Mayor of Chinchero, Gualberto Sallo, explained how the new airport would be different from the airport in Lima:

No queremos un aeropuerto como el Jorge Chávez, del cual todos prácticamente huyen por la peligrosidad del Callao. Nosotros deseamos que los visitantes se queden a disfrutar de nuestra riqueza arqueológica y arte textil. Por eso, el terminal de Chinchero es una necesidad para el Cusco y todo el país. (We do not want an airport like Jorge Chávez, from which practically everyone flees from the dangerousness of the Callao neighborhood. We want the visitors to stay and enjoy our wealth of archaeological ruins and textile art. As a result, the terminal in Chinchero is a necessity for Cusco and for the whole country.) (Sánchez 2017:n.p.)

In his justification of the need for the new airport, Mayor Sallo simultaneously invokes the rich cultural heritage of Cusco and berates Lima’s stereotypical reputation for rampant violence. In this way, demands for the new airport in Chinchero are based not only on economic arguments of maximizing profits from the tourist industry, but also on an entrenched political and regional divide between Lima and Cusco. As my research findings later show, however, there are local rifts within the pro-Cusco regionalist argument.

¹⁹ Peruvian politics is experiencing significant upheavals; in December 2017, President Kuczynski narrowly avoided impeachment and his humanitarian pardon of former dictator Alberto Fujimori resulted in public outcry.

An Unfinished Megaproject

Given its large scale and budget, the Chinchero International Airport is considered a megaproject. Often defined as large initiatives exceeding \$1 billion of investment, megaprojects are categorized based on the relative size of the project and the affected population (Domínguez 2015:19). Such projects include airports, dams, bridges, highways, and renewable energy projects, as well as other types of infrastructure. Megaprojects often focus on facilitating a service, whether it be the movement of people or the extraction of a natural resource. They constitute a significant share of economic growth, equaling around 8% of global GDP (Leslie 2015:n.p.). Megaprojects have broad appeal and address real issues, but they are often poorly executed; 9 out of 10 exceed their budgets and time schedules (Ibid). As Jonathan Peyton, a scholar of unfinished megaprojects in Canada, has noted, “for every successful megaproject, there are dozens that have failed to launch” (Peyton 2011:358). This is true for the case of the airport in Chinchero. The expected date to begin construction has been pushed back continuously for the past four years. Current estimates say the airport will be open for passengers in 2021, but as of early 2018 construction has not yet started.

One reason why the megaproject in Chinchero has been postponed for years comes from the prevalence of corruption issues. The case of the construction agency Kuntur Wasi is indicative of a larger problem across the region. The international scandals involving the corporation Odebrecht pervade numerous countries and elected officials across Latin America.²⁰ In Peru, bribery continues to occur across political offices. The ex-mayor of Cusco is in prison for such charges and former President Toledo has also been convicted (Zarate 2017). These instances of political misbehavior further contribute to the hindering political conflicts mentioned in the previous section.

²⁰ Odebrecht, a Brazilian construction company, has used bribery and corruption to establish projects in numerous countries in the Western hemisphere. Latin American political officials in Brazil, Colombia, Peru, the Dominican Republic, and elsewhere have come under investigation and been arrested for corruption and illegal involvement with Odebrecht. For more information, see Lopez 2017.

Corruption plagues many infrastructural development plans in particular and such political scandals have stymied progress of Mexico City's new green airport as well (Villegas and Malkin 2017). The assumption that infrastructural projects are steeped in corruption serves as a manifestation of the disconnect between desired outcomes and the reality of the project (Harvey 2017:51-2). This disconnect also informs locals' perceptions of uncertain future outcomes, as will be explored subsequently.

In addition, poor planning has also delayed the construction plans. Although the Regional Government finalized the purchase of Yanacona land in 2013, it continues to purchase plots surrounding the area as the construction plans expand. The Yanacona who sold their land had relocated further north of the *pampa*, creating a new neighborhood called Nueva Yanacona ("New Yanacona"). They used the money to construct new multiple-storied concrete houses on the hill overlooking the *pampa*. It was not realized until later that this new neighborhood was located too close to the runway. The new houses violated the Civil Aviation Law No.27261, which stipulates that structures cannot be within 50 feet of the landing airplanes (López Aguilar 2017a:n.p.). Not only has this new conflict delayed the progress of construction, but it has also placed new emotional stress and uncertainty on the local Yanacona who will have to move again.

Although these instances of poor planning and corruption have resulted in the megaproject remaining uncompleted for decades, the project is not without tangible effects. The absent presences of unfinished megaprojects across the globe have been shown to produce concrete effects on the local communities and landscapes based on the type of project, service provided, and the local context. For example, unfinished projects that revolve around natural resources such as water, wind, solar, and oil result in discursive changes of how locals perceive their environment and understand development (Peyton 2011; Powell 2006; Rowe 2017). Unfinished projects located in reservation lands or in areas of strong environmental solidarity prompt the emergence of social movements of

resistance (Powell 2011; Powell 2018; Domínguez 2015). The unfinished Nicaragua Canal project, considered one of the biggest development projects in history, elicits strong fears in the local communities; to the project's potentiality, not its actual realization, has provoked emotional responses (Jewell 2017). Depending on the project and local contexts, its invisible presence can engender environmental, discursive, social, and cultural changes.

Unfinished road and highway infrastructure projects have unique outcomes as a result of their focus on the movement of people. Even before they are completed, roads can result in different movement patterns and discourses. For example, although the Santarém-Cuiabá highway in the Brazilian Amazon remains unpaved, this has not prevented local inhabitants from staying mobile in the region (Campbell 2012). In the 20th century, the Pan-American Highway project entered into narratives of development and was a powerful symbol of progress. Although the Darién Gap in Panama remains unclosed, the project has entered social memory as complete (Miller 2014:191). While the project's completion or incompleteness did not make a difference on an international level, on the local level the construction of the road would have greatly affected the Darién and Chocó regions of Panama (Ibid). These two examples illustrate the varying perceptions of the effects of unfinished roads; on international or national scales discourses about progress are not always compatible with local lived realities.

Each of these examples illustrates the wide variety of concrete effects from the “unbuilt environments” of unfinished megaprojects (Oberdeck 2005). As anthropologist and sociologist Kregg Hetherington notes about an unfinished project of land reform in Paraguay, “it is not the fulfillment of the promise that matter[s] so much as the promise itself” (Hetherington 2014:210). In the case of the Chinchero International Airport, larger political and economic players may be more concerned with fulfilling their promise; but in many instances the promise itself has been enough to instill significant changes in local actions, discourses, and mentalities in Chinchero.

Airport as Development?

Development projects often fall into narratives of progress. The notion is that infrastructural projects, such as roads or airports, help move the community and society as a whole from simplicity to complexity. This “trope of linearity and singularity” ignores prior engineering feats and infrastructures, such as the Inca road system (Harvey, Jensen, and Morita 2017:7). Another issue with such development projects is the discordancy between imagined outcomes and actual realities. With the case of road projects in Peru, Harvey and Knox (2015) describe this phenomenon as a “disjunctive doubling where roads are dreamed of as solutions to a pervasive sense of abandonment and underdevelopment, and yet dreaded for their proven capacity to destroy fragile natural and social environments” (Harvey and Knox 2015:135). This clash between dreamed solutions and proven destruction means that infrastructural projects generate unevenly distributed benefits.

The relationship between airports and development is also an important political issue in the neighboring country of Bolivia. Regional governments frequently use the construction of an airport as a way to promise progress and bring about economic development. In this way, airports symbolize the arrival of modernity. Currently in 2017, there are six airports underway in Bolivia with five of them already under construction (López-Camacho 2017:n.p.). The state’s focus on building airports is situated within the national policies of promoting *suma qawsay* and *el buen vivir*. The Bolivian state promotes a holistic, indigenous-oriented well-being through economic development projects that are focused on maximizing profits from the tourist industry. The goal is for local residents to benefit from the development by creating more demand for local services in housing, restaurants, souvenirs, and tour guides.

At the same time as airports can promote local development through increased tourist demand, the space of the airport is inherently disengaged from its surroundings. Airport architecture is generic rather than unique to the geographic location and as a result creates a “placeless city”

(Edwards 2004:27). Rather than reflecting the locality, airports become representations and promotions of a destination (Losekoot and Wright 2011; Wattanacharoensil et al. 2017). This clash between generic project designs and unique localities can cause conflicts. For example, in 2013 in Oruro, Bolivia, protests erupted when the local airport—originally named after Juan Mendoza, an aviation pioneer from the region—was redesigned as an international airport and renamed after President Evo Morales (Bjork-James 2013:n.p.). Although the new airport was tied to discourses of increased tourism and expanded economic opportunity, locals still fought for the symbolic importance of the airport's name. As airports are non-unique spaces, their names remain a significant way to preserve a sense of locality. In this case, local interests in cultural and regional identity remain significant considerations in demands for development projects.

Local inhabitants in Chinchero also present their own nuanced understandings of development. These opinions may be informed by the state policies and political discourse, as well as numerous other social, historical, and cultural factors. Previous research has explored how locals define development through visual terms. For example, Penelope Harvey (2010) reviews how concrete is an important marker of development and social status in provincial Peru. While the physical presence and materiality of concrete structures evoke an image of power, ethnographic observation reveals that the heterogeneity of each social terrain challenges concrete's homogeneity and uniform stability (Harvey 2010). In this way, development and progress is understood locally in a very physical and material manner. When the Yanacona farmers invested the money earned from the sale of their land into multiple-storied houses made of concrete, they were simultaneously avoiding risks and marking their newly-attained social and economic status. This physical and material understanding of development is also informed by the perceived dichotomy between developed urban centers of concrete buildings and underdeveloped rural areas of adobe brick

houses. By linking development with the presence of concrete structures, rural Peruvian communities consider visual aesthetics as significant markers of development.

Political and social engagement issues connected to the airport's construction also illustrate varying definitions of development in the region. Since 2012, Cusco has experienced numerous local and regional strikes. There have been 48-hour strikes in February 2016, November 2016, and February 2017, all in favor of building the airport (López Aguilar 2017a:n.p.). During my fieldwork in July 2017, I experienced another two-day regional strike. The strike demanded the airport's construction to increase tourism, but ended up hurting tourists the most (Neyra 2017b:n.p.). Numerous roads in the city were blocked with large rocks and burning tires, so tourists were unable to travel in and out of Cusco. Meanwhile in Chinchero, no one participated in a strike; instead, all businesses and Textile Centers remained closed as vendors lamented the loss of tourists and sales. The contrast in participation in these regional strikes marks a clear distinction between regional interests in economic development and local interest in preserving their calm ways of life. In this way, the juxtaposition of state and local understandings of development shows the contrasting use of economic and social factors in achieving well-being.

“Estamos en la Duda:” Vendors’ Uncertainty about the Airport

In my fieldwork, I explored vendors' perceptions of how the airport would affect their well-being and ability to live *sumaq kamsay*. By conducting semi-structured interviews with local vendors at Textile Centers and the archaeological plaza, I focused on those actively engaged in both tourist economies and weaving traditions and I let them format their responses. My findings demonstrate a temporary snapshot of local economic agents' perspectives on the physically absent but socially and politically present airport. The 50 vendors with whom I spoke highlighted high levels of uncertainty

about the airport plans. This uncertainty exemplifies a significant discursive and emotional change already impacted by the unfinished megaproject's absent presence.

In my interviews, I asked about the airport after I had already covered questions about *sumaq kawsay* and their life satisfaction. This conscious organization of questions served as an attempt not to affect their responses with my particular research interests in the airport. Although I saved discussion about the airport for the end of the interview, in many instances the women mentioned the airport before I asked these questions. For example, when I asked general questions about life in Chinchero (“¿Cómo describiría la vida en Chinchero?”) I received responses about “*el tema del aeropuerto*” (“the issue of the airport”). In some women’s explanations of their life satisfaction scores, they cited “*el peligro del aeropuerto*” (“the danger of the airport”) as a negative factor. In many cases, they started talking about the airport without me prompting them. Their familiarity with anthropologists studying the effects of the airport in Chinchero undoubtedly affected this trend. In this case it is important to use reflexivity to recognize how my role as an anthropologist and outside researcher may have affected their responses. Nevertheless, the airport was very much present in their daily considerations, thoughts, and conversations.

To open the discussion about the airport I used open-ended inquiries. I avoided leading questions by asking general prompts such as “¿Usted ha escuchado sobre el aeropuerto?” (“Have you heard about the airport?”) and “¿Qué piensa sobre el aeropuerto?” (“What do you think about the airport?”). By formulating my question in this way, I allowed the vendors to discuss whatever they felt was most important to them. Even though they had not been directly asked whether they thought the airport would be built or not, the vendors’ initial responses mostly revolved around uncertainty. Of 41 respondents, 56% said they were unsure whether the airport would be built while 34% did not think the airport would be built. Overwhelmingly, the vendors were not optimistic that the airport would eventually be built. Only four respondents thought the airport would be built.

The main reasons cited for their stated uncertainty revolved around political matters. Vendors mentioned the executive branch when they said “*depende del presidente*” (“it depends on the president”) and “*los presidentes sabrán eso*” (“the presidents would know that”). Chaska, a vendor at *Balcón del Inca*, said she was unsure about when the airport would be built because of “*tantas problemas que hay*” (“there so many problems”). She clarified with an observation of political corruption: “*Todos se han recibido plata. Los—eh, el gobierno, todo su gente*” (“Everyone has received money. The—the government, all of them”). This widespread uncertainty and lack of confidence clearly stem from low trust in the political institutions. Peruvians have a remarkably low rate of trust in political institutions. Despite the country’s strong economic growth—one of the highest rates in Latin America—survey data reveals that only 35.6% of the population trusts the government, ranking the country third to last in the region (Carrion 2009:36). Findings from the 2016-17 AmericasBarometer report of Latin American public opinion confirms Peruvian distrust of political institutions. Only 7.5% of respondents in Peru trusted political parties—the lowest score of all countries surveyed—while 77% believed that more than half of all politicians are corrupt—the third-highest score after Brazil and Mexico (Cohen, Lupu, and Zechmeister 2017:21,60). Low political confidence also invariably affects local perceptions of the airport plans and other state development projects. The political realities of corruption and constant postponements resulted in vendors’ uncertainty and low confidence in the eventual realization of the airport.

Overall, my interviews revealed a strong uncertainty about whether the airport would eventually be realized and what effects it would have on Chinchero. Political conflicts, corruption issues, and multiple decades of discourses promising the impending arrival of development have already left their mark among vendors in Chinchero. The looming changes from the airport are vast, if not uncertain. The vendors’ realities can be summed up in the words of Nilda from the *Centro de Textiles Tradicionales de Cusco* (CTTC): “*No tengo ni idea qué va a pasar. Pero sí va a haber un impacto fuerte*”

“I have no idea what is going to happen. But there will be a big impact”). Even without the physical construction of the airport, vendors have undergone discursive and emotional shifts in how they think about their futures. Other research has shown how uncertainty over future wealth negatively affects well-being (Graham 2010). In this way, vendors’ great uncertainty sets the backdrop for how they think the airport will affect their well-being.

The Airport Versus *Sumaq Kawsay*: Conflicting Realities

After assessing vendors’ uncertainty about whether the airport would be eventually built, I further explored their opinions about the megaproject. I focused principally on whether or not they wanted the airport to be built and their stated reasons behind their responses. The vendors’ overwhelming opposition to the airport revealed many dichotomous clashes between the core elements of *sumaq kawsay* they had identified earlier and the outcomes they viewed the airport would cause. For the vendors, living a life according to *sumaq kawsay* meant they live calmly and harmoniously in the community and with the environment. However, many vendors explained the airport posed threats to this lifestyle; forces of urbanization, environmental contamination, and decreased economic opportunities threatened vendors’ pillars of *sumaq kawsay*.

Of the 43 vendors I asked, the vast majority (70%) stated they did not want the airport. Nine respondents were unsure of their opinions (21%) as they weighed pros and cons of the airport’s construction. The remaining respondents were either in favor of the airport (three vendors) or did not care (one respondent). Overall, the vendors explained how the airport would not benefit them individually. They said “*a mí no estoy apta*” (“for me it is not suitable”), “*a mí no me conviene*” (“it is not good for me”), and “*por mí que no haga*” (“for me I hope they do not build it”). In their descriptions of the pros and cons of the airport, vendors cited many more specific negative outcomes than

positive outcomes. Their use of the singular tense points to an evaluation based on individual economic cost or benefit.

The majority of stated negative outcomes of the airport revolved around the threats to the vendors' calm and communal lifestyles in Chinchero. They explained that with the airport "*no vamos a vivir así tranquilo*" ("we will not live like this, calmly"), "*ya no vamos a ser así libre, tranquilo*" ("we will no longer be free and calm"), and "*hoy en día estamos tranquilo*" ("nowadays we live peacefully"). Just as vendors explained *sumaq kawsay* using the plural tense, when discussing the effects of the airport they continue to use speak with plural verb forms but negate their answers. This grammatical shift highlights how vendors evaluate the effects of the airport as a collective, not individuals, and how they focus on the preservation of a harmonious community. Others lamented how the airport would mean that they would no longer live a "*sano*" ("healthy") life. The main threats they identified revolved around stereotypical issues of urban centers. Primarily, the vendors pointed to the potential for increased violence; they cited "*delincuencia*" ("crime"), "*rateros*" ("thieves"), "*drogadicción*" ("drug addiction"), "*matanzas*" ("killings"), "*secuestros*" ("kidnappings"), "*narcotraficantes*" ("drug traffickers"), and "*atropellos*" ("car accidents"). In this way, an important component of their calm lifestyle in Chinchero was the relative safety of the region.

The peacefulness of Chinchero is contrasted with the media portrayal of the capital city of Lima. One vendor in the Sunday market named Ana worried that if Chinchero got an airport, "*como Lima se va a convertir*" ("it will turn into Lima") and another worried "*va a volver como El Callao*" ("it will become like El Callao"). Vendors often hear news about the violence and crime that occurs in Lima on the television and radio. The vendors conflated the arrival of the airport with the arrival of a dangerous urban reality. This particular perceived threat is influenced by the type of infrastructural project. Airports, like roads, serve to bring in people rather than services like water or electricity, so a common hesitation is that of the arrival of outsiders. Overall, in their considerations of whether they

wanted the airport or not, vendors considered broader effects beyond the mere physical construction of the airport.

The airport also challenged the environmental values of *sumaq kawsay* in Chinchero. After citing their fears of increased violence, vendors also stressed the risks of environmental harm from building an airport and accompanying infrastructural projects. Multiple vendors said they did not want the airport to be built because it would result in the “*contaminación*” (“pollution”) of Chinchero and harm the region’s “*biodiversidad*” (“biodiversity”). With this observation, they referred to not only environmental pollution of the land and air, but also sound and light pollution. Although not all airport projects necessarily ignore environmental concerns, the project plans in Chinchero have so far ignored this crucial factor.²¹ Furthermore, the increased vehicular traffic from the airport would contribute to more “*bullá*” (“noise”) in the usually quiet streets and would make Chinchero more “*agitado*” (“hectic”) like Lima. Environmental harmony and the ecological preservation of the unique landscape were both seen as threatened by the construction of the airport.

One of the greatest threats to the environmental landscape of Chinchero was the possibility that families would stop sowing their *chakra* farms. This loss of arable land would not only sever their deep connection to nature, but also eliminate many families’ food supplies and their ability to sustain themselves. They worried that more concrete buildings, vehicular traffic on the roads, and chemicals in general would permeate the land and poison their crops. Sapayra, a vendor at *Centro Textil Illary*, stressed how she was satisfied with her life because “*como sana de la chakra*” (“I eat healthily from the farm”). She expressed concern that construction of the airport—and a subsequent proliferation of other construction projects—would eliminate her access to a healthy diet. The risks

²¹ The new green airport in Mexico City has recently begun incorporating environmental factors in the megaproject’s planning after the emergence of social movements of resistance. See Domínguez 2015 and Villegas and Malkin 2017.

of contamination and pollution in Chinchero thus directly threatened their well-being in both ecological and social ways.

Loss of farming activities was not the only local custom that was perceived as threatened by the airport. Numerous vendors echoed how the airport would cause them to “*perder nuestros costumbres ancestrales*” (“lose our ancestral traditions”). If Chinchero became an urban center, they reasoned, their cultural traditions would be marginalized. One vendor named Karen explained how the arrival of foreigners would dilute the local customs because they would be “*nueva gente que no sea parte de nuestra cultura*” (“new people who are not part of our culture”). Given their strong focus on community and communal ties, the vendors were worried they would no longer know their neighbors or hold the same values as them. Although many vendors mentioned how “*nuestras costumbres van a desaparecer*” (“our traditions will disappear”), they did not specify which elements of their customs would be lost. Their definition of “*costumbres*” can be extrapolated from their discussion of the potential loss of their “*tranquilo*” lifestyle and of their *chakras*.

No one, however, mentioned the airport’s effects on their weaving traditions. When I asked whether the vendors would continue weaving if the airport were built, many said yes. They would continue working at the Textile Centers until it was no longer economically viable. Either decreasing tourist demand or rising rent prices in Chinchero would eventually prevent the vendors from continuing their businesses. Karen noted that she would keep working at the Textile Center if the airport were built, but “*si en caso haya por ejemplo otra oportunidad*” (“if by chance there were another opportunity for example”) she would take the other job. In this way, their responses reveal their understanding of working at Textile Centers as more of an economic activity rather than a manifestation of their lived “*costumbres*.” Vendors’ daily confrontations with economic risks continue to shape their perspectives of weaving activities at the Textile Centers.

Another interesting trend in their responses was that they did not identify any potential economic gains from the airport's construction. Increased tourist flows from the airport in Chinchero would theoretically increase the demand for tourist services such as taxis, hotels, restaurants, and *artesanías* at the Textile Centers. I had hypothesized that perhaps vendors would mention the economic benefits of the airport. However, they were not optimistic about being able to capitalize on the increased tourist flows. One vendor named Oleandra stated "*no somos bien capacitados...que no somos profesionales*" ("we are not well trained...because we are not professionals"). Another vendor, Rumiñawi, explained "*nosotros no estamos dispuestos*" ("we are not ready"). Others exclaimed that they as individual vendors would be unable to compete with big businesses arriving from Cusco, Lima, and abroad. They understood that "*la genta así humilde del campo*" ("the humble people from the countryside") do not have the social or economic capital to make more profits from the projected increased tourism. It was interesting that even though they discussed individual economic logics, these vendors responded in the plural tense; they were assessing decreased economic opportunities as a communal collective of vendors in Chinchero.

Additionally, many vendors expressed doubt that the airport would change Chinchero from a tourist stop to a tourist destination. Due to the town's high altitude and cold climate, they reasoned that tourists arriving at the airport would not remain in Chinchero. Instead, they would "*desaparecer*" ("disappear") to the Sacred Valley, which is at a lower altitude and has a more temperate climate. For this reason, they explained that Urubamba and the city of Cusco, rather than Chinchero, would benefit economically from the airport. The vendors thus recognized the potential for economic gain and development from the airport, but acutely identified that the benefits would line others' pockets. This observation points to the division within the regionalist pro-airport discourse; inhabitants of Cusco praise the project for bringing development for them, while the local inhabitants of Chinchero do not identify such benefits. As a result of decreased profits from tourists visiting

Textile Centers, vendors worried that they would not be able to pay rent in the future. At the heart, they were concerned they would have to leave Chinchero to find an economic means to feed their family elsewhere. The potential future separation from their land in Chinchero represented a symbolic rupture of their social and communal values.

The only other advantages of the airport that the vendors mentioned revolved around vague concepts. These general notions included “*progreso*” (“progress”), “*más movimiento*” (“more movement”), and “*negocios*” (“businesses”). This vague language evokes that of the political discourses around development in Peru. Some vendors believed the construction of the airport would provide more occupational opportunities as a result of the demand for construction workers, housing, and restaurants. They mentioned “*más trabajo para nosotros*” (“more work for us”), “*muchas oportunidades de trabajo*” (“a lot of job opportunities”), and “*beneficios para nuestros hijos*” (“benefits for our children”). The potential for a greater variety of job options seemed appealing to some vendors. One vendor, Eda, mentioned the airport would allow her to “*poder hacer otro tipo de trabajo y tener entrada*” (“be able to do another type of work and gain entrance”). However, most vendors clarified that the majority of the economic benefits would go to big businesses from Cusco and Lima, as well as to wealthy foreigners. While vendors recognized the potential for economic growth and progress, many were not completely convinced by the political propaganda and were skeptical of their personal prospects from the airport. The project would harm their well-being without even providing them with economic benefits.

The vendors overwhelmingly expressed opposition to the airport and held strong opinions about its negative outcomes. They explained how the airport would affect their livelihoods, safety, farmland, environment, and cultural traditions. Economically, the vendors perceived an increased potential but understood the disadvantages they had in competing with large companies and rich foreigners. The general consensus was that the airport “*nos afectaría mucho*” (“would affect us a lot”)

and “*cambiaría todo*” (“it would change everything”). Overall, the vendors believe the outcomes of the airport would negatively affect their ability to live according to the foundational principles of *sumaq kawsay*. Their stated fears of increased violence and loss of communal values suggest that the vendors conceive of the airport megaproject in terms of its long-term effects of urbanization, increased population size, and social problems. This trend of conflating all local changes to a single megaproject has been documented elsewhere, notably in the context of the Guiana Space Center in the late 20th century. Anthropologist Peter Redfield observed that “while the space center was not the only modernizing influence in French Guiana...it quickly came to represent everything, good or bad, that emerged alongside it” (Redfield 2000:130). In this way, vendors in Chinchero view the airport as the embodiment of a totality of urbanizing and modernizing change.

The Changing Aesthetic of Chinchero

In describing the airport’s modernizing threats to their ability to live *sumaq kawsay*, many vendors also identified major aesthetic changes in Chinchero. As introduced in the opening anecdote of this chapter, the constructed landscape of Chinchero definitively marks temporality. The old part of town on the hill is full of the old-fashioned one-story adobe mud brick houses with straw roofs. Down the hill the dirt paths turn into the paved roads lined with multiple-story concrete and brick houses in the town’s center. Multiple vendors pointed to these “*casas de material noble*”²² when they express discontent with the changing aesthetics of Chinchero. Although materials such as brick and cement can be seen as more durable than adobe, the vendors view these man-made materials as unattractive visuals that do not fit in harmoniously with the rest of the rural landscape. The clearer visualization of status through “*casas de material noble*” contributed to more stated emotions of greed,

²² The term “*material noble*” (literally “noble materials”) in Peru refers to constructions made of bricks, cement, stone blocks, or ashlar. The translation of the term as “high-quality materials” is problematic because it establishes an inherent hierarchy of superiority between modern materials and adobe mud bricks.

jealousy, and desire, all of which are seen as threats to *sumaq kawsay*. In this way, their use of the term “*casas de material noble*” supports Penelope Harvey’s (2010) observation that concrete serves as a physical marker of development and social status.

One vendor, Chaska, lamented the proliferation of these modern constructions. From the Textile Center *Balcón del Inca* she pointed to the panorama view of Chinchero and exclaimed, “*ni siquiera han empezado el aeropuerto y cómo ha cambiado Chinchero. Antes no era así; eran casitas de adobe. Bonito, ¿no? Ahora no. Feo. Parece Juliaca.*²³ *Así han hecho*” (“they have not even started the airport and look at how Chinchero has changed. Before it wasn’t like this; they were little adobe houses. Pretty, right? Not anymore. Now it’s ugly. It looks like Juliaca. This is how it’s become”). Even though the airport has not yet been realized, Chaska blames the changing aesthetic of Chinchero on the influx of money from the sale of land for the project. Those who sold their land in the Yanacona region built large concrete houses and as a result “*lo han malogrado todo Chinchero*” (“they have ruined all of Chinchero”). She compares Chinchero to another generic city to underline the loss of character and aesthetic uniqueness of the adobe brick houses. In line with what Harvey (2010) observed, concrete in Chinchero is a marker of development and modernity. The visual aesthetic of the town is an important component of Chaska’s vision of what it means to live well in Chinchero.

Chaska also explained how the airport was already causing the loss of values in Chinchero. When I asked her if she thought she was living according to *sumaq kawsay*, she commented “*ahora aquí en Chinchero está perdiéndose los valores*” (“now here in Chinchero the values are being lost”). She explained further what she meant by the loss of these values:

En mi familia...siempre vivimos unidos, compartimos...Los valores que nos han inculcado nuestros padres. Todo el valor del respeto... el compartir...la responsabilidad, la humildad, la sencillez. Todo eso que nos han enseñado nuestros padres, ¿no?...En cuanto a nuestros vecinos...cuando yo nací teníamos vecinos así y nosotros

²³ Juliaca is a town in the Puno region of southeastern Peru. It is the biggest city in the region and a busy transit point for tourists traveling to Lake Titicaca.

compartíamos todo. Ahora nuestros vecinos han fallecido. Sus hijos ya se han ido a muchos lugares. Muchos han vendido sus terrenos, se han dejado a sus padres, así, ¿no? Entonces estos señores ya han vendido a otros sus terrenos y son otra gente que viene a nuestro, a nuestro alrededor viene, ¿no? Entonces ya no hay eso de compartir. A veces salimos y...ni siquiera dicen buenos días, buenas tardes al vecino...O sea como te digo ya se han perdido los valores ya...Es que acá en Chinchero *todos* nos conocíamos. Ahora ya no hay esa así. Hay otro tipo de gente que vive. Los chicos de nuestros vecinos caminan [con celular]...con esto están pendientes. Los chicos en este afán. Ya no hay este respeto que los papás han formado. Ahora... los papás ya no forman valores a los hijos ya. Ya está perdiéndose esas cosas. Ya parece una ciudad Chinchero...El aeropuerto ha traído todo ese cambio.

In my family...we always lived in unity, we shared...The values that our parents had instilled in us. The value of respect...sharing... responsibility, humility, simplicity. All of this that our parents had taught us, right?...With regards to our neighbors...when I was born we had neighbors like this and we shared everything. Now our neighbors have passed away. Their children have already gone to other places. Many have sold their land and have left their parents, right? So these people have sold their land and now other people come to our surroundings, right? So there isn't this type of sharing anymore. Sometimes we go out and...they don't even say good morning, good afternoon to their neighbor...Like I tell you, the values have already been lost...It's that here in Chinchero *everyone* knew each other before. Now it's not like that anymore. It's another type of people that live here. Our neighbors' children walk [on their phones]...they are absorbed in it. They are obsessed. There's no longer this respect that the parents have taught. Now...the parents no longer instill values on their children. These things are already being lost. Chinchero already seems like a city... The airport has brought all of this change.

In this passage, Chaska explains how the values of respect, sharing, and simplicity are being lost in Chinchero. The main example she points to is that people no longer greet each other on the streets, as is typical in large cities. She explains this is a result of people not knowing their neighbors because more people are arriving from other places. In her mind, the airport is bringing more outsiders into Chinchero and diluting the social ties and community. Her other example of children being absorbed in their cell phones on the street points to a conflation of the airport with other aspects of

an urban modernity. The lost values in Chinchero is not just due to a social disconnectedness, but also to another type of technological connectedness.

Interestingly, Chaska discussed the airport in the present tense despite the fact that it has not been built yet. When she pointed out all the observed changes in Chinchero, she concludes that “*el aeropuerto ha traído todo ese cambio*” (“the airport has brought all of this change”). The loss of values has already happened in Chinchero. Chaska, along with many other vendors, conflate a variety of modernizing changes with the airport project. Given the 40-year absent presence of the project, it comes to no surprise that all of the changes that have occurred in the past few decades become blamed on the airport. New technologies such as cell phones, televisions, and new construction materials are all lumped together as forces of modernity, much like what Redfield (2000) observed with the space station in French Guiana. This compounding force of change makes many vendors worry for the future of their children. One vendor commented “*Todo problemático va a ser. Para nosotros y para nosotros hijos también*” (“Everything problematic will happen. For us and for our children”). The airport thus represents a threat to their well-being that has already begun to have effects and will undoubtedly continue to affect their community and *sumaq kawsay*.

The Presence of Absence

Overall, the issue of the Chinchero International Airport is surrounded by concern and uncertainty. Over the past 40 years, the airport has been heralded as a direct pathway towards progress and development. Countless politicians and political parties have espoused the megaproject in order to garner campaign support and further their careers. As is the case with many megaprojects, it has served as a promise of job creation, local growth, and general prosperity. However, issues of corruption, conflicting political interests, and a regional-national divide have stymied its progress. Despite its constant postponement, the airport has already established a

concrete presence in Chinchero and its potentiality has affected the mentalities and actions of the local population. Although still physically absent, the airport is very much present in Chinchero.

The airport project is perpetually arriving yet never physically constructed. The unfinished—and effectively un-started—project has already had strong effects on the population of Chinchero. From my interviews, many vendors are already expressing concerns over how the airport and subsequent changes to the region would affect their well-being. The airport's increased flux of tourists and businesses posits a direct threat to their communal values, environmental harmony, and ability to live according to the pillars of *sumaq kawsay*. As a result, most vendors responded that they do not want the airport to be built. Although these opinions are stated preferences, their revealed preferences also corroborated these statements. The vendors let their children wander the streets without a worry and cheerfully greet their neighbors who visited them at the Textile Centers.

Vendors have also adapted their economic actions in response to the airport's absent presence. One vendor's son went to school to study to become a pilot in hopes of finding a job on one of the airlines. The Yanacona who sold their land invested their earned money into large, multiple-story houses to later open *hospedajes* and restaurants to accommodate the airport construction workers and future tourists. Some vendors consider pursuing other types of jobs either in Chinchero or elsewhere if they encountered difficulties selling at the Textile Centers. Even though the airport is not yet physically present, the whole economy and mentality in the town is already adapting and changing. As is the case with countless other unfinished megaprojects, the absent presence of the Chinchero International Airport has already caused the materialization of mental, economic, and social effects that threaten the vendors' well-being and *sumaq kawsay*.

CHAPTER V

THE FUTURE OF CHINCHERO

When I conducted my fieldwork in Chinchero the town was going through a period of upheaval. Economically, socially, and culturally, life in Chinchero was changing—and the female vendors were at the forefront. Over the past few years, Textile Centers were emerging on every block as more and more women wanted to make a profit from passing tourists. This resulted in an increase in economic competition between vendors at Centers, the plaza, and the Sunday Market. The events occurring within the spaces of the Textile Centers were also different. Years ago, the women who worked at the Centers would spend weeks weaving the blankets and textiles they sold to tourists. They used the traditional techniques of spinning, dying, and weaving to craft beautiful, unique *mantas*. However, now it was most common for the vendors to purchase spun yarn, dyed thread, and machine-made textiles. As a result of the changing tourist demand for cheap souvenirs, weavers turned into vendors and weaving became an economic means to provide for their families. The women became actively engaged in market exchanges and attuned their performances of tradition to tourist demand.

Although they commercialized their textile traditions for tourist consumption, the female vendors in Chinchero have not let economic interests affect their autochthonous notions of well-being. They still report living according to the principles of the Quechua term *sumaq kamsay*—community, reciprocity, environmental harmony, and tranquility. In the face of increasing economic competition and market demands that devalue their textile heritage, the vendors continue to live peacefully and in harmony among their neighbors and family members. Overall they are satisfied with their lives, albeit concerned for the future of their town, their livelihoods, and their children.

Only when discussing their scaled life satisfaction do the vendors mention economic and quotidian limitations stemming from the atmosphere of economic uncertainty. As farmers, they risk losing their crops from abrupt weather changes; as vendors, they risk losing income if tourist flows decrease. The national teachers' strike and international news coverage of the El Niño floods are two factors that contributed to the decreased number of tourist visits to their Textile Centers. Despite these concerns, the vendors still reported that overall they were content with their lives, living well, and living "*así sumaq kawsay*."

The omnipresent factor spurring much of the change was the issue of the Chinchero International Airport. Over the past four decades that it has existed as a promise for progress, the unfinished megaproject has gradually established an invisible yet concrete presence in the physical and mental spaces of the town. For the past generation, Chinchero has been eternally preparing for the arrival of the airport. Children became parents and then grandparents, yet are still waiting for the airport. As a result of the airport's everlasting potentiality, much of the vendors and local inhabitants conflate the modernizing changes in Chinchero with the airport project. The increasing presence of cars, paved roads, cell phones, electric wires, restaurants, and *hospedajes* are all seen as a result of the airport. Visually, the town already bears little resemblance to the small Andean town it once was.

The vendors' stated opinions of the airport highlight strong opposition to the megaproject. They view the development project as a threat to their well-being and ability to live according to *sumaq kawsay*. Weakened social ties, increased violence, lower interpersonal trust, environmental contamination, and an urban aesthetic all threaten the pillars of what they identify as fundamental components of living well. Even in economic terms the vendors are doubtful that the airport would improve their life satisfaction. The potential for economic gain and development did not pertain to them; large corporations and rich businesspeople would be better able to capitalize on the increased tourist flows. Overall they viewed the unfinished airport as a direct threat to both their economic as

well as their communal well-being. The project, still just an absent presence in the town, has already had strong effects on the local mentalities and mindsets.

In addition to contributing to the growing literature on the effects of unfinished megaprojects, this thesis also provides implications for discourses of development and cultural heritage. The airport, heralded by the Cusco Regional Government as a path to progress, confronts strong opposition in Chinchero itself. Perhaps if the megaproject worked more closely with the local communities, it could achieve a more harmonious nexus between the state's idea of development and local conceptions of well-being. Additionally, the airport plans must better address the issue of the preservation of cultural heritage. The heritage of Chinchero goes beyond the physical Inca stone and adobe structures in the archaeological complex; it includes the weaving practices, Quechua language, community organizations, ceremonial practices, and ecosystems, all of which are threatened by the airport's construction. Without Inca ruins, the distinctive landscapes, or the descendants of the century-old weaving traditions, what is there for tourists to see? The Chinchero International Airport may promise a path to development and modernity, but the path will lead to nowhere if the project neglects to preserve the region's rich cultural heritage and disregards local indigenous conceptions of well-being.

As Colloredo-Mansfeld found in the vendor community in Otavalo, Ecuador, economic change can invigorate local indigenous politics even as it fragments cultural values (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002). While Otavaleños reinforced differences and created hierarchies, they invoked ancient Andean values of how to live and behave. In Chinchero, the economic change spurred from the airport has the potential to either strengthen the vendors' communal values of *sumaq kawsay* or dissolve the town's rich cultural heritage of language, communal organization, architecture, and weaving practices. Only time will tell which outcome will become reality.

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