Quechua Women's Embodied Memories of Political Violence in Peru (1980s-1992):

The Female Body Communicates Memories

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This dissertation titled
Quechua Women's Embodied Memories of Political Violence in Peru (1980s-1992):
The Female Body Communicates Memories

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ABSTRACT

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Women's Embodied Memories of Political Violence in Peru: The Female Body Remembers

Director of Dissertation: Roger C. Aden

This dissertation examines the ways Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and Shining Path in Peru (1980s-1992). To answer this question, I ask three subsidiary research questions: How does the film, The Milk of Sorrow, illustrate Quechua women’s embodied memories of political violence in Peru (1980s-1992)? How do contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict? How do Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima?

By performing a thematic analysis of the film, conducting two focus groups and a photovoice project, I analyze how Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence (1980s-1992). After analyzing participants’ responses, I argue that the film enables the exploration of memories of political violence in Peru within the Quechua female body. To develop this argument, I draw on Marks’s (2000) use of a theory of embodied visuality to examine the film-viewing process as “an exchange of two bodies” (the viewer and the film) in which the body and culture meet.

Chapter 1 offers a synopsis of the film, emphasizing how it reflects the stories of Quechua women who experienced political violence. Chapter 2 provides a feminist
explanation for the ways women enact embodied memories in post-conflict societies.

Chapter 3 discusses the methods that I followed to answer the research questions and presents the thematic analysis that examines how the film illustrates Quechua women’s memories of the conflict. In other words, in chapter 3, I explain the ways I use the film as a starting point for the discussion to explore women’s embodied memories of the conflict. Chapter 4 illustrates how Quechua women in focus groups discuss their embodied memories of terrorism. Chapter 5 discusses the results of the photovoice project, which describe how Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories in the hills outside of Lima. Finally, Chapter 6 offers a more detailed connection between Chapters 4 and 5, and, therefore, the film and participants’ embodied memories of the conflict in contemporary times. It also summarizes how this dissertation points to a methodological challenge about the ways researchers learn how others’ memories are embodied in their encounters in everyday practices.
DEDICATION

To my sweet Jesus Christ: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me”

Philippians 4: 13

To the amazing men in my life: My husband, Roberto, and my son, Jose Alejo.

For a lifetime of support and true love
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CHAPTER 1: THE MILK OF SORROW AND THE SYMPTOMS OF HISTORY THROUGH THE FEMALE BODY

Communicating Memories: Synopsis of The Milk of Sorrow

The Milk of Sorrow (Llosa, 2009) tells the story of Fausta, a young woman who suffers from an unusual disease called “la teta asustada” (the milk of sorrow). According to an Andean belief, the disease is transmitted through the breast milk or via utero of pregnant women who were raped during or soon after pregnancy in terrorist times in Peru (1980s-1992). Suffering the disease means that Fausta constantly lives afraid of strange men whom Fausta considers as potential rapists. When in public spaces, Fausta timidly walks and performs preventive gestures to avoid physical contact with others.

In other words, Fausta’s vision of the world has been determined by her mother’s (Perpetua) experience of gang rape during wartime. Having the disease makes it difficult for Fausta to live her own life, to disconnect herself from Perpetua’s painful memories. Even though Fausta was in her mother’s womb during the rape, Fausta lives as if she has been raped, too, and is scared of a possible sexual assault during her daily commute. Fearful of being raped, Fausta decides to insert a potato in her vagina to avoid sexual assault. In Fausta’s words:

My mom told me that during the terrorism, a neighbor did it to resist rape. They [the rapists] say it was disgusting. So, I thought she was the smartest. Then, she got married, had four kids, and didn’t have to live with a rapist. (Llosa, 2009)¹

The potato inside Fausta’s vagina depicts her resistance to being raped and experiencing the consequences of sexual assault in her life. Although having the potato in her body

¹ All subsequent references to the film are Llosa, 2009.
extremely affects Fausta’s health, she opposes removing the potato because she considers the tuber as her “coat of arms” to prevent rape and an unwanted pregnancy. She believes if potential rapists see the potato in her vagina, it could produce rapists’ disgust and “only revulsion stops revolting people.”

Like Fausta, her family believes Fausta was “contaminated” by her mother’s painful memories through breast-feeding. They rely on the Andean explanation of the disease and affirm that Fausta swallowed her mother’s memories. For that reason, her family considers Fausta’s introverted behavior and physical symptoms (e.g., frequent faints and nose bleeding) are because she “carries” in the body her mother’s anguish. Since “la teta asustada” is not diagnosed by traditional medicine, but rather by the Andean belief, when Fausta faints and bleeds through her nose, her uncle tries to explain to a physician, according to his belief, why Fausta suffers from “la teta asustada:”

She bleeds only when she is frightened. Her mother, she just passed away, and that’s why she fainted. She lived in the village during the hard times. Fausta was born during the years of terrorism. Her mother transmitted her fear through breast milk. La teta asustada, that’s how we call those children who were born like she was, without soul, hidden under the ground because of the fear. Such an illness doesn’t exist here, right, doctor?

This is the scene in which “the plot’s action begins with the death of Fausta’s mother” (D’ Argenio, 2013, p. 24) and her internal struggle of removing the potato and moving on after her mother’s death. Because Fausta does not have money to bury her mother, her corpse remains mummified (in her uncle’s house) until she can find a job and take her
mother, Perpetua, to her native village and bury her according to her family and cultural rituals. When Fausta finds a job as a housekeeper, she is forced to confront her fear of being in the world. Accepting this job means that Fausta must face the possibility of encountering strange men whom she considers potential rapists. During her new work routines, Fausta nervously moves from the safety of her home to the exploration of unfamiliar public spaces. Fausta’s work pushes her to construct her subjectivity, find her own voice, and communicate not only her mother Perpetua’s story, but also her own story.

In this respect, the film illustrates the ways the body communicates history or “the symptoms of history.” In other words, Perpetua transmits to Fausta her trauma through the body. As a result of the “transmission” of memory, Fausta re-enacts Perpetua’s trauma when facing similar events in contemporary spaces. That is to say, the movie illustrates how the body might be seen as a “container” of memory (Connerton, 1989), able to re-enact the past when facing memories in contemporary situations and transmitting history to others’ bodies. The ways that Fausta re-enacts her mother’s trauma through the body demonstrates the notion of embodied memory, performed by the body when facing past events in contemporary times and spaces. *The Milk of Sorrow* thus offers a compelling opportunity to reflect upon the ways in which history, memory, agency, and understandings of space intersect within the female body. *The Milk of Sorrow*, Quechua Females, and the History of Conflict in Peru: 1980s-1992

“The milk of sorrow” disease is a cultural belief of Quechua communities to explain the suffering of indigenous women who experienced sexual violence during
terrorist times (1980s-1992). Defining Quechua population in Peru requires considering two different approaches. On the one hand, there is a definition of Quechua indigenous population related with ethnicity, which mean a group of individuals who share geographical space, history, geographical and social organization, and have developed a sense of belonging based on beliefs, ancestral traditions, and kinship (biological or social). The Quechua population might be defined as individuals who live in the geographical and cultural area occupied by the Inca Empire: Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. As Gelles (2002) explains:

Today the central Andean highlands, covering the better part of the largest mountain chain in the world, give rise to the Inca, the largest indigenous empire to develop in the Americas; today the Andes are home to the largest peasant communities control vast territories in the highlands of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, and one out of every three indigenous people of the America is Andean. (p. 204)

On the other hand, the Quechua population might be defined according to the use of its native language, and in this project, I approach the Quechua population attending to the use of language. Quechua is the ancestral language of the Inca Empire, but in spite of the age and prevalent use of the language, today signs of the language’s death are present. Social and cultural discrimination against those who speak it is so manifest in Peru that many Quechua speakers decide not teach their descendants the language for fear they will be rejected or mocked.
In line with the cultural traditions of Quechua peoples and their struggles in contemporary lives, the film, *The Milk of Sorrow*, is based on Theidon’s (2004) book *Entre Projimos*, which considers how the Quechua female body communicates embodied memories of political violence in Peru. In her book, Theidon explains “la teta asustada” as a theory of violence and trauma elaborated by Quechua communities to explain how the mothers transmit their embodied memories of rape to their babies via breast milk or the uterus. In her exploration, Theidon (2004) reflects on two possible interpretations to explain the causes and symptoms of “la teta asustada.” On the one hand, Theidon explains how the disease is frequently associated with biomedical descriptions that consider the disease as a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) transmitted from the mother to the baby during pregnancy.

A biomedical perspective of the disease considers that PTSD may be biologically transferred from progenitors to the next generation. Yahyavi et. al. (2014) identify biological features which might contribute to the transmission of PTSD to offspring. They explore the ways “reduced cortisol levels at the time of trauma may compromise the inhibition of stress-induced biological responses, resulting in prolonged physiological and emotional distress, which would then facilitate the development of PTSD in individuals at risk” (p. 90). This study emphasizes the possibility that the mother transmits PTSD to the next generation through the uterus “by alteration of glucocorticoid receptor sensitivity or in response to maternal behaviors in early life” (p. 91). A mother’s extreme levels of depression and anxiety might be transmitted through the placenta into the fetus, which could affect cortisol levels of the baby and fetal development.
On the other hand, when referring to “la teta asustada,” Theidon (2008) prefers to explain it from a phenomenological perspective rather than a biomedical model of PTSD. For Theidon, although medical research in PTSD presents arguments to explain how stressful experiences may be transmitted transgenerationally from mother to baby, she questions the dominance of the diagnosis of PTSD for exploring the legacies of armed conflict. Theidon warns that “there is an enormous market for trauma, and an industry of trauma experts deployed to post-conflict countries to detect symptoms of PTSD via ‘culturally sensitive’ questionnaires” (p. 8). For Theidon, the search for a universal language to communicate violent events and their outcomes to a global audience dismisses the urgency of conducting research that attends to divergent experiences of multiple cultures and biologies.

Moreover, Theidon (2008) prefers to consider “la teta asustada” as a theory about the memory of violence rather than a “myth” elaborated by Quechua communities. Similarly, Lupton (2012) states, “non-western cultures’ medical beliefs have sometimes been viewed as ‘superstitions’” (p. 12) and [beliefs] considered as “an inferior version of ‘real’ biomedical illness as diagnosed and treated by doctors” (p. 12). Theidon concurs with Lupton and avoids the reproduction of the dichotomies inscribed on the words “theory”—medical books— and “belief”—folk illness. Theidon aims to challenge those “universal” medical conceptions and advises “categorizing ‘la teta asustada’ [the milk of sorrow] in these terms which reinforces the dichotomy between producers and consumers of knowledge—a dichotomy that leaves little room to appreciate sophisticated theories” (p. 9). Theidon values the female body as a valid source of social knowledge and
examines the causes of the disease to understand how the symptoms are socially and historically produced. In other words, a phenomenological perspective might highlight the ways the female body actively communicates its experiences in terms of understanding postwar societies.

In line with post-conflict societies, in which women become important social agents in the process of knowledge construction of history, the film situates Fausta and her mother as the central narrators (historians) of the war times. As Maseda (2010), notices “it is no accident that the film begins with a widow [Fausta’s mother] retelling her traumatic experiences” (p. 5). The film portrays Fausta and her mother as important agents in postwar societies: “They are the only ones left standing to tell the stories” (Maseda, 2010, p. 5). While her mother is dying, she is comforted by knowing that Fausta carries her memories and will continue re-transmitting her mother’s stories to others. Thus, by depositing her sorrow in Fausta’s body, her mother is not only communicating her personal trauma, but also the social suffering of the Quechua community during terrorist times.

By receiving Perpetua’s suffering, Fausta’s body becomes the main character responsible for transmitting her mother’s knowledge and the suffering of their community. Fausta’s body performs “the symptoms of history” that communicate her mother’s trauma and the experiences of thousands of Quechua women. When scared, Fausta faints and bleeds through her nose; she repels encounters with strangers and boldly resists rape by using her “coat of arms” (the potato). Fausta becomes what Quechua communities call “weakened or damaged babies” (Theidon, 2004). That is to
say, the babies were born with physical problems (e.g., headaches, epilepsy, blindness, deafness, Down’s syndrome, etc.) and psychological problems (e.g., depression, eating disorders, schizophrenia, and so on).

In Quechua communities, “the symptoms of history” are evident through the manifestations of unbearable memories called llakis (Theidon, 2004). Andean communities explain that llakis enter into the heart in order to fill up it with emotions. Because the heart does not have enough capacity to contain llakis inside of it, “emotional thoughts” overflow outside of the heart “infecting” the rest of the body. Thus, llakis fill up the rest of the body. Theidon reports that the notion of llakis is a “hydraulic model of emotions” (p. 65), which means such emotional thoughts rise, weigh, crush, and plug the body. In short, Theidon notices how the body does not own memory, but memory owns the body. It seems that the “symptoms of history” are triggered by emotional thoughts (llakis), which constantly visit women’s and their children’s memories.

Theidon (2004) reports the testimony of one woman who expresses how her daughter has to deal with llakis as one of “the symptoms of history:”

I say that my daughter is still traumatized about everything that happened—everything passed through my milk, my blood, my worries. Today, she can’t study. She’s 17 years old and is in fifth grade. She can’t progress—every year she fails. She says she has a headache that her head burns. What is it—fear? She’s always been like this. (p. X)

Similar to the movie, which illustrates how the body communicates history, this commentary suggests the ways the mother transmitted to her daughter trauma through the
body. Consequently, the girl re-enacts her mother’s memories in everyday practices. Although memory indicates what is personal in a subject’s relation to the past, memory is undeniably intertwined with social process as well. Thus, the film portrays the story of many Quechua women who suffered political violence between state forces and Shining Path in Peru (1980s-1992).

Understanding political violence in Peru implies considering the ways the armed conflict “was particularly differentiated by gender, ethnic group and social class, whose exclusion and discrimination was ongoing before the violent conflict erupted” (Maseda, 2010, p. 4). Although members of the conflict—Shining Path and armed forces of state—did not have explicit, motivations or ideologies, or overt ethnic tensions, the war did have a strong racial component, which fostered violence and destruction of the Quechua-speaking population in Peru between 1980 and 2000. Shining Path did not define its struggle as a conflict between ethnic groups, but as a struggle against extreme social inequality and poverty in Peru. The central motivation of the conflict was not starting a racial war, but a political struggle, one that had a significant ethnic dimension and that aspect was present from the beginning to the end of the armed conflict.

The internal armed conflict is one of the contemporary contemporaneous events in which the Quechua population has experienced an upsetting encounter with dominant groups (e.g., white population and high class) in Peru. According to Gelles (2002), the years between 1940 and 1993 show a significant decrease in the percentage of Quechua speakers. Particularly, the period between the 1980s and 1994 is a significant period in which the proportion of Quechua speakers was significantly reduced.
causes of such a reduction is the Peruvian conflict in the 1980s. During those years, more than 69,000 Peruvian inhabitants died and/or disappeared in Peru; of these 75% were native speakers of Quechua. The years between 1980 and 1994, from the beginning of the violence to the last period of the conflict, the number of Quechua-speaking victims was greater than Spanish-speaking victims. In 1993, the indigenous population, defined by the use of the Quechua language, represented 19.5% of the population. In 2007, Peruvian National Census reported now that population represents 15.9 % of the Peruvian population.

As De La Cadena (2000) notes, the Peruvian population has always justified discriminatory practices. Racist thought in Peru is based on the rejection of the use of the Quechua language; knowing this language is considered a ‘primitive’ and ‘uncivilized’ knowledge. The Quechua language is associated with inferior social status while Spanish is described as the language of civilization, progress, and reason (De La Cadena, 2000). Consequently, social and cultural discrimination against those who speak it is so manifest in Peru that many Quechua speakers decide not teach their descendants the language for fear they will be rejected or mocked. Therefore, those communities who speak a Quechua language prefer to hide their ethnic origins while interacting with others in the public realm.

In Peru, derogatory practices against Quechua people are established on a colonialisit stance that associates indigenous peoples with underdevelopment and poverty (Garcia, 2005, p. 4). The word that contains pejorative adjectives to Quechua communities is chuto. Theidon (2004) explains the word chuto means “thick lips” and
refers to an uncivil, dirty, and ignorant person. Particularly, in everyday practices in Peru, chuto is an ethnic offense. Quechua speakers learn very early that this word hurts the most intimate part of the self.

During terrorism times, the use of the word chuto was part of everyday life among the actors in the conflict. Members of state forces used the word chuto as a reference to identify Quechua speakers who they considered as informers for Shining Path. Thus, both state forces and guerrillas frequently named Quechua speakers as chutos when they exercised physical and sexual violence to express their repulsion against indigenous bodies: “fucking Indian,” “ignorant,” and “savage.” Verbal violence intensified the cruelty of physical and sexual violence in every scenario during wartime (Maseda, 2010).

The use of racist words during the sexual assault of Quechua women demonstrates the ways in which race and gender intersected in the conflict. The opening scene of the film is the voice of a dying Quechua woman, who narrates her rape and her husband’s murder during terrorism. By portraying the Quechua female body, Llosa aims to denounce the sexual violence that both guerrillas and soldiers enacted against indigenous women in the 1980s.

However, although guerrillas and soldiers performed and encouraged racist practices and violence within Quechua communities, state forces added an astonishing level of racial contempt and ethnic complexity to the conflict (Maseda, 2010). Between 1983 and 1984, the internal division among Andean communities—sympathizers with and opponents against Shining Path—encouraged local authorities to request the presence of military bases in Huanta, La Mar, and Huamanga. Instead of ending the conflict, the
arrival of soldiers to those areas dramatically increased violations of human rights, in particular, sexual assaults against indigenous women and girls (Theidon, 2008). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) in Peru and several scholars have reported that although both Shining Path and the armed forces committed crimes against humanity, the highest percentage of Quechua women’s rapes was attributed to state forces (Brooke, 1993; Falconi & Aguero, 2003; Maseda, 2010; Theidon, 2004).

While the lessons learned from studying Quechua women’s embodied memories of the 1980s-1992 violence can help us understand more about their particular experiences, they also may generate insight into how women’s embodied memories function in other post-conflict societies. In general, women’s narrations about the violence they experienced and witnessed in conflicts may constitute counter-memories that enhance historical inquiry by including plural memories of the armed conflict. Women become chroniclers of the history in which the female body becomes a valid narrator, denouncing violence and narrating the ways the body was actively involved. Moreover, in postwar societies, many women lost their husbands; they and their daughters became important social agents of post-conflict knowledge construction rooted in their own experiences.

Traditionally, depictions of war tend to masculinize the heroes and ignore women’s contributions and experiences in wartime. Women are portrayed as minor characters and powerless victims that need to guard their bodies in armed conflicts. According to Maseda (2010), although women’s bodies demand protection, they also need participation in socio-political process in post-conflict societies. Thus, feminist
scholars urge researchers concerned about gender issues to explore alternative representations of women’s trauma in post-conflict societies that overcome portrayals of women as passive subjects in “battered bodies.”

*The Milk of Sorrow* as an Illustration of Post-Colonial Cinema

In response to this urgent call the exploration of women’s alternative representations of trauma, *The Milk of Sorrow* constitutes a valuable example of an alternative feminine language to represent women’s experiences of being-in-the-world. As Maseda (2010) explains the film “employs some narrative strategies in order to include female trauma in the general discourses of history, steering clear of rendering women a spectacle of victimhood” (p. 4). By placing the female body as the central character of the story, the filmmaker situates the body as an alternative narrator that communicates history rather than as a passive object that accumulates violence without answering back. Instead of seeing the body as an obstacle to historical inquiry, the film sees the female body as a counter-memory to register women’s lives in post-conflict societies. Thus, the presence a Quechua voice at the beginning of the film demonstrates the filmmaker’s intentions of situating Quechua communities as the central narrators of the story to emphasize they were the population that was mostly affected during the conflict. The rest of the movie portrays how racist behavior against the Quechua community was present not only in the armed conflict, but is still present in Peruvian everyday practices today.

By highlighting the voices of indigenous women, who have experienced the oppression of colonialist practices, the film becomes an example of postcolonial cinema
in which emerges Quechua women’s trauma of sexual assault that has been absent from the Peruvian national history. Ponzanesi and Waller (2012) point out that postcolonial cinema “is constituted by and within a conceptual space in which making connections and drawing inferences, specifically those that are occluded by national and colonial frames, is encouraged” (p. 1). The film directly speaks up to the suppression of Quechua women’s trauma from national accounts during armed conflicts. As Maseda (2010) points out, “the social and moral restraints against gender violence disappear in wartime. Rape is found to be an abhorrent but, nonetheless, expected part of war” (p. 1). Similarly, Clair (1993) notices how sexual harassment narratives “do not receive the same public exposure, legitimation, or respect” (p. 243). As a result of the “normalization” of rape during conflicts, women’s narrations of violence are disregarded and silenced by national history while men’s victories, as acts of courageous defeat, are nationally celebrated and commemorated (e.g., annals of history, monuments, statues, and memorials). Particularly, women’s narratives of the conflict are disregarded when the perpetrators of sexual violence during wartime are members of government forces who bring “victory” to the nation. To avoid the image of the “fatherlands” being spoiled by the women’s accounts, dominant accounts of nations relegate the experience of women’s rape to a private mourning.

In the film, Quechua women metaphorically come back from the past (as a ghost figure) to situate their experiences in the public conversation of post-conflict and locate themselves as valid chroniclers of wartime. Quechua women’s memories hauntingly and persistently confront national history. The Quechua female body returns from the past to
fill the historical gaps and make visible the trauma that has been absent from the public realm. The film, as a counter-memory, depicts the female body as a site where private and public memories of the conflict meet. In doing so, the female body communicates the memories that continually haunt the bodies in the private realm and situates its trauma in the public arena.

As a communication scholar, who has been inspired by a feminist postcolonial perspective, the ideas of women’s resistance towards being absent from history and the potential of re-collecting the past by their own struck me. I commit myself in the explorations of counter discourses to resist “the tyranny of the single story” (Brunner, 2002, p. 103). In doing so, I found in postcolonial cinema a fascinating strategy to make visible stories that androcentric discourses have placed on the margins of history.

By investigating (and watching) postcolonial cinema, I have learned about the figure of “the ghost” in narrative films, which is a powerful metaphor to tell the story of that which seems to be absent beyond the narrative frame. Sharma (2015) points out “the figure of the ghost has, in recent film scholarship, been used in relation to the subjectivities of marginal and forgotten peoples, particularly in postcolonial societies” (p. 65). The ghost figure resurfaces to problematize and question universalizing definitions of history that arbitrarily have suppressed women’s and the colonized stories of history. In response to that “suppression,” marginal groups trouble and unsettle the present.

White (1980) notices, “the absences of narrative capacity or a refusal of narrative indicates an absence or refusal of meaning itself” (p. 6). As a communication and postcolonial scholar, I suspiciously see how the rejection of telling stories of others’ past
has political implications in the ways we communicate ideas of nation, history, and memory. Undeniably, the refusal to make stories visible denies the vitality of opposing perspectives in social life. Brunner (2002) explains how the vitality of culture “lies in its dialectic, in its need to come to terms with contending views, clashing narratives” (p. 91). Thus, my attention to the ghostly figure attempts to unmask dominant discourses to reveal the incommensurable possibilities of opposing and conflicting meanings in social life.

In order to avoid “the tyranny of the single story” (using Brunner’s words), postcolonial scholars (Bhabha, 1990; Said, 1989) encourage Western and non-Western scholars to remain vigilant to the colonial process. These scholars warn about the dangers of attending to a single narrative or metanarrative (e.g., history, progress, democracy, or nation), which privileges a “unique” idea of individuals’ lives, but ignores human variations. Bhabha (1990) explains how these grand narratives traditionally have attempted to legitimize “complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of ‘the people’ or ‘the nation’” (p. 292). Postcolonial scholars’ works demonstrate suspicion of the grand narratives, which overemphasize the notions of “linear progress” and “homogeneity” (the many as one) over the social differences that characterize the affective life of the national cultures. Similarly, Said (1989) notices how a Western discourse “eliminates certain discourses and makes choices” (p. 297), which suggests privileging some narratives (men and the colonizer) while placing in the margins others’ stories (women and the colonized). In other words,

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2McGee’s (1975) argues that “the people” are not objectively real. For McGee, the notion of “the people is “a collective fantasy” (p. 239).
Western discourses have traditionally constructed grand narratives in which white men, as rational individuals, “wisely” rule nations and give “collective identity” and uniqueness to a country among other nations.

Postcolonial scholars’ efforts to raise awareness about the risks of a single history, have elicited the emergence of “another time of writing” (Bhabha, 1990). It is a time in which minority groups have begun “speaking up” and reclaiming a space in history. According to Bhabha, in this another time we are “able to inscribe the ambivalent and chiasmatic intersections of time and place that constitutes the problematic modern experience of the western nation” (p. 293). In this “another time of writing” (and narrations), other groups (e.g., women and indigenous) people question homogenous discourses and problematize dominant ideas of “national history.”

We live in a postcolonial time, which “questions the theological traditions of past and present, and the polarized historicist sensibility of the archaic and the modern” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 304). In the postcolonial time, minorities compellingly problematize the notion of “linear progress” to the extent these groups go back and forward in time and space to re-collect the past and fill those spaces in history where they have traditionally been absent or placed on the limits of the nation’s narrative. Similarly, Foucault (1972) emphasizes the emergence of a “primitive narrative” which contests traditional (dominant) narratives and claims other ways of understanding the world. According to Foucault, a “primitive narrative” implies a shift in the construction of historical knowledge and considers the ramification and micro levels of events. In other words, a “primitive narrative” acknowledges we are in a time in which history is not a singular
level. In short, in this “another time of writing,” Western and non-Western scholars should be more concerned with representation in its political sense.

Third World Feminists have made important contributions to this “another time of writing” (Bhaba, 1990). For instance, Abu-Lughod (1990) explains how feminist scholars, “who have been doing exciting work since the mid-seventies, have been more concerned with representations in its political sense” (p. 16). In this sense, Third World Feminists call attention to the construction of other single categories that ignore the value of subjects’ diversities: “Womanhood.” The emergence of “another time of writing” demonstrates the complexities of notions such as “womanhood” and “native” which must be seen in relation to other individuals’ characteristics (e.g., race, religion, sex, gender, age, and social class). For that reason, Third World Feminists constantly reject the idea that women are alike in their common humanity (Track & Haunani, 1996; Ferree & Tripp, 2006) and criticize the limited and singular vision of women as single category (Mohanty, 2003; Narayan, 1997). In this “another time of writing,” women resist oversimplification of their identities and reclaim the complex depictions of their lives in academic and non-academic accounts. Said differently, women and the colonized refuse to accept both being imagined by “an authoritative” voice and being absent from historical accounts. Being aware of an “intersectionality” approach has been a powerful action that has encouraged feminist and communication scholars to face the difficulties of approaching others’ lives and resisting the construction of homogenous identities (Narayan, 1997).
In short, post-colonial and Third World Feminists have encouraged Western and non-Western scholars to question meta-narratives of “nation” in which nationalism is seen in androcentric terms (Herr, 2003). In doing so, “counter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase the [nation’s] totalizing boundaries—both actual and conceptual—disturb those ideological maneuvers through which ‘imagined communities’ are given essentialist identities” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 300). Consequently, the formation of counter-narratives undermines dichotomies (either/or categories), creates oppositional interpretations of minorities, and gradually destabilizes the social margins where the “fathers of the nation” have traditionally placed others’ histories (and bodies).

I situate my research in this “another time of writing” in which the female body communicates counter-memories of national history and it is actively involved in re-creating past events in contemporary practices. Therefore, the purpose of my dissertation is to examine the ways in which the female body stores, retrieves, uses, and communicates embodied memories of political violence. I do so by investigating how a specific group of women, Quechua females in Peru, experience embodied memories of political violence suffered during the conflict between state forces and the Shining Path guerilla movement during the 1980s and early 1990s. In particular, I explore one primary research question and three subsidiary research questions. My primary research question is: How do Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and Shining Path? To answer this question, I also ask these subsidiary research questions: How does *The Milk of Sorrow* illustrate Quechua women’s embodied memories of political violence from the
1980s-1992 conflict in Peru? How do contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict? How do Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima?

The insights gained from answering each subsidiary research question were used, in turn, to explore the next subsidiary research question. That is, my thematic analysis of the film provided me with ideas to pursue in the focus group interviews that were used when I explored the second subsidiary research question, and the results of the focus groups were integrated into the photovoice project which tackled the final subsidiary question. In short, the seemingly distinct subsidiary research questions are all related to one another.

By addressing these questions, my project aims to contribute, first, to the larger scholarly discussion of the nature of embodied memories; second, I enter in the ongoing conversation of the nature of embodied memories formed through political violence; third, I provide some insights on the ways women work with these memories as they develop an embodied subjectivity in their contemporary lives; and finally, I participate in the explorations about how Quechua women, in particular, have done so while negotiating life in a new space.

The notion of embodied memory is a concept in which different fields meet, both scientific and non-scientific (e.g., anthropology, sociology, historiography, philosophy, phenomenology, feminist theory, performance theory, and media and communication studies). Csordas (1994) notices, “beginning in the early 1970s, and with increased
energy in the late 1980s, the body has assumed a lively presence on the anthropological scene, and on the stage of interdisciplinary cultural studies” (p. 1). In the last two decades, social sciences and humanities have suggested the body should be understood as a dynamic entity at particular historical moments rather than a fixed material essence (Frank, 1991, p. 40). In his 1989 book, How Societies Remember, Paul Connerton explicitly explores the intersection between collective memory and body language to emphasize the ways the body contains history. In short, the notion of embodiment has inspired feminist scholars and from different disciplines to examine the ways that culture, memory, and the self meet in the body (Jaggar & Bordo, 1989; Kurks, 2001).

Particularly, the astonishing proliferation of media discourses of political violence and global actions of human rights defenders have increased the attention to the ways the body can experience pain and self-alienation (Csordas, 1994; Frank, 1997; Leder, 1990; Scary, 1985). In this sense, the creation of several centers for historical memory in Latin America to promote the memory of human rights violations committed during its periods of dictatorship and internal armed conflict demonstrate the relevance of studying the nature of embodied memories formed through political violence. According to the Latin American Network of Site of Conscience, there are in the region 20 centers of memory (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay). These centers are used as vehicles for promoting social inclusion, making visible plural memories, and raising awareness to avoid forms of authoritarianism in future generations.
In Latin America, the growing strength of human rights and feminist activist groups have called attention to the ways women have faced these memories as they handle postwar experiences in contemporary spaces (Candamil & Mejia, 2011). Specifically, Venturoli (2009) highlights the ways Quechua women have participated in the creation of social organizations, made demands for the reestablishments of their rights, and pursued the restitution of their lands. Thus, the role of Quechua women is undeniably relevant to the process of displaced population in postwar societies.

The recognition of women’s role in post-conflict society has signified the appreciation of the potential of their stories to undermine representations of women as passive individuals before, during, and after the civil war. In their narrations, women increase understandings of the ways the female body is actively involved in practices that question women as passive individuals that suffer violence.

In this introductory chapter, I have provided a brief synopsis of *The Milk of Sorrow* to emphasize how the film reflects the stories of many Quechua women who experienced political violence in Peru (1980s-1992). Moreover, I have explained the relationship between “la teta asustada” disease and the notion of embodied memory, which might be explained as the communication of memory from one body to another. The introductory chapter was the initial stage for exploring the ways the film represents the experience of embodied memory among Quechua women in Peru. Finally, I have presented the purpose of this research and three subsidiary questions that have helped me

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3 In this project, I am working with Quechua women who belong to one of these organizations: ASFADEL (Association of Displaced Family). The organization was created in 2000 and more than 75% of the members are women.
attain the main research question of my dissertation: How do Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and Shining Path?

In Chapter 2, I provide a feminist theoretical explanation for the ways embodied memories are enacted by women in post-conflict societies. To do so, I explain, from a feminist phenomenology perspective, the female body as a site of memory and the intersections among women’s embodied memories and trauma in post-conflict societies.

In Chapter 3, I explain the methods and the procedure that I followed to answer the primary question: How do Quechua women communicate their embodied memories of the conflict? And the three subsidiary questions. In order to respond to the first subsidiary question (How does *The Milk of Sorrow* illustrate Quechua women’s embodied memories of political violence from the 1980s-1992 conflict in Peru?) I did a thematic analysis that provided ideas to pursue in the focus group interviews. In this thematic analysis, I identified three central themes in the movie that helped to start the discussion: The use of Quechua songs in the story, the re-creation of problematic representations of women’s trauma, and the relationship between embodied memories and spaces. To begin the exploration of the subsidiary questions two and three, I described how I conducted two focus groups and a photovoice project, which facilitated the examination of the ways participants discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict as well as the connections between these memories and their contemporary lives in Lima. Then, I present the process of the data analysis and the tools that I used to examine women’s responses and identify general categories and
subcategories based on their answers. I end Chapter 3 by reflecting on my role as researcher in the dissertation. As a communication scholar, who is sensitive to feminist theories, I care about the ways I navigate among issues of power. For that reason, I consider it relevant to explain how I see myself in relation to participants in the process of knowledge construction.

In Chapter 4, I present the results of the focus group, which directly speaks to the second subsidiary question: How do contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict? In this chapter, I identified three central themes based on participants’ responses, which illustrate the ways women talk about their memories from the conflict: The threat of disappearance/abduction, re-defining safe spaces, and re-placement of bodies and/in spaces. The identification of these themes and their respective subthemes helped me to identify, first, how the threat of disappearance is the central connection between the film and participants’ embodied memories of the conflict. Second, using the film as a starting point for the discussion encouraged women to talk about how they experienced their villages as unsafe spaces during terrorism while identifying the sierra as a safe space where they “camouflaged” their bodies. Finally, the focus groups enabled my exploration of the ways Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills outside Lima by embracing the Quechua language as a positive aspect of their memories that remain embodied within them in urban spaces.

In Chapter 5, I report the results of the photovoice project, which respond the third subsidiary question: How do Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories
as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima? In this chapter, I present the results of the photovoice project as a continuation of the conversation of the focus groups (Chapter 4), enhancing my descriptions and interpretations of women’s embodied memories. While Chapter 4 describes Quechua women’s embodied memories in relation to their lives in the sierra and contemporary spaces, the photovoice enhances those memories by highlighting participants’ subjectivities. I organized Chapter 5 using two themes that emerged from the photovoice project: The Quechua female body remembers, and carving out a space for their own. Both themes provide evidence to increase the responses to subsidiary questions two and three. Participants’ photographs movingly illustrate the central connection between the film and women’s embodied memory (“the fear of disappearance”) by representing the absences/presences of the female Quechua body in the conflict and in contemporary spaces in Lima. Moreover, their pictures demonstrate how Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives by performing agentic practices (e.g., as informal vendor and farmers) to overcome socio-economic difficulties in their communities.

In chapter six, I address the primary research question of the dissertation: How do Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and Shining Path? In doing so, I argue *The Milk of Sorrow* makes possible the exploration of memories of political violence in Peru within the Quechua female body. This argument is a result of how participants explain “the milk of sorrow” disease as the fear of being disappeared. They persistently assert that the central female character (Fausta) is afraid of being forcibly taken away
from her mother and of never seeing her family again. They compared Fausta’s fear with
their own fear because they lived with the same anguish of being desaparecidas by
soldiers or guerrillas during terrorist times. Since they have felt similar anguish, they
understood and justified Fausta’s fear. In other words, for participants, “the milk of
sorrow” disease is the fear of being desaparecidas. My analysis of participants’ readings
of the movie and relationship with their own experiences is based on Marks’s (2000) use
of a theory of embodied visuality, I examine the film-viewing process as “an exchange of
two bodies” (the viewers—participants—and the film) in which the body and culture
meet.

Generally speaking, this project is a research about the ways the body
communicates memories. In doing so, I use The Milk of Sorrow (a historical film) as a
starting point to have a conversation with ten Quechua women, who experienced political
violence in Peru (1980s-1992). By watching the film, participants discuss and visually
communicate their fear of being disappeared, the meanings of safe spaces, their
contemporary lives in Lima, the meanings of the female indigenous body in the conflict
as well as their emotional meanings for the hills outside Lima.

In order to start the exploration about how Quechua women communicate their
embodied memories of the conflict, I present in the next chapter a set of theoretical ideas
that illustrate the female body as a site of memory and the intersections among women’s
embodied memories and trauma in post-conflict societies. In the next chapter, based on
feminist phenomenology (Fisher, 2011), I argue that the exploration of women’s
embodied memories in post-conflict societies implies navigating between the tensions of
denouncing women’s trauma and sexual violence while promoting women’s agency to overcome voyeuristic portrayals of the female body (Ritzenhoff & Kazecki, 2014; Maseda, 2010; Projansky, 2001; Venturoli, 2009)
CHAPTER 2: WOMEN’S EMBODIED MEMORIES IN CONTEMPORARY SPACES

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a feminist theoretical explanation for the ways women in post-conflict societies enact embodied memories in contemporary spaces. In other words, my goal is to study the ways the female body stores, retrieves, and communicates such memories. To do so, I argue that the exploration of women’s embodied memories in post-conflict societies implies navigating between the complexities of denouncing women’s trauma and promoting women’s agency to overcome representations of women as helpless victims in wartime. My argument aims to provide the theoretical foundations to examine the three subsidiary questions of the dissertation related: How does *The Milk of Sorrow* illustrate Quechua women’s embodied memories of political violence from the 1980s-1992 conflict in Peru? How do contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict? How do Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima?

As I mentioned before, the examination of women’s embodied memories of wartime implies the exploration of strategies that attain equilibrium between denouncing trauma and reclaiming women’s agency. In order to develop this argument, I start by presenting Simone de Beauvoir’s phenomenological reflections on women’s depictions as active subjects able to create a space in the world. De Beauvoir’s ideas provide valuable insights to understand not only how patriarchal institutions have objectified the female body, but also to identify the female body’s possibilities to affect the world. On the one hand, attending to the ways patriarchy has denied women’s possibilities of
transcending helps to see women’s challenges when creating a space of their own. On the other hand, identifying the female body’s possibilities to create a space in the world undeniably stresses women’s agency. In short, from a feminist phenomenology perspective, de Beauvoir helps me to include in the conversation possible strategies to attain equilibrium between denouncing trauma and reclaiming women’s agency.

Next, I draw on Fisher’s (2011) notion of “the meaningful body” to understand how the female body is able to sediment meanings of past events and reenact those experiences through bodily action in the present. Fisher’s ideas are particularly relevant to my project because they bring together the notions of the female body, time, and space. Fisher’s (2011) notion of “the meaningful female body” stresses, similar to de Beauvoir, the female body’s capacities to interpret its place in the world and enacts such meanings. “The meaningful female body” underlines the female body’s capacity to communicate memories when confronted with contemporary events. The communication of such memories is what I have identified in this project as embodied memories: What is remembered by the body and enacted through bodily action and motility in a specific time and space. Every time the body remembers, it is able not only to re-tell past events, but also to incorporate new meanings and significance to those events.

Finally, I end this chapter by relating women’s embodied memories with trauma in post-conflict societies. I demonstrate the ways trauma is encoded in the female body and performed in contemporary spaces as a form of remembering history as well as a form of communicating how the past might both thwart and enable women’s lives in contemporary spaces.
The Female Body and the Possibility of Having a World

In order to provide a feminist theoretical explanation for the ways women in post-conflict societies enact embodied memories in contemporary spaces, in this subsection, I lean on de Beauvoir’s ideas about women as active subjects able to create a space rather than passive individuals lacking skills to affect the world. In this research, I draw on feminist phenomenological understandings of the lived female body. In doing so, I identify de Beauvoir as one of the first feminist scholars and the one who made the most influential contributions to the intersection between feminism and phenomenology by proposing the notion of the lived female body—the relationship between the anatomical and the social. Fisher (2000) points out how de Beauvoir is one of the first feminists who provided a feminist reading of phenomenology to identify affinities and potential for interaction between both disciplines. In other words, de Beauvoir’s main contribution to feminist phenomenology might be identified as the inclusion of the notion of gender to phenomenological accounts, which allows examinations of the historical process of the construction of gendering.

My interpretation of de Beauvoir is that she specifically draws her arguments of the lived female body from two phenomenological concepts: “the lived body” and the “embodied subject.” In The Second Sex, de Beauvoir (2006) relies on phenomenology to explore the situation of the lived female body in patriarchy. She identifies the ways the male gaze has objectified women’s bodies. As a result of that objectification, women have internalized the male gaze and reproduced their lived bodies as objects for others in a phallocentric order.
According to Olkowski (2006), “the feminist encounter with Maurice Merleau-Ponty can be said to have started with Simone de Beauvoir’s 1945 review of Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology of Perception” (p. 3). In the essay, de Beauvoir claims that one of the great merits of phenomenology is that it gave back the notion of the lived body. In this short text, de Beauvoir claims, “in restoring our body to us, phenomenology also restores things to us. Through the body we can ‘frequent’ the world, understand it; we can ‘have a world’” (de Beauvoir in Heinamaa, 2004, p. 161).

Embracing the ideas that “we can have a world” and the ways phenomenology “restores things to us” suggests that de Beauvoir is considering the potentialities of phenomenology to explore women’s possibilities and alter social constructions that have historically oppressed the female body. De Beauvoir embraces the phenomenological elucidation that restores the lived body, one in which the body is not posited in the world as a mere object, but as a subject, the way of having a world. By highlighting the merits of phenomenology, de Beauvoir seems to be fascinated with the lived body’s possibilities as a vehicle to be in the world and have a space in it. When she claims that we can “have a world” through the body, de Beauvoir stresses how the space is an open field of corporeal possibilities. She reflects on the ways the phenomenological approach allows individuals to think about their places in the world and consider the power of spatial explorations. This powerful statement celebrates the possibilities of acknowledging one’s place in the world and re-thinking and re-creating the world.

Moreover, when de Beauvoir highlights “we can have a world,” she notices the relevance of the experience of spatiality, which should be understood according to
individual’s specific socio-cultural situation in the world. This idea means that not every individual’s situation is the same in every space in the world, that each individual’s situation is distinctive. For instance, while some individuals might experience space as an open field of corporeal possibilities, others might face in their bodies the constraints of having a world. As Simonsen (2012) states “some bodies are blocked in their mobility and access to places more than others who can freely pass and extend their physical mobility into social mobility” (p. xx). Therefore, bodily experiences of restrictions and/or freedom are often determined by specific socio-cultural and historical contexts.

The recognition of attending to individuals’ socio-cultural specificity and history is relevant to de Beauvoir’s work. In her words: “the body is not enclosed in the instant but implies an entire history” (p. 163). Individuals’ experiences and perceptions of space have a history, which is constructed before each individual’s birth. Hence, the lived body is always related to spatial and temporal dimensions, surrounded by others’ bodies in a specific environment. In other words, “my history [collective and individual] is incarnated in a body that possesses a certain generality, a relationship with the world prior to myself” (de Beauvoir, cited in Kurks, 2001, p. 163). In acknowledging the history that is “incarnated” in the body, de Beauvoir expresses her agreement with the phenomenological notion of the situated, embodied subject, which means the specific ways one’s situation will be expressed through one’s body.

De Beauvoir develops this notion of women as embodied subjects in a specific socio-cultural context in The Second Sex (1949). In her classic work, de Beauvoir illustrates the idea of the lived female body through the different stages of a woman's life.
Bound up with the idea of women as embodied subjects, de Beauvoir draws a history of a woman’s life, her attitudes toward the changes of her body functions over the years, and the ways society influences her perceptions of her body. According to Heinamaa (2004), de Beauvoir makes her central contribution to phenomenology in The Second Sex, which is “to pose the question of sexual difference in terms of a phenomenology of the body” (p. 25).

In The Second Sex, de Beauvoir’s main question: “What is a woman?” is a thought-provoking interrogation that has compelled Western and non-Western feminist scholars to study the material and symbolic dimensions of the lived female body. On the one hand, this question has uncovered the phallocentric gaze that creates the female body as object of male pleasure. On the other hand, the search for the meanings of womanhood encouraged Third World Feminists to urge for the importance of attending to the specificity of the female body according to geographical locations.

In acknowledging the female body as an object of the male gaze, de Beauvoir reflects on Husserl and Merleau-Ponty’s ideas of the lived body and uses them to examine the female body as an erotic object (Bergoffen, 2000,). De Beauvoir realized what “Sartre does not. It is the woman, not the man, who experiences the objectification of her body and it is the man, not the woman, who has the power to objectify her as the target of his desire” (Bergoffen, 2000, p. 61). Thus, the female body is always described in relation to men’s perception of women. For that reason, men have always given a woman definition: he is the subject and she is the object, reduced to the materiality of her body. Hence, when de Beauvoir claims that we cannot separate the biological body from
the body that lives in a specific context, she thoughtfully considers how none of the women’s biological processes (e.g., menstruation, breast-feeding, pregnancy, and menopause) have a meaning in themselves, but patriarchy defines them as weaknesses. As a result, women learn to perceive their bodies according to an oppressive society.

The Female Body in Specific Cultural Contexts

Inspired by the urgency of attending to the relationship between the female body and specific contexts and the need to identify forms to overcome male/Western objectification to the female body, Third World Feminists question the effectiveness of the category of “woman” in relation to challenges posed by women of color, lesbians, working class women, immigrants, and in general, women from “third world” nations. In this sense, Narayan (1997) and Mohanty (2003) recall the importance of attending to contextualized practices of women and their variations across age, gender, race, social class, religion, and geographical locations. Drawing on de Beauvoir’s descriptions of “womanhood,” Third World Feminists insist that recovering the female body means remembering that the body has a history, one which is materially and symbolically attached to a specific time and space.

Therefore, thinking on the female body’s possibilities of creating/having a world implies considering the socio-cultural specificity of the body in spaces. In this regard, Edward Casey (1998) questions the notion of place as an abstract and simple container, and proposes understandings of place as a concrete bodily location. For Casey, the lived body belongs to place and helps to create place. There are no places without bodies and there are no bodies without places. Both terms are intertwined with each other. Places are
complex because they gather a multiplicity of individuals’ experiences, stories, cultural beliefs, and thoughts.

According to Casey (1998), Merleau-Ponty helps us to reclaim such complexity of space from a totalizing treatment that describes space as homogenous and isotropic. In Casey’s words “space comes to us always already contorted, twisted in asymmetrical double helices of right versus left, here versus there, front versus back, near versus far, and so forth. These contortions begin in the bodily experience of place” (p. 237). For Casey, the fact of having a lived body is enough to reject any assumption that space is homogenous.

Thus, “space is ever different from place to place, and from body to body” (Casey, 1998, p. 238). This is why there is a double interweaving of body and space and space and body. We cannot talk about the body without considering the place where the body stands. In Merleau-Ponty’s words: “there would be no space at all for me if I had no body” (Merleau-Ponty, cited in Casey, p. 202). Casey notes: “we are surrounded by places. We walk over and through them. We live in places, relate to others in them, die in them. Nothing we do is unplaced” (p. ix). Thus, the idea of the lived body emphasizes the ways the body cannot be cut off from matter and space, but considered as situated in a material context.

Casey (1998) celebrates how “Merleau-Ponty culminates a late modern effort to reclaim the particularity of place, the universality of space by recourse to bodily empowerment” (p. 238). In other words, the lived body has ontological freedom to express itself and transform its surroundings. What I want to emphasize is the role of the
lived body and the body’s orienting capacity to move upon and within its surroundings. The ontological freedom of the lived body to express and transform its surroundings is the core of de Beauvoir’s ideas when reflecting on women’s possibilities to change the world.

In this subsection, I explained how de Beauvoir’s ideas about women as active subjects able to create a space increase our understandings of the ways the female body is actively involved in everyday practices and affects the world in meaningful ways. De Beauvoir’s contributions about the lived female body help me to reflect on the possibilities of seeing women as subjects committed with the world: “I realize myself, and it is in assuming myself that I have a hold on the world” (De Beauvoir, p. 160). In the next subsection, I talk more deeply on the female body’s capacities to interpret its place in the world and enact such interpretations. In doing so, my goal in the next subsection is to explain how the female body is able to sediment meanings of past events and reenact those experiences through bodily action in the present.

Communicating Women’s Embodied Memories

In order to examine the ways the female body communicates memory and reenacts the past, I consider the ways space and time are inseparably intertwined in the notion of the lived body. I rely on Fisher (2011) and Lee (2014) to elaborate the temporal character of the female body. By reflecting on temporality, I aim to consider the ways woman experiences space and time from her own perspective (time’s intimacy), how certain bodily and spatial practices activate her memories, and the way woman is an active subject able to re-think new meanings to “have the world.”
In turning to how the lived body determines time’s meanings, Lee’s (2014) essay, “Body Movement and Responsibility for a Situation,” demonstrates Merleau-Ponty’s notion of time’s intimacy or the ways the lived body subjectively organizes time. As Lee states “the ideal of time’s flow is intimately tied to subjectivity” (p. 239). In contrast to the modernist notion of time, which considers time objectively flowing and might be divided into equal fragments—the past, the present, and the future—Lee believes that time cannot be fixed in such rigid segments, but it moves back and forth according to each subject’s interpretations. In Lee’s words “time flows, the past flows toward the present and the present continues into the future” (p. 239). The rhythm, the flow of time is a subjective creation of each individual, who actively reanimates past events in the living present.

Fisher’s (2011) essay, “Gendering Embodied Memory,” enhances Lee’s interpretations on time’s intimacy. From a gender analysis, Fisher (2011) attentively considers how temporality might elucidate our understanding of women’s capacity to understand, re-think, and (re) enact their meanings of being in the world. Fisher revisits, from a feminist phenomenological perspective, Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of the lived body, an analysis which suggests the body is a mediator and interpreter of the world-meanings. Fisher’s essay is a relevant account exploring how the female body is able to understand, re-think, and re-enact its place in the world. In her work, Fisher reads Merleau-Ponty’s examination of motility, the bodily enactment, and spatiality and realizes the relevance of attending to temporality to understand the ways the body thinks new meanings and makes sense of the past, present, and future of being in the world.
Fisher (2011) notes “the body as our ‘medium’ thus has the interwoven senses of situation, mode, and manner, along with mediator and facilitator of experience, meaning, and significance” (p. 98). Fisher’s statement stresses the body’s capacities to make sense of the world-meaning and re-signify its understandings of “having a world.” Therefore, thinking of the body as a meaningful body means to consider the ways the body is able to understand and re-fashion new meanings of its existence not only in a particular space but also in time.

According to Fisher (2011), “this process of taking new meaning and fresh significance underscores the sense of bodily enactment and incorporation of meaning while signaling additionally a temporal character” (p. 98). Fisher explains how the notion of “new meanings” is directly related with a temporal dimension to what she calls “the meaningful body.” In doing so, Fisher argues, that “the meaningful body” is one that interprets and understands its place in the world and enacts such meanings. That is “the body that understands, that acquires and enacts meaning, [that] is the body that remembers” (p. 98). In this statement, she emphasizes the ways the body is able to sediment meanings of past events and performs those experiences through bodily action. Fisher’s emphasis on “new meanings” indicates the bodily possibilities of “refreshing” past events and making new insights in the present. In other words, although the body has history, the body has the potential not only to remember the past, but also to rethink those memories and behave in new ways at particular moments.

The fact that the body “understands,” “acknowledges,” and is able to re-think when confronted with certain situations might be considered embodied memories. In
other words, embodied memory is what is remembered by the body and enacted through bodily action and motility in a specific time and space. Every time the body remembers, it is able not only to re-tell past events, but also to incorporate new meanings and significance to those events.

The notion of embodiment speaks directly to Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the lived body, which considers the body’s capacities to make sense of the world-meaning and re-signify its understandings of “having a world.” Thus, embodied experiences emphasize the agency of the body in social practice, when the physical body maintains, performs, challenges, and questions dominant social assumptions. Our understandings of embodiment incorporate the ways the body not only reproduces but also challenges conventional boundaries. The female body should be considered as an active subject of culture rather than a passive object of culture. In this sense, “the lived body is a dynamic unit that changes through interacting with an environment to which it responds and that it actively structures” (Simonsen, 2012, p. 16). Hence, embodiment involves how the materiality of the body is affected in space and it also affects the space.

Such an approach to embodiment allows me to claim that the concept of embodiment does not reinforce the idea that this notion should be understood in terms of the individual, “but rather the concept of embodiment itself can lead to a deeper awareness of the sociality of being and emotion” (Turner, 1994, p. 62). As Csordas (1994) expresses it, embodiment is a notion that considers the study of culture and the self. Thus, embodiment might be understood as a bodily experience, which is the existential ground of culture and the self. Embodiment considers each human experience
as an embodied social experience. The body is always interacting with the surrounding world where the body inhabits others’ bodies, and the body affects and is affected by the complexity of such bodily encounters in particular contexts.

**Defining Memory**

In this study, I rely on Nora’s (1989) definition of memory. In developing a definition of memory, Nora proposes that memory and history should be considered in fundamental opposition. Nora expresses “history is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer” (p. 9) while memory is an actual phenomena which always exists, an eternal link with eternity. In this sense, Nora claims:

- Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived (…)
- Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past (…) [while memory] nourishes recollections that may be out of focus or telescopic, global or detached, particular or symbolic. (p. 8)

I consider Nora’s definition suitable for my project for four main reasons. First, Nora approaches memory as a faculty, not fixed in a rigid temporal notion of the past; he emphasizes the way that memory is susceptible “to manipulation and appropriation.” In other words, memory is always liable to be revisited, changed and altered by individuals. By highlighting the ways memory is susceptible to individuals’ manipulation, Nora
emphasizes subjects’ capacities to think, understand, and re-fashion new meanings of its existence not only in a particular space but also in time. Reflecting on memory as a susceptible faculty of subjects’ appropriation means to consider “the possibility of exploring new and different forms of making sense of personal life” (Freeman, 2010, p. 123). From this perspective, individuals might move into past events to interrogate personal and collective memories. In other words, memory involves an intentional act of recollection in the present of past events, and such action of remembering involves creating and re-creating yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Memory is a creative and interpretive act of the past into the present.

Second, Nora’s (1989) distinction between memory and history suggests that memory can be used as a counter-narrative, one that undermines those homogenizing conventions assumed by a universal history about subjects’ worldviews. For Nora, “history is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it” (p. 9). History situates memory as fiction and irrational fabrication, a marginal account, frequently opposed to facts and universal truths.

Third, the definition of memory that I consider in this project looks at the relationship between culture and the self. As Nora states “there are many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual” (p. 8). Acknowledging the ways the individual and the collective intersect in such a notion of memory implies attending to “the cultural dimension—specifically, to those culturally rooted aspects of one’s story that remain uncharted and that, consequently, have yet to be incorporated into one’s story” (Freeman, 2010, p. 96).
Individuals constantly construct and reconstruct their selves to meet their own situation in a specific culture. Memory is not only a product of internal individual process but is always a product of collective memory. By recollecting past events there is a need to move beyond personal life into the shared life of culture.

Finally, in contrast with the abstract dimension of history, according to Nora (1989), “memory takes root in the concrete, in space, gestures, images, and objects [bodies]” (p. 8). I desire to call attention to the ways “memory takes root in the concrete,” the body, in particular. In this sense, McDowell (1999) notes how Bourdieu suggests, “the body might be theorized as a [space of] memory” (p. 41). The biological body is charged with social meanings and values and when it is confronted with certain situations remembers to react in certain ways. As Summa et. al (2012) state “through body memory, rather, the past impacts the subject’s present and future, it is enacted in his/her performances, and it informs the unfolding of the subject’s experience without him/her being explicitly aware of this process” (p. 23). Those meanings are sedimented in the body and expressed through bodily action and motility, in the form of embodied memory.

**Gender and Embodied Memory**

At this point, three questions remain: How might embodied memory be gendered? What embodied memories will be more gender-specific? Why is gender relevant when considering the relationship between embodiment and gender? According to Fisher (2011): “gender, as a complex specification of both our natural embodiment and cultural being, conditions how we are in the world” (p. 92). Gender is a fundamental circumstance; it determines our situations and how we “have” the world. In reflecting on
gender, I understand gender as the dialectical relationship between the biological connotation of the body and its cultural attributions, which should be read in a particular socio-cultural context. In this sense, I define gender embodiment as the ways women experience the world through the female body—biological and social dimensions—in spaces filled with sensorial stimuli (e.g., sight, smell, taste, texture), which trigger women’s memories. Thus, the notion of gender embodiment pays considerable attention to the role that gender plays in conditioning individuals’ social circumstances and history. Depending on our determined biological sex, at birth we are given a name that (usually) reflects and specifies a particular gender, and our subsequent gender socialization encodes particular tasks and activities, appearances, roles and expectations for us—such prescriptions increasingly being challenged, certainly, but by virtue of being in a position to be challenged (Fisher, p. 94).

In order to identify those embodied memories that are more gender-specific, Fisher (2011) argues that “themes ranging from embodied temporal experiences such as pregnancy to gendered traumatic memory to countless examples of body memory and place memory and embodied dwelling—in multiple cases inflected by gender—are rich potential areas of phenomenological inquiry” (p. 105). In other words, she proposes to address those women’s experiences directly related with the materiality of the female body, which, when confronted with certain situations, remembers the past and consequently impacts women’s present and future.

I illustrate women’s embodied memories with two examples. First, de Beauvoir explains how the experience of menopause affects women’s self-esteem in a “youth-
oriented consumer society” (Young, 2005, p. 105). Young draws on de Beauvoir to argue how woman experiences a devaluation of her feminine sexuality and reproductive capacity:

Whereas man grows old gradually, woman is suddenly deprived of her femininity; she is still relatively young when she loses the erotic attractiveness and the fertility which, in the view of society and in her own, provide the justification of her existence and her opportunity for happiness. With no future, she still has about one half of her adult life to live. (de Beauvoir, cited in Young, 2005, p. 105)

When menstruation ceases, a woman faces society’s assumptions that claim that “she is no longer truly a woman” (de Beauvoir, 2006, p. 105). Her body confronts her with the fact that menopause rudely divided her body into before (past) —a healthy and attractive body to the male gaze—and after (future) —a burden and old body—which consequently impacts her situations and how she has the world in the present.

The second example that illustrates the notion of women’s embodied memories is rape trauma. In her essay, “Rape Trauma: Context of Meaning,” Cathy Winkler (1994) narrates her own experience as a survivor of rape and them interviews other women to develop her central argument: “the meanings of trauma must be interpreted not only cognitively and affectively but sensorial” (p. 250). In doing so, she narrates how the body of survivor-victims is able to “know” and identify the rapist. A survivor-victim tells how she recognized who the rapist was when several men walked into view in the police line-up:
One of them had an impact upon me. When he entered my vision, my body first identified him in the line-up. It was a purely visceral response, a return of the fear and revulsion. My body told me immediately that he was the rapist. After my body’s split-second identification, I then mentally recalled that man’s face as that of the rapist. (p. 259)

In this second example, the female body is able to remember a traumatic past event, which impacts her present to the extent her body is able to bring out that experience and (re) enact those feelings in the present. In other words, the woman communicates trauma through the body.

In this subsection of theoretical chapter, I provided key concepts to understand how the female body is able to sediment meanings of past events, and them communicates those experiences through bodily action and physical responses in the present. I stressed Fisher’s (2011) notion of “the meaningful female body” to underscore the body’s capacity to communicate memories when confronted with contemporary events. In the next subsection, I specifically relate women’s embodied memories with trauma in post-conflict societies. My purpose is to demonstrate how trauma of wartime is encoded in the female body and performed in contemporary spaces.

Women’s Embodied Memory and Trauma in Post-Conflict Societies

As I mentioned, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a feminist theoretical explanation for the ways women in post-conflict societies enact embodied memories in contemporary spaces. In doing so, first, I started by presenting de Beauvoir’s phenomenological reflections on women’s depictions as active subjects able to create a
space in the world; second, I connected de Beauvoir’s ideas of the female body’s capacities to affect the world with the body’s capacity to communicate memories when confronted with contemporary events. Such theoretical connection facilitated the identification of the core notion of this project: Women’s embodied memories. After developing these two subsections, in this last subsection, I explicitly present the relationship between women’s embodied memories and trauma in post-conflict societies. Feminist scholars warn that women’s representation of trauma in post-conflict societies must face the complexities of denouncing women’s trauma and promoting women’s agency. Therefore, my goal in this subsection is to present the ways the female body actively denounces traumatic past experiences of wartime and communicates resistance to violence while performing agency in meaningful ways in the public sphere.

A patriarchal perspective of the female body in post-conflict societies takes for granted the use of rape as a weapon of war in the armed conflict. The use of rape, as a war strategy, “has been an effective means by which men both iterate their own masculinity and undermine others” (Meger, 2012, p. 51). In this way, in wartime the female body is considered as “the ultimate site” in which the humiliation and demoralization of the enemy occurs (Schott, 2010); the sexual violence that happens to the female body in wartime represents one of the most unbearable parts for a nation’s history. For that reason, women’s experiences of rape are considered as a private mourning that provokes “national” shame and must be “healed” in the private sphere. The violence that happens to the female body in wartime evokes the kind of memories that a nation wishes to eradicate. Since the use of sexual violence in armed conflict “provides a
clear demonstration to the victimized group of their men’s inability to fulfill the roles of protector” (Meger, p. 51), rape is the kind of memory that a nation prefers to deny. Consequently, the silence of the female body serves to enhance the construction of the epic image of the male hero in history (Ponzanesi & Waller, 2012). What it is important in war narrations is the over-representations of male trauma, which eventually becomes a national reason to celebrate the arrival of peaceful times (Kaplan, 2005).

In contrast to the beatification of male suffering and sacrifice in wartime, patriarchy believes the portrayal of women’s trauma thwarts the glorification of the fatherlands. In other words, women’s suffering is a sorrow that must remain obscured in the subject’s intimate realm; their voices must be obliterated from national discourses; their experiences have to stay in a mystified silence and cut out of public discourses. A patriarchal gaze of the female body in wartime promotes the “discursive erasure of women’s experience in narratives of national tragedy” (Novak, 2007, p. 295). Thus, the privilege of masculine narrations denies the emergence of women’s memories as oppositional voices.

Undeniably, the exaltation of male deeds in wartimes and the isolation of women’s trauma into silence enhance the predominance of a patriarchal language that denies an alternative language to represent women’s suffering. In this sense, feminist scholars encourage the search for viable forms of feminine expression that can undermine homogenous and oppressive discourses of men as national heroes. Irigaray (1977) has inspired feminist scholars to create a new specific feminine language that allows women to speak outside a patriarchal language. In this sense, Maseda (2014) notices how female
filmmakers have engaged themselves with the exploration of alternative narrations that portray women’s voices that refuse to disappear and insistently haunt national history. In Maseda’s words: “in many ways female filmmakers advanced these ideas with their own praxis, even without calling themselves feminist in the strict sense of the word” (p. 54).

Similar to female filmmakers’ accomplishments, Manning (2013) notices how in art works, such as film and literature, particularly, in Spanish culture “female characters have begun to emerge who give voice to women seeking to evoke and understand the past” (p. 515). The emergence of these representations demonstrates the re-creation of alternative narrations that interrogate women’s lack of depictions within national discourses of political violence. As Budryte (2010) explains, “recent collective memory studies tend to acknowledge the role of gender in the process of constructing a national meta-narrative” (p. 331). The developing of alternative female portrayals represents an innovative space in national history to retell women’s trauma and make visible obscured female voices of public discourses.

Particularly, in Latin America, after more than six decades of dictatorship, internal wars, and terrorism, the relevance of women in post-conflict societies has gained greater attention among scholars, artists, and government institutions in recent years. Women human rights defenders in Latin America have demanded from national governments commitment to promoting respect for women’s rights and attention to women’s trauma in armed conflicts. In response to these requests, governmental institutions in several Latin American countries have established partnerships with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to create “Truth Commissions” and “Centers of
Memory” in which women have begun to emerge as relevant narrators of the past from their own perspective. Roht-Arriaza (1998) explains “Truth commissions as an accountability strategy came to international attention beginning in the 1980s as a result of events in Latin America, particularly in the Southern Cone” (p. 313). Countries like Argentina (1983), Chile (1990), and Peru (2001) set up these commissions after repressive military regimes and civil wars. The purpose of these commissions is investigate violations of human rights and “repairing” victims’ suffering by listening to their stories (“truth telling”) of violence during armed conflict. Novak (2007) explains “truth commissions like the one in Chile seek to circumvent this distortion or erasure by excavating the buried past and providing a forum for voices that have not been heard” (p. 298). Thus, one of the characteristics of these commissions of “truth telling” is to incorporate the plurality of voices of the conflict, which explains the surfacing of women’s stories of armed conflicts in Latin America in the last several decades.

Similar to the “Truth Commissions,” the creation of a “National Center for Historical Memory” or “Sites of Conscience” in other countries have promoted strategies to share stories of dictatorship and terrorism in Latin America to prevent all forms of authoritarianism in the future. By listening to different voices of the conflict, the “Sites of Conscience” aim to contribute to repair victims’ rights, examine the consequences of the violence on society today, and explore the opportunities for displaced populations.

The creation of these organizations has contributed to the emergence of women as alternative chroniclers in post-conflict societies. After wartime, women have become important social agents, who stand to tell stories and participate in the knowledge
construction of the conflict. In this context, the voices of women “expelled from signification and banished to both the textual and cultural unconscious return once again to assert their presence” (Novak, 2007, p. 313). Women become “agents of memory” (Aguilar, 1999), who participate in the process of understanding the past, and mediators of nation-building projects. By stressing women’s roles as “agents of memory,” their trauma is not dismissed as a personal/intimate issue, but their personal suffering might be seen as a valuable strategy to positively influence collective memory in present and future. As Reviere (2007) notices:

Women tell the stories of their lives—to their children, to their friends and neighbors, to their lovers and husbands. These narratives teach a lesson, open a dialogue, pass information, share experiences; the ability and the willingness to communicate is one of women’s assets. (p. 5)

Thus, the value of women of roles’ as narrators in post-conflict societies not only lead to the healing of the survivors (empowerment at the individual level), formation of compassionate feelings of the audience, but also to a national recognition that the violent actions of the past cannot happen again. In this sense, Freeman (2010) stresses that the value of narratives of trauma is to look back over the past from the standpoint of the present as a source of self and social understanding. The relevance of women as narrators of wartime is an opportunity to reflect on the past and a potential to explore new forms of solidarity.

Rather than obliterating women’s experiences from history, depicting women’s memories in post-conflict times signifies the possibility of expanding the limits of
history. Salbi (2007) notices “there is a power in telling one’s story, a power in allowing raw truth and experience to spill past the protective walls that we all construct for ourselves” (p. 6). Telling women’s stories is a political act that deconstructs meta-narratives of history that, traditionally, have privileged male “Truth” as the unique form to narrate history. Making women’s stories visible in national discourses means to transcend from the inmost level of the individual to reach families, neighborhoods, communities, and entire nations. In this sense, Reviere (2007) underlines “while the importance of sharing a personal story may start with introspection and interpersonal bonds, the real power of a narrative is its potential to illuminate a social problem and create social change” (p. 5). Personal narratives do not exist outside of collective narratives, but they are connected to the boundaries of histories and socially constructed in individuals’ minds.

By highlighting the ways that women’s memories have become relevant in post-conflict societies in Latin America, my point is to acknowledge the emergence of these representations within discourses of political violence and the value of women’s narrations of wartimes. The appearance of these accounts from women’s perspectives demonstrate other ways of depicting the female body as an active subject that resists, communicates, and questions the war rather than as a passive object that receives violence over it. In other words, rather than depicting themselves as submissive bodies that experience the violence, in their accounts, women privilege the body as a central narrator to communicate not only their suffering, but also narrate their own sorrow in relation to others’ pain, in particular their children.
For instance, the unspeakable suffering of experiencing enforced disappearances of their children have encouraged women to narrate from a feminine perspective (a language that is connected to the body) the ways they “make sense” of the conflict. In the report of the National Commission Reparation in Colombia (2011), when narrating the consequences of the conflict, some women stress their identities as mothers and claim: No parimos hijos para la guerra! (“We did not bear children for the war!”). Meanwhile, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina call themselves “permanently pregnant” because after the disappearance of their children in 1977, they have been pregnant now for thirty long years. Similarly, Peruvian women who experienced political violence in the 1980s, when retelling their suffering, claimed their wombs hurt when they remember deaths of their beloved children (Theidon, 2004).

By locating their pain in the body, these women localize memories in their wombs, which they metaphorically identify as a place where they can “feel” memory and history. The association of trauma and the female body in these stories demonstrates the ways embodied memories are gender-specific. When feeling traumatic memories in the body, these women materially and symbolically identify a part of the body (e.g. their wombs) to vividly re-tell the past to narrate what it meant to lose their children and how their children’s disappearances have affected their families, and communities.

Instead of presenting their bodies as passive objects that experienced violence, one specific feature of the female body (motherhood) inspired these women not only to narrate their personal stories, but also to engage themselves in political activism to reclaim their rights. By thinking on the ways they feel trauma in their bodies, as mothers,
these women are able to create a political argument that they could communicate in the public realm. Thus, for example, in Argentina in 1977 “The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo” went to the plaza to speak up: “We want our children; we want them to tell us where they are” (http://www.womeninworldhistory.com/). Peruvian displaced women boldly entered into public organizations to search for government and non-government organizations for support for their families. As Venturoli (2009) reports when displaced women came to Lima, they had to become breadwinners and had to assume leadership of their families. The women had to enter into public spaces as informal vendors or housekeepers. They also were part of organizations, such as “Los Clubes de Madres” and “Programa del Vaso de Leche,” which gave them social support to raise their children.

While it is relevant recognize women’s embodied agency in post-conflict societies, it also is pertinent to denounce the violence against women during the war, its consequences in the body, and the ways women resisted violence. Hollander and Gill (2014) notice “human bodies have assumed center stage in modern warfare” (p. 1) and the violence perpetrated during wartime continue to affect people in the aftermath of the conflict. That is to say “people whose bodies were ‘marked’ continue to embody the war in everyday activities in terms of pain, disabilities and loss of mobility” (Hollander & Gill, p. 1). Violence continues in the female body after the war comes to an end. For instance, women who suffered rape in the conflict are marginalized and even excluded from their communities. These women carry an indelible legacy of the conflict in their bodies due to violence or torture. Moreover, memories of the violence become part of the female body and its habitual and emotional experiences when facing stressful situation
like domestic violence in the present time. According to the 2013 report “Las Heridas Invisible de la Guerra” (Invisible Wounds of the War), some research indicates domestic violence often increases in post-conflict societies; men and women feel powerless to provide for their families and have difficulties adjusting to their new lives.

However, it also is important to mention how some women narrate the ways they resisted rape by hiding themselves and their daughters. In his book *Berlin: The Downfall, 1945*, Beevor (2007) narrates how German women, who were in East Prussia during World War II, learned to hide themselves and their daughters during the “hunting hours” of the evening. What I want to emphasize is the affective and embodied dimension of women’s experience, one that does not describe women as passive individuals, but as active subjects. In these accounts, the female body is not depicted as a powerless object, but as an active subject that resists violence and communicates the trauma when experiencing it.

Despite the acknowledgment of women as narrators in post-conflict societies, Maseda (2014) warns “although the level of awareness of the nature and treatment of trauma has increased dramatically during the past 30 years, we still cannot fully understand in all its dimension the meaning of suffering of trauma” (p. 51). Maseda calls attention to the complexities of women’s experiences of the conflict and the need remain vigilant to national accounts that ensure the inclusion of others’ voices. The risk of these national accounts (“Truth Commissions” and “Sites of Consciousness”) is overemphasizing women’s agentic practices while denying women’s trauma or sometimes overstressing women’s suffering.
Maseda wants insists that we must be careful to avoid repeating problematic representations of women’s trauma in the growing amount of national accounts. Feminist scholars should continue problematizing the representation of national accounts and must to remain vigilant of the risks for a culture when recalling women’s trauma (Kaplan, 2015) and frequently ask: What kinds of trauma are we privileging? What experiences of trauma we are constructing? How do these experiences also recognize women’s agency to participate in the process of re-construction in post-war societies?

In the search for a feminine perspective to represent women’s trauma in post-conflict societies, several female filmmakers (e.g., Llosa, 2009) have committed themselves to explore a feminine language that might express women’s experiences on their own terms. As Maseda (2014) notices “[female filmmakers] wanted to denounce something as atavistic as gender violence without falling into the objectification trap that could contribute to the display of violence against women” (p. 60). This search implies the difficulties of representing women’s trauma and avoiding objectifications of the female body, while reclaiming the depictions of the female body as an active subject from those that deny that women’s suffering be obliterated from public discourses. The representations (or inclusion) of women’s trauma do not guarantee a lack of dogmatic prescriptions of national memory, but at least make explicit their complexities.

The purpose of chapter 2 was to provide a feminist theoretical explanation for the ways women in post-conflict societies enact embodied memories in contemporary spaces. At the beginning of the chapter, I presented de Beauvoir’s phenomenological reflections on women’s depictions as active subjects able to create a space in the world, and
examined the female body’s capacities to communicate embodied memories in contemporary spaces. After explaining how I understand embodied memories, in this last subsection, I have explored the relationship between women’s embodied memory and trauma in post-conflict societies. To do so, I navigated among the challenges that feminist scholars face when depicting women’s representations of trauma in post-conflict societies: Searching for an equilibrium between denouncing women’s trauma and promoting women’s agency. I highlighted the emergence of women’s roles as valid narrators of post-conflict in Latin American and the ways that the female body is actively involved in everyday practices when communicating female experiences of the conflict in the public realm. I concluded this chapter by insisting that despite the level of consciousness of the treatment of women’s trauma, as a feminist scholar, I remain aware of the complexities of women’s experiences and the risks of problematic representations. In the next chapter, I describe the methods and the procedure that I followed to explore how Quechua women communicate their embodied memories of the conflict.
CHAPTER 3: ACCESSING EMBODIED MEMORIES

This chapter outlines my use of qualitative research methods to examine the ways Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and guerrillas in Peru (1980s-1992). First, I start by presenting the thematic analysis that helped to examine how the film illustrates Quechua women’s memories of the conflict and inspired participants to talk about their memories; second, I describe the methods of inquiry used in the following two chapters: Two focus groups and photovoice project; third, I present the process of the data analysis and the tools that I used to examine women’s responses and which helped me to identify general themes and subthemes based on women’s answers. I end Chapter 3 by explicitly addressing my role as researcher in the dissertation and how I dealt with reflexivity issues.

I began Chapter 3 by undertaking a thematic analysis of *The Milk of Sorrow*. The results of the thematic analysis provided an initial answer to the first subsidiary research question (How does *The Milk of Sorrow* illustrate Quechua women’s embodied memories of political violence from the 1980s-1992 conflict in Peru?”), and offered me a means of developing a set of questions that could be used to explore the second subsidiary research question (How do contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict?). In short, the goal of the thematic analysis of the movie was to identify central themes in the movie, which then served as a guide to foster the conversation with participants about what they saw in the movie and recalled about the conflict. The next section identifies and illustrates those themes.
Thematic Analysis of The Milk of Sorrow

The first chapter provided an overview of Claudia Llosa’s (2009) The Milk of Sorrow. I now identify three themes that permeate the story. These themes illustrate how Llosa artistically demonstrated how Quechua women embody the memories of terrorism in Peru (1980s-1992) between state forces and Shining Path.

The Use of Quechua Songs in the Story

The relevance of Quechua songs in the film might be related with a denouncement of the ethnic discrimination experienced by Quechua-speaking natives in Peru during the 1980s and the early 1990s. Today, racial discrimination continues in Peru and Quechua speakers live in urban areas trying to hide their language, AND their identity, because use of the Quechua language is associated with poverty, ignorance, and terrorism. In particular, thousands of female Quechua speakers, who experienced torture, rape, physical and emotional damage hid not only their indigenous identities, but also those experiences of sexual violence in order to avoid shame and social rejection from their communities. In other words, racist practices and sexual violence against Quechua communities have been historically intertwined in Peruvian history.

Llosa, the filmmaker, portrays the voices of “many females who cannot talk about their mistreatment due to their self-enacted amnesia or the societal amnesia” (Yliruikka, 2013, para. 4). They chose silence because the common perpetrators of rape were members of the armed forces, who were celebrated as national heroes after the war. The use of Quechua language in the film is a key strategy to illustrate how the indigenous population in Peru has been marginalized since colonial times. Anderson (2015) explains...
“in a country that has continually favored the white European heritage over indigenous blood and where race and class are intricately woven together into a hierarchy of power, the Quechua speakers have been silenced” (p. 15). Indeed, the film aims to interrupt Quechua speakers’ silence and use this native language as a strategy to heal women’s trauma and represent women’s rejection of the shame of their collective and individual identity.

The use of Quechua songs in the story suggests how the Llosa (2009) sought to emphasize the ways racial discrimination and sexual violence have been historically part of the Andean social life since colonial times. The filmmaker illustrates the hierarchical colonial structure of power through the relationship that Fausta establishes with the character of Aida, a white, upper class woman, who is a famous pianist in Lima. Since Fausta needs money to bury her mother’s corpse, she decides to work as maid for Aida. While Fausta is working, she sings Quechua songs. Aida, who is frustrated because of her inability to compose new songs for a concert, found in Fausta’s Quechua songs the opportunity to get new material for her performance. In order to get a new song, Aida makes a “deal” with Fausta: She will give Fausta one pearl necklace in exchange for singing the songs that she makes up. Yliruikka (2013) notices how Aida’s deal is a strategy “to plagiarize these songs under her name in a concert where ‘all Lima attends’” (para. 10). The deal represents the ways colonial structures of power (colonizer/colonized), exploitation, and social discrimination continue today in Latin America everyday life.
Because Quechua populations believe the use of the language might generate social exclusion, members of these communities prefer to use the Quechua language in private scenarios with family members or close friends. In the movie, Fausta exclusively communicates her emotions in Quechua with two characters: Her mother and Noe, the gardener.

First, the use of Quechua language to express intimate feelings is illustrated in the movie through the maternal-filial relationship. By starting the movie with Perpetua’s Quechua voice telling of her rape while Fausta was watching inside her mother’s womb, it could be argued that the filmmaker wants to emphasize the level of intimacy between Fausta and her mother and the meaning of using the Quechua language to communicate the personal and emotional level of this trauma. In this sense, it is no coincidence that the film stresses that Fausta “saw” the violence from her mother’s womb. Therefore, Fausta claims in a Quechua song: “I felt the slashing of your body.” Through the use of Quechua songs Fausta “expresses herself and her trauma and communicates with her dead mother” (Yliruikka, 2013, para. 10). Fausta believes that singing is a medium to deal with “the milk of sorrow” disease: “We must sing pretty things to hide our fear; and pretend it doesn’t exist; to conceal our wound and pretend it doesn’t exist.” Thus, Quechua songs in the movie might be seen as the language of the subjectivity and intimacy for indigenous communities. Fausta reserves the use of Quechua language to communicate her emotions.

Second, Fausta uses the Quechua language to communicate her emotions to Noe, the gardener. Noe enters into Fausta’s intimate space through the use of her native language: Quechua. For Fausta, Quechua is the language of her mother’s sorrow. Since
her mother sings her memories to Fausta in Quechua, it is possible Fausta might relate Quechua with “the familiar”—her community. But, Fausta’s knowledge of her community is directly related with her mother’s trauma of violent times in Peru. It seems that Fausta only knows painful words in Quechua, which her mother used to describe the sexual assault that she and other women suffered during terrorism.

However, when Noe speaks Quechua to Fausta, he uses a different set of words in Quechua—words of faith and encouragement—that Fausta probably did not use during her journey with her mother. His use of a different set of words is illustrated in the scene in which Noel removes branches and debris of the garden to plant new flowers. While cleaning up the garden, Noe tells Fausta in Quechua: “At the stems you can read everything, its life and memories. The earth must be stirred from top to bottom. If not, you get a crust and the plant dries quickly.” Although Noe does not know about Fausta’s potato or her mother’s trauma, the film suggests that Noe metaphorically compares Fausta’s body—in particular her vagina—with a garden in which the roots of the potato narrate Perpetua’s memories and Fausta’s fears. Her body—like a garden—must be cleaned up of “fallen branches” and “debris”—painful memories—to encourage the growth of new memories. Noe’s metaphorical language is charged with hope and life for Fausta. He invites Fausta to re-signify her native language with a new set of meanings to explore the possibilities of being-in-the-world.

In short, Quechua songs in the film artistically give voice to Quechua-speaking women who experienced terrorism in Peru during the 1980s and the early 1990s. In doing so, the film emphasizes how racial discrimination continues against Quechua speakers in
Peru. These dynamics of social exclusions cause Quechua people’s desires of reducing the use of the Quechua language in private spaces. However, the use of Quechua songs in the film also demonstrate not only the colonialist stance that remains in Peru, but the ways Quechua communities resist being excluded from national discourses. *The Milk of Sorrow* stresses how Quechua women’s stories, traditionally subjugated by a colonialist stance, emerge to enunciate their accounts and undermine problematic representations of women’s experiences in national discourses. The Quechua songs in the movie imply an indigenous means to negotiate their rights as minorities groups in a contemporary world.

**The Re-creation of Problematic Representation of Women’s Traumatic Memories**

The representation of women’s trauma in the film might be understood in two possible ways: The mother’s embodiment of a past event and the daughter’s enactment of those memories in the present. First, the mother depicts the ways traumatic experiences remain alive and are never denied by the body. Moreover, the mother represents how the female body might be a “container” of social and collective memory. In this regard, the mother represents an archetype in Peruvian history: the widow. According to Theidon (2004), “[the widows] are the only ones left standing to tell the stories. The Quechua name warmisapa reflects her ambivalence: warmi means woman and sapa, very or alone. Therefore, warmisapa could mean either ‘woman alone’ or ‘very woman’” (p. 132).

By privileging the figure of the warmisapa to tell the story, the movie “starts as Fausta’s mother, Perpetua, eloquently sings in indigenous Quechua language her story, her brutal mistreatment, while she was pregnant with Fausta” (Yliruikka, 2013, para. 2). The beginning of the movie suggests Fausta’s and Perpetua’s voices represent the
experience of thousands Quechua speaking indigenous women who remained silent after the sexual violence they suffered:

This woman who sings, was grabbed, was raped that night. They didn’t care about my unborn daughter. They raped me with their penis and their hands, with no pity for my daughter watching them from inside. And not satisfied with that, they made me swallow the dead penis of my husband Josefo. His poor dead penis seasoned with gunpowder. With that pain I screamed: You better kill me and bury me with my Josefo.

Fausta’s mother “is singing, possibly, what Quechua cultures call qarawi, a narrative form sung to remember the past” (Maseda, 2010, p. 5). Therefore, the mother assumes a relevant role in postwar society as a chronicler of history, one that actively negates being part of an “invisible” national history, but reclaims her voice to narrate actively her traumatic memories. The signing female voice situates Quechua women as the central characters, which demarcates indigenous and female agency to make visible their obliterated stories within a national/colonial history in Peru.

Second, Fausta, the daughter, represents the enactment of her mother’s memories in the present. Fausta lives to reproduce her mother’s memories. She continues with her mother’s tradition of being a chronicler, in particular singing Quechua songs (qarawi). Fausta also resists being treated as a passive body and creates her own way to resist rapists; she inserts a potato into her vagina in order to provoke repulsion on the part of potential rapists. Fausta explicitly sabotages men’s power to rape, which might be seen as a form of control over her own body. Thus, the interruption of problematic
representations of women’s traumatic memories is present in the movie through the mother’s rejection of being ashamed, and by Fausta’s control over her own body.

Fausta claims that she uses the potato “like a coat of arms, like a stopper because only revulsion stops revolting people.” Calling the potato “a coat of arms” or armor suggests that Fausta’s memory continues anchored in the 1980s and the early 1990s when the armed conflict occurred. It seems she is ready to face bravely the conflict, protect her body in the war, and minimize harm to herself using her “coat of arms.” For her, the potato is her war weapon to resist the enemy (men/soldiers/foreigners) and prevent sexual assault. Knowing she has the potato in her vagina suggests that Fausta is re-enacting her mother’s desires to protect her body of potential sexual assault.

Despite the physical suffering the potato produces in Fausta, she resists the idea of taking the potato out. She is willing to endure the physical damage of her uterus because she is not eager to surrender her body to possible rapists and let her mother’s memories die. For Fausta, taking the potato out means opening her body, sexuality, subjectivity, and removing literally her mother’s memories inside of her. Perpetua’s trauma is deeply embedded on Fausta’s body and—metaphorically—constantly flourishing inside of her vagina. The growth of the potato in Fausta’s vagina may be seen as a symbolic representation of the transmission of Perpetua’s memories to Fausta. Via breast milk, her mother gave Fausta all the necessary nutrients to irrigate her trauma and perpetuate her memories.

Bodies are not only the history of what has happened to them, but also of what has been passed on through them. The history of Perpetua’s embodied experience during
terrorism is written in/on her body, but after her death this history continues alive in/on Fausta’s body. She lives to water her mother’s history and keep alive her “drying memory.” The potato’s roots, which constantly grow outside of Fausta’s vagina, suggest that Perpetua’s memories constantly flourish because Fausta’s body is a favorable terrain for her cultivation.

In short, by denying the possibility of removing the potato from her vagina, Fausta is not only radically resisting the possibility of rape, she is also keeping Perpetua’s memories alive and re-claiming a place in the history for her mother’s traumatic experience. By resisting removing the potato, Fausta is daily re-telling the violation that her mother—and thousands of Peruvian women—experienced during the conflict. By having the potato in, Fausta remembers her mother’s anguish of being raped with no pity by several soldiers.

Thus, Fausta’s body is not only an enclosed site of resistance that strongly challenges the “entrance” of male dominance into her sexual organs, but also a bodily space that communicates her mother’s memories. As her mother, Fausta becomes an active “chronicler” of the Peruvian history. Yliruikka (2013) explains “it is not only the maternal body, which becomes a historical text, which embodies the cruelty, but also the filial body, embodying the long-lasting trauma” (para. 5). Fausta embodies Quechua women’s trauma, a part of national history, which has been silenced by dominant narrations that traditionally have celebrated male deeds over women’s trauma. Instead of using spoken words to communicate these experiences, Fausta communicates women’s trauma through body language and movements when walking in public spaces. In other
words, Fausta’s body language illustrates the ways the female bodies of Quechua women stores, retrieves, and communicates embodied memories of the conflict.

By depicting the female body as an active subject, Llosa artistically navigates among problematic representations of women’s trauma in national accounts. While underlining the potential of the female body as a source of social knowledge, the film problematizes universalizing versions of the tragic civil war and the long history of colonial oppression.

*The Relationship between Women’s Embodied Memory, and Women’s Spaces*

Undeniably, the movie constitutes a compelling scenario for exploring feminine body comportment, manner of moving (e.g., encountering or avoiding touching others), and relation to space in everyday life. Specifically, the movie is a fascinating medium for examining women’s embodied memories; in particular, the ways the female body stores, retrieves, and, communicates such memories.

Fausta embodies the most extreme form of the female bodily invasion: rape. As a result, Fausta exaggeratedly performs maneuvers to avoid physical contact with the unknown. She is concerned about increasing the distance between her body and others’ bodies. Fausta carefully “inspects” the physical appearance of others in order to detect potential rapists. She lives fearfully even though her family members claim that there is no “real” reason to be scared in Lima nowadays. However, Fausta insists on restraining herself from exploring the neighborhood and its surroundings. The movie shows how Fausta limits her movements denying herself the opportunity to explore new possibilities of being with others (male/strangers) in public spaces.
Fausta believes that during her daily commute she might be intentionally the subject of bodily invasion (e.g., in the bus, walking in the market). For that reason, she uses preventive body gestures to keep others at a distance. Fausta is hyper-aware of social meanings that claim that the female body is a potential object of men’s intentions and control in public spaces. She has interiorized meanings that place the female body as an object of male desire that can be sexually rapable in any time and space. Indeed, such meanings have determined how she reacts against strange men’s potential touching in public spaces and prevents others’ objectifying touching in such scenarios.

Fausta’s bodily movement in space is a continuous assessment of the others’ appearance and prevention from an intrusive touching. In doing so, although Fausta’s body and gaze are daily distanced from others. At the same time, she submissively accepts others gaze over her body; said differently, she looks at the ground without questioning actively the objectifying gaze. However, even when she looks at the ground, it does not mean that Fausta lacks vision. She has a mode of vision to assess the environment and “scan” others as a possible risk for her body, and in particular, for her sexuality. It seems Fausta has a gaze, which is “distanced from and mastering its object” (Young, 2005, p.69). It is a gaze, which is not interested in reducing distance or relating with others, but looking carefully at the otherness to detect a latent danger. In short, others’ physical presence has significance to Fausta to the extent that their presence represents a threat to her own body.

Fausta’s distanced gaze might be illustrated in the scene in which she walks with her auntie to Aida’s house where Fausta works as a maid. Despite the fact that Fausta is
scared of walking by herself in public spaces, she decides to accept a job. During the walk toward the house, as viewers, we can see how her long and black hair usually hides her cheeks and breasts. She nervously walks and avoids eye and physical contact with others; her facial expressions suggest she is afraid of being in this space. A man passes close to her and she quickly looks at him and evades being touched. Then, a woman comes from the same direction and Fausta has the same reaction as she did toward the man. Fausta is so focused on avoiding contact with the passing woman that she does not realize another man was coming from the same path. She does the same behavior “scan” of others, avoids eye contact, and moves her body to avoid touching others’ bodies.

Fausta’s fear of encountering strangers in public spaces demonstrates the ways the body communicates memories in space. That is to say, we cannot talk about the body and memories without attending to the space where the body stands. The body is not “unplaced,” but it is always situated in specific contexts and times. Indeed, one’s body and the space where the body stands intertwine each another. The film illustrates the ways the Quechua female body when re-experiencing the past in public spaces; it re-enacts those traumatic experiences in the form of embodied memories. Said differently, memory is an embodied process, not only intellectual, but also a bodily sensation experienced in specific spaces and times.

To conclude this thematic analysis, I rely upon these three themes (The use of Quechua songs in the story, the re-creation of problematic representation of women’s traumatic memories, and the relationship between women’s embodied memory, and women’s spaces) in my qualitative research because, as Staiger (2005) emphasized,
cinema possesses the potential of cinema to draw out personal/collective memories. When watching a film, it is possible that a single event in the film’s story might encourage individuals to recall events from their past. As Staiger claims “the individual seems already to be in a life situation in which they are actively seeking a sign” (p. 194). Audience members search for “clues” in which they might connect their personal lives with the narrative level of the film. Particularly, “how media construct, mediate, or reproduce personal memories also carries some weight in our engagement with reality” (Staiger, p. 196). Thus, audience members create a self-narrative according to the media content and from their current perspective of being-in-the-world. Such personal narrative is undeniably charged with individuals’ emotional and intimate interpretations about the past in a present time. In other words, those self-narratives are strong personal event memories.

Regarding the memories that cinematic experience might elicit from the viewer, Naficy (2001) refers to Marks’s (2000) work to claim that “each [spectator has] recollections of images, sounds, smells, people, places and times they have left behind” (p. 29). By acknowledging how film draws out audience’s memories, Marks understands cinematic experience as “an exchange between two bodies—that of the viewer and that of the film” (p. 149). In this regard, the viewer is an active agent who has the ability to create her/his own object of perception of the film, question the film’s story, and connect it to her life experiences. In other words, Marks’s ideas of embodied visuality recognize the ways audience members bring their own personal and cultural organization to the media.
Thus, based upon the three themes I identified in the film, I developed a set of questions for the focus groups as well as general guidelines for the photovoice project (see Appendix). These themes worked as guidance to generate discussion about what participants saw in the movie, triggered them to recall their experiences of the conflict, and compared the film’s story with their own experiences.

Qualitative Methods of Inquiry

Based on the nature of the primary research question (How do Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and Shining Path?), a qualitative method is the most suitable approach to gain a better understanding of how Quechua women communicating embodied memories of political violence as well as gaining a better understanding of the intersections between The Milk of Sorrow and women’s contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima. As Lindlof and Taylor (2011) explain, some of the reasons qualitative researchers interview people are “to understand their perspectives on a scene, to retrieve their experiences from the past, to gain expert insight or information, to obtain descriptions of events that are normally unavailable for observation” (p. 3). Thus, my objective was to attend to the ways Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and guerrillas.

The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the film helped me to design a questionnaire for the two qualitative methods I used in this project: Two focus groups and a photovoice project. The data that I collected from both methods directly
addresses the second and third subsidiary questions of this research: How do contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict? How do Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima?

Before explaining each method of inquiry, I need to explain who the participants were in this study: Ten Quechua displaced women, who reside in Lima, and experienced the armed conflict in Peru (1980s-1992); their ages are between 32- and 57-years-old. Having these ages means that participants probably were either children, teenagers, or adult women during the armed conflict. Participants belonged to the Association of Displaced Families in Lima, Peru (ASFADEL), which works for the rights of displaced communities, displaced during the armed conflict. The women fled from four different regions in Peru: Payguana, Huancavelica, Ayacucho, and Apurimac in the 1980s.

Participants’ process of displacement happened in different moments and under different circumstances. That is to say, being from different regions and being different ages determined the difference and complexity of participants’ experiences in the armed conflict. For example, because Ayacucho was one of the first regions where terrorism started, participants who experienced the conflict in this region were the first in leaving their villages. Moreover, participants who became adolescents (“becoming a mujer”) during the armed conflict left their villages earlier in the conflict than little girls because their parents believed they might be raped. Additionally, some participants reported their mothers fled first even before the adolescent girls from the sierra to search for a job in a city. Thus, participants stayed with their grandmothers in the sierra, which signified that
participants created a stronger emotional attachment with their grandmothers than with their mothers. Also, participants told me that because their relatives migrated to urban areas at different times, these migrations generated the breakup of the family unit.

The majority of women described themselves as Quechua speakers and fluent Spanish speakers who belong to the working class and perform different roles as housewives, informal vendors, housekeepers, and farmers in the hills outside of Lima. All participants had children and nine of them had grandchildren. Only two women reported being married at the time of the research and the other eight women told me they are divorced as the result of domestic violence.

The strategy I used to recruit participants was through the organization, previously mentioned, in Lima ASFADEL. My initial contact with the organization was through the director who recruited the women interested in participating in the project. The participants who decided to participate in the project made their decision primarily based on their time availability to attend the screening, participate in the focus group, and the photovoice interview. I discussed with the coordinator of ASFADEL about women's time constraints and possibilities to participate in the project during the two days I had to collect the data for my research. For that reason, I set up the schedule for the focus groups and the photovoice interviews based on participants’ daily routines. That is to say, I worked with participants who could stay with me only after 8:00 am when their children were at school and until 3:00 pm before their children back from school.
Screening of the Film and Focus Groups

My first encounter with participants was during the screening of the film and the focus groups. Both activities were held one day in a room at the Casa del Adulto Mayor (Elder Home). This location was chosen because La Casa del Adulto Mayor is located in the downtown part of the city, which was a convenient location for participants. Emerson et. al (2010) explain regarding research sites that “the setting should be relatively neutral” (p. 161). In this sense, La Casa del Adulto Mayor was a comfortable and “safe” space where participants felt free to express their experiences.

I conducted two focus groups of five participants each. I determined the size of the groups in order to facilitate the interaction during the time available for listening to individuals' contributions. After watching the movie, I asked questions from the questionnaire, that I had created based on the thematic analysis, to explore primarily the second subsidiary question: How do contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict? (As I have noted, the focus group interviews were also intended to help me prepare the participants for the photovoice project, which—as I will describe—was developed to address the third subsidiary research question.) The identification of the themes in the thematic analysis of this chapter helped me to recognize “sequencing and grouping questions, strategies for introducing issues, and the links that might be important to make between different questions or issues” (Cameron, 2010, p. 160).
The Photovoice Project

Photovoice is a participatory technique that puts a camera in participants’ hands to encourage them to share or document their realities with others. As Singhal, Harter, Chitnis, and Sharma (2007) claim: “by placing cameras in the hands of people, a facilitator or researcher can gain insights into people’s lived experiences, which were previously overlooked, rejected, or silenced” (p. 217). Participatory photography encourages individuals to think on their personal and collective situation within their communities and the possibilities to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions. In short, photovoice is a participatory form of communication, one that privileges social interaction and fosters processes of dialogue between communities and institutions. By taking the pictures, people and groups reflect on their own lived experiences, identify what their discontent is, and consider possible ideas for actions.

After each group discussed the film, I had a short training session with participants to explain to them what a photovoice project is. We spent time learning how to use the camera and discussing ethical issues surrounding taking photographs (e.g., photographing random people or children without permission). Then, I gave them one main direction: “Based on what we discussed in the group and what you liked most in the movie, take pictures that show what it is like to be a displaced woman in Lima today.” Also, I gave them a prompt with framing questions for taking pictures in case they needed questions to help them know what to do. For instance, some of the questions are: “Can you take a picture of spaces in which you feel safe and unsafe in Lima?” “What
places in Lima look like your native village in the sierra?” and “How do you see your body in public spaces?”

After answering questions and concerns about the photovoice project, I gave each woman a digital camera to take home and photograph the spaces they use in their daily routines. I preferred to use digital cameras rather than disposable cameras because I was in Lima for only one week, and I did not have enough time to meet the women several times in order to get the film and print the pictures. Additionally, meeting three times with participants during that week would have required them to invest extra money in transportation. Although I considered using instant cameras to save time printing, these cameras are expensive. I thought the best option for this project was to use digital cameras, which do not require film, are cheaper than instant cameras, have better quality pictures than disposable and instant cameras, and save time in the project (time that could be used to listen to women’s stories of their pictures).

Two days later, after I gave participants the cameras, I interviewed participants and downloaded their pictures on my laptop. During these interviews, I viewed and discussed the pictures with each participant. Since I am interested in the ways women make sense of their experiences when in their particular contexts, I employed a feminist standpoint to grasp what the pictures meant to participants. During each interview, I was more interested in what the photographs meant to them rather than how the photographs fit into the framing questions.

Although participants provided 108 photographs, I included only 71 photographs in Chapter 5. I made this decision based on my desire to avoid displaying photos that
duplicated one another or were of poor quality. However, although I did not include the
totality of the pictures in Chapter 5, I did incorporate the women’s narrations and stories
of all images in the chapter. Finally, in line with the emphasis of the photovoice method
to reach policymakers and others who can be mobilized for change, participants will
display some of the photographs in a public exhibition in Lima (November, 2015).

To conclude the descriptions of the methods of inquiry, I want to emphasize the
benefits of using/mixing the focus and the photovoice project. First, one of the central
characteristics of the focus groups is its generation of interactive data, which gave me the
opportunity to observe participants’ co-construction of meaning in action, their
interactions, agreements, and disagreements. That is to say, the groups facilitated my
understandings of the ways participants constructed a sense of collective memory of the
conflict. Meanwhile, the photovoice project provided a personal dimension of
participants’ experiences of the conflict and their contemporary lives in the hills outside
of Lima. In the photovoice project, I navigated among participants’ subjective dimension
to continue the conversation of the film at the micro (personal) level. By highlighting the
ways that the photovoice facilitates the emergence of the women’s personal experiences,
I want to emphasize that although photovoice has been traditionally used to promote
social change, it has other possibilities at the level of individual representations.

In this sense, photovoice makes possible the exploration of participants’ body
image, embodied memories (presences/absences), and their emotions toward spaces. As a
researcher, approaching to participants’ subjective dimension (e.g. body image and
personal memories) would be difficult to grasp without the use of the photovoice
technique. In this regard, Novak (2010) examines in his research with informal vendors how photovoice “facilitated the participants’ ability to document and discuss communicative issues that would have been unattainable by the researcher without photovoice” (p. 307). For that reason, the use of photovoice in my research helped me to deepen on participants’ experiences and embodied memories, which are difficult to communicate only through spoken language. In short, participants’ pictures made available and visible a reality that is taken for granted or ignored by women. In doing so, I was able to capture the women’s behaviors and emotions that are difficult to understand without photovoice. Thus, the photovoice project encouraged me, as a researcher, to carefully pay attention to participants’ complex experiences and ensure writing strategies to integrate their voices in the research project.

While in the focus groups, participants collectively constructed the meanings of “the milk of sorrow” disease as a “fear of disappearance,” and in the photovoice project, each participant—as I will show—illustrated how she communicated “the fear of disappearance” and her embodied memories of the past in the peripheral hills in Lima. Thus, the central contribution of mixing these two methods is the interplay between collective and individual dimensions that enabled the creation of five general themes that I present in Chapters 4 and 5.

Second, by using two different methods I aimed to avoid overgeneralizing participants’ individual experiences and their cultural complexities. In other words, my goal was to not generalize, but present the connections between participants’ diverse and shared experiences. For that reason, as I mentioned above, the interplay between both
methods allowed me to navigate the personal and the collective memories of these women’s experiences and embrace the complexity of representing their lives.

The mixing of two methods is in line with Ellingson’s (2009) notion of crystallization. According to Ellingson, crystallization helps scholars, whose research uses a wide range of methods, to avoid simplifying individual and cultural complexities. In her words: “Crystallization combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text of series of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction” (p. 4). I embrace the use of these two different methods because I believe in the complexities of human experiences and the partiality of knowledge claims that I am making about women’s lives.

Data Analysis

Once I transcribed and read the two focus groups’ responses and the photovoice interviews, I performed an interpretative analysis of this material to explore how Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the armed conflict between state forces and Shining Path. As Staiger (2005) states, “reports of focus group discussions, questionnaires, and so forth are subjected to the same methodological tools used to characterize the message being interpreted” (p. 9). Thus, during the data analysis, I interpreted 110 pages of transcripts of focus group, and the interview of the photovoice project, 108 pictures, and 30 memos. I started the data analysis following three stages to interpret and produce coherent data for
Data management, data reduction, and conceptual development (Emerson et. al, 1995; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

Data Management

The process of analyzing qualitative data begins with a general reading of the collected data. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) explain that the goal of data management is “gaining control over data that tend to grow rapidly in a project” (p. 243). In order to gain such control, qualitative researchers read and re-read during this stage to make sense of the data collected and start the process of data reduction. During this reading, many questions, clarifications, and interpretations arise from participants’ statements. In this stage, researchers start to write memos and register their insights, which might be used in the analysis stage.

Several readings of the transcripts helped me to see data in a new manner and explore possible ways to systematize what has been recorded. Thus, I identified themes, patterns, and variations within participants’ statements. For example, I recognized that participants emphasized the ways their parents hid them in the sierra, as well as emphasizing the continuous identification between Fausta’s behavior (the central character of the film) with their feelings of fear during terrorism. The participants also highlighted the connections between the representation of the hills in the film and their feelings of living in the hills outside of Lima. Moreover, they expressed agreements and disagreements about how they felt guerrillas and soldiers treated women’s bodies in the conflict; all of these showed ways participants frequently intertwined past memories with their contemporary lives in Lima.
In order to start to “gain control” over the data, I connected what seemed significant to participants with my research interests, *the body* and *space*. In doing so, I started using qualitative data analysis software (NVivo) to establish connections between past spaces (the sierra) and contemporary spaces (the peripheral hills in Lima), and the body, which means participants’ bodies, and their narrations about others’ bodies in the conflict (e.g., parents, siblings, relatives, guerrillas, and soldiers). Also, I used NVivo to do a “run query” of key terms such as: “home,” “sierra,” “mother,” “body,” “corpses,” “Quechua,” “trauma,” and “terrorist.” After identifying participants’ responses and connections with bodies and spaces, I manually created ten visual maps to draw the connections among the body, space, Quechua language, past, and present. These maps facilitated the data management stage and anticipated the data reduction process because I could visualize the similarities and differences not only among participants, but also between the focus groups and the photovoice project to construct arguments and themes.

*Data Reduction*

The central aim of data reduction is to prioritize the value of evidence. However, according to Lindlof and Taylor (2011) “this does not mean that data should be thrown away like chaff; you never know when chaff, or unused data, might become wheat in another work context” (p. 243). Rather than considering evidence like “discarded material,” the data reduction process helps researchers to identify parts of the evidence that might be used to construct arguments. During the data reduction stage, it is expected that themes will emerge from the data. Themes can be defined as experiences, stories, repeated ideas, words, or images that are part of the data.
As I mentioned before, during the data management stage, I started identifying patterns among participants’ accounts, which allowed me to create themes, such as, participants’ bodies and others’ bodies in relation to the conflict and contemporary times, as well as categories like home, nature (the sierra), urban spaces, and the Quechua language. Thus, I began connecting these themes with analytic categories of the body, space, and memory.

This process of connecting data to create themes, provide interpretation, identify and develop concepts might be defined as coding. Cope (2010) explains that coding technique might be seen in two different phases: open coding and focused coding. First, open coding helps me to identify the most obvious themes, “[the] interactions among actors, strategies and consequences” (p. 288). During open coding I asked questions, which “[gave] priority to process rather than causes; “what” is occurring, rather than ‘why’” (Emerson, et. al, 2011, p. 177). These questions contributed to specifying participants’ perspectives. During the open coding process, I started to explore the answer some of the basic questions: “who,” “what,” “where,” and “how.”

Asking these basic questions during the data reduction process helped me to identify the five core themes based on the focus groups and the photovoice project. During the reduction process, I asked myself questions, such as: “What participants recalled after watching the film,” “how they compared the movie’s story with past and contemporary times,” “what perceptions they created based on the film’s story and their experiences.” Also, I explored more specific questions such as, “who the perpetrators of the violence were,” “what memories participants have of the conflict,” “how participants
used to hide in the sierra during terrorism,” “where participants felt safe during the armed conflict,” and “what it means for participants living the hills outside of Lima.”

Second, having decided the core themes, I moved to focused codes in order to connect data within broader topics. As Lindlof and Taylor (2011) explain, “these are high-reference categories, because they require knowledge of cultural insider meanings or call for more complex decision rules for coding data” (p. 247). By connecting open codes with broader topics, I aimed to establish connections to the theoretical framework of this study and theoretical ideas. To do it so, in chapter four, where I offer the results of the focus group interviews, I present three themes: the threat of disappearance/abduction, re-defining safe spaces, and re-placement of bodies and/in spaces, which demonstrate how contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict (second subsidiary question).

In Chapter 5, where I discuss the insights generated by the photovoice project, I identify two broad themes to explain how Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima: The Quechua female body remembers and memories of the sierra and their materialization in urban spaces, which illustrate the third subsidiary question.

In the next stage of the data analysis process, conceptual development, I connected the results of the focus groups and the photovoice project to construct a “wider picture” to make sense of the collected data in Chapter 6.
Conceptual Development

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2011), during the data management and reduction processes, themes start an important transition from the empirical to the theoretical dimension. However, it is during the conceptual development stage when “concepts and themes grow profusely” (Lindlof & Taylor, p. 243). Therefore, during the conceptual development stage, I was able to create in Chapter 6 an argument based on the themes and theoretical ideas that I identified during the data management and reduction stages.

Drawing on participants’ responses (Chapters 4 & 5) about the ways they communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experiences, in chapter six, I argue that *The Milk of Sorrow* makes possible the exploration of a public memory of political violence in Peru within the Quechua female body. The analysis is primarily focused on Marks’s (2000) work of the film-viewing process to understand cinematic experience as “an exchange of two bodies” (the viewer and the film).

*Embodied Visuality in the Film-Viewing Process*

Based on Marks’ (2000) ideas of embodied visuality, I argued in the conceptual development stage how Quechua women communicate their embodied memories of the conflict. In her work *The Skin of the Film* (2000), Marks proposes a theory of embodied visuality that encourages researchers to find culture within the body. For Marks, cinema spectatorship is a form to explore the relationship between the self and the world. By approaching cinematic experience as one that stimulates our reflections of being in the world, Marks stresses the interactive character of the film-viewing process. In fact, she
understands the film-viewing process as “an exchange of two bodies” (the viewer and the film). Marks’s idea points to an innovative means of addressing a methodological challenge in researching embodied memories: How does a researcher learn the ways others’ memories are embodied and used in their encounters in contemporary spaces? Her purpose of using cinema spectatorship to search for places where the body and culture meet suggests that Marks’s work is not necessarily a strategy to conduct reception studies, but a set of theoretical and methodological approaches to explore the ways individuals’ embodied memories are reenacted by the body in everyday life practices by using film as the vehicle to promote reflection upon those embodied memories.

Marks’s (2000) work is especially relevant to my dissertation because she identifies three central actions to explain how the body actively participates in the film-viewing process and engages all sense perceptions related with past and present by seeing, recalling, and comparing. According to Marks, the viewer moves between “seeing the object, recalling virtual images that it brings to mind, and comparing the virtual object thus created with the one before [him/her]” (p. 147). Therefore, the film-viewing process evokes a viewer’s memory and encourages the viewer to create an object as a result of the cinematic experience.

By connecting participants’ responses to Marks’s ideas, first, I attempt to contribute to the ongoing conversation of one of the methodological challenges in researching embodied memories: How does a researcher learn the ways others’ memories are embodied and used in their encounters in contemporary spaces? Second, the five
themes that I identified in Chapters 4 and 5 enter into the “wider picture” of the ways women in post-conflict societies enact embodied memories in contemporary spaces.

Finally, I consider it important to explicitly claim that I characterize research methods and fieldwork in this project as being predominately inductive. I did not have previous hypotheses or theories for interpreting the data. Rather, my goal was to allow the research participants to tell their stories, and how those stories intersected with the movie, the essence of which stories subsequently was theorized. I remained open to the varied possibilities that could emerge from the data, which means I attended to the everyday meanings of women who live and act in Lima.

By remaining open to participants’ worldviews, I assumed a phenomenological approach, which privileges the suspensions of “all judgments about what is real until they are founded on a more certain basis [participants’ experiences]” (Creswell, 1998, p. 52). Creswell explains that this suspension is called epoche, which encourages researchers to not make judgments and to privilege participants’ knowledge of their world.

However, that inductive approach does not mean that I operated exclusively inductively. As Kidder and Judd (1986) state “the researcher inevitably makes theoretical assumptions in deciding what to observe or where a potential cause may lie” (p. 24). I acknowledge that I have an implicit theoretical orientation that guides this study—feminist phenomenology—even when I have no hypothesis to examine. Without theory, I would not know where to begin exploring the research questions.

Emerson, et. al (1995) insist the researcher cannot completely ignore “[the possibility of having] no theoretical commitments prior to reading through the notes” (p.
However, Emerson et. al (2011) do suggest “theory does not simply await refinement as [the researcher] tests concepts one by one against events in the social world” (p. 198). Undeniably theory and data do not stand apart during the research process, but are intimately intertwined. As a researcher, I assumed theoretical commitment at every phase during the data analysis process and such commitment influences the ways I managed and reduced data and how I performed conceptual development. In the next section, I reflect on these theoretical commitments and personal involvement during the research process.

Making my Self-Knowing Visible in the Research Process

In this final part of Chapter 3, I explicitly address my role as researcher in the dissertation and how I engaged in reflexivity issues. In this last part, my goal is to present a careful understanding of my role in constructing participants’ stories. This means that I emphasize reflexive processes to communicate how my work as a researcher, and my affective and political investments were involved in the ways I represent participants’ responses.

Inspired by feminist phenomenology, in December 2014, I interviewed ten Quechua women to explore the ways they communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and Shining Path in Peru (1980s-1992). In keeping with a feminist approach, I focused on discussing with participants what the film *(The Milk of Sorrow)* meant to them in terms of embodied memories. I employed a feminist phenomenological interview style (Levesque-Lopman, 2000 & Nash, 2014) to explore participants’ responses. I aimed to examine the primary
question (How do Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and Shining Path?), in relation to three subsidiary questions: How does *The Milk of Sorrow* illustrate Quechua women’s embodied memories of political violence from the 1980s-1992 conflict in Peru? How do contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict? How do Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima?

My representations of participants’ experiences are the result of both their narrations and my “imaginative” creations to communicate their stories. In the next few pages, I reflect on the ways I navigated among participants’ accounts and my “creations” of their narrations and lives. As a communication and feminist scholar, I am sensitive to reflecting on issues of power relations in the research process. That is to say, I believe my own positionality as researcher of this study merits important comments in this chapter. Reflections regarding my positionality in the research process are based on some key characteristics of a feminist standpoint (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2004) and communications scholars’ ideas of reflexivity (Ellingson, 2009; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

By considering reflexivity and using a feminist standpoint, I am not claiming that I am immune to the complexities of power relations in the research process. As Lindlof and Taylor (2011) explain the recognition of reflexivity helps to realize the inseparability of knowledge and power “reflexive scholars dispels the myth of objectivity” (p. 72). Similarly, Ramazanoglu and Holland (2004) explain that feminist standpoint
“problematizes the nature of relationships between ideas, experience and social reality. Women ‘speaking their truth’ are situated in relation to forms of power that shape their lives” (p. 65). Like the majority of feminist researchers, I realize the ways I am embedded in the web of power relations (researcher/researched; outsider/insider) and how these relations determine representations of others. In other words, uncovering the structural relationship of power and recognizing how I am part of such a dynamic encourages me to be aware of the reproduction of problematic representations.

Lindlof and Taylor (2011) notice that a communication scholar using post-colonial and feminist perspectives must be aware of “any methodology to revive and reproduce oppression” (p. 62). Similarly, Anzaldua (1990) warns feminist scholars to be aware of any methodology to reproduce oppression:

Like our exploiters who fixate on the inferiority of the natives, we fixate on the fucked-upness of our sisters. Like them we try to impose our version of “the ways things should be,” we try to impose one’s self on the Other by making her the recipient of one’s negative elements, usually the same elements that the Anglo projected on us. Like them, we project our self-hatred on her; we stereotype her; we make her generic. (p. 143)

As a qualitative communication researcher concerned with the risk of using methods that might revive oppression or might impose my version of “the ways things should be,” I engage myself with the enactment of reflexivity as “a sensible and responsible direction” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 97) in the research process. That is to say, I embrace the ways reflexivity “make[s] explicit the power relations and the exercise of power in the
research process” (p. 118). The awareness of power relations meant to me asking questions about my role in the recollection of participants’ past; why I am presenting these memories; how I am responsible in the work of making the participants’ past meaningful; what my contributions to the ways the conflict can be remembered are; why I am telling these memories rather than others; and how my knowledge is authorized.

The possible answers to these questions are directly related with my multiple identities and the geographical and symbolical place from which I am researching participants’ lives. Ramazanoglu and Holland (2004) observe that:

The feminist researcher “knows” from a specific and partial social location, and so is socially constituted as a “knowing self” in particular ways of thinking and authorizing knowledge. Questioning the “knowing self” makes the specificity of the researcher visible, just as feminists expose the actual men behind the apparent neutrality of patriarchal knowledge. (p. 65)

By attending to the idea of “questioning the ‘knowing self’” I wondered what it means to make visible my own specificity in this research. By reflecting on that question, I start by saying that I am a Latina and Colombian woman educated in the United States.

Receiving education at the doctoral level in a university in the United States has meant to me being aware of the ways this education might affect how my own fellow citizens and Western and non-Western scholars see me as a researcher. For some Latin American scholars, I might be considered what Said (1989) calls an “obedient interlocutor,” who is a third world scholar “studying otherness in the United States” (p. 302). By being seen in this way, I “might have become estranged from [my] own cultural
values to the point of being embarrassed by, and hostile towards, all that those values represented” (Tuhiwai, 2013, p. 70).

During my fieldwork in Lima, I certainly experienced that kind of “embarrassment” when I was confronted by one of the women that I met in Lima for this project. Her name is Santa and I must confess that I initially called this woman “the uninvited participant” because she was not part of the group of women that my “gatekeeper” (the director of ASFADEL) recruited for the research. Santa came the last day of my fieldwork when I was interviewing another participant, Donatella. Santa confidently entered into the room and defiantly looked at me. It was the first (and last) time I saw Santa. I saw her strong expression. I greeted her and asked her to sit down with Donatella. When I asked her how I could help her, she suddenly interrupted me, opened an envelope, and showed me a picture of her daughter, Rosa, who has Down’s syndrome. She told me her daughter was born with the syndrome because of the terrorist attacks in the 1980s. While narrating her daughter’s story, Santa constantly tried to hold back her tears while she defiantly continuing to look at me. I did not have any words for Santa. Her story made me feel like a complete “outsider” who was unable to understand the magnitude of her suffering. I was speechless, and I could not connect myself with her poignant experience. When I finally started to mumble “Lo siento mucho” (I’m so sorry), again, Santa abruptly interrupted me and questioned why I was in Peru doing this research:

Por que estas aquí? Tu no eres de Perú. You are a Colombian woman, who does not know how much we have suffered in Peru. Your country has not lived the
same violence that we lived in Peru. Moreover, nobody told me about your investigación (research), so, I decided to come by myself.

Listening to Santa, I realized that perhaps, I could be “the uninvited visitor.” Who authorizes me to tell her story and other women’s stories? How can I decide what participants’ stories to tell and what narrations I should leave out? Santa confronted me with my own biases. I must confess that I took for granted that Latin America women are “one” and “we” can easily understand each another. Santa reminded me I couldn’t assume that just because I am from Latin America I can understand what means to be a Peruvian displaced woman, or because I am from Colombia, I can grasp the experience of political violence of a displaced woman of another Latin American country. I am from Colombia, but I have not experienced political violence, and I am a Latina woman, but I do not know what means to be a Peruvian woman living in the Andean mountains and fleeing to Lima. What I know is that being a Latina woman who grew up in a city close to the Caribbean Sea, and who studied for four years in the U.S., have determined the ways I see the world and the ways I presented the life of these ten Quechua women in this project. I do not pretend to deny the biases that I have, but one of my goals in the research process is to recognize the existence of these biases and how they can affect my relationship with participants.

Thus, at this point, my questions are if participants and I do not share identities and pasts, how can reflexivity help me in the process of “researching” their lives, and what do I gain by making visible my “knowing self” in the research process? Although the responses to these questions are part of an ongoing conversation, which I do not
pretend finalize in this dissertation, my contribution is to share how my encounter with participants helped me to realize the limitations and possibilities involved in exploring participants’ acts of remembering.

By being aware of my affective and political investments in the research site, I became conscious of how my identities might facilitate the research process. Ramazanoglu and Holland (2004) explain “any researcher’s critical consciousness is constrained by the limits of their knowledge, culture and experiences, and also by their personal skills, powers of empathy and political openness to silences and exclusions” (p. 119). In this research, my main constraint is that participants and I do not share the same experience of the past and national identities. Following this Ramazanoglu and Holland also say, “the possibilities for sharing knowledge are limited when researcher and researched have no political interests in common” (p. 115). As I mentioned in my encounter with Santa, she believed that since I am not from Peru, I could not understand the importance of the political violence in Peru and the consequences for her and her family and community. Even when I could focus on the fact that “we do not have political interests in common,” I decided to search for other forms of “political” identification among us.

In this regard, Campbell (2009) says, “when people remember, they often direct the imaginings to appreciators who may not share a past with them but who become participants in re-collective practices” (p. 212). Thus, even though I do not share with participants a common past, the act of “listening” to them makes me a “participant” (or audience member) of their re-collective practices of the past. Here, I am appealing to my
personal skills and political openness to engage myself as a co-participant in the process of remembering the past. By acknowledging my role as a researcher, on the one hand, I embrace the fact that my identities determine how I approach participants’ experiences; on the other hand, I see myself as an active “listener” (audience member) of their memories, who imaginatively becomes part of their re-collective practices.

This does not mean I am claiming “neutrality” in the research process, but I am recognizing that as an active listener (or member of participants’ audience), I am co-creating with participants their meanings and memories of the past, and my identity is an important part in this process. While actively listening to participants, I am interpreting (and imagining) their narrations to intertwine their stories with my own “creations.” After all, as Campbell (2009) explains, as researchers:

We make important contributions to how the past can be remembered. Our imaginative engagement can both facilitate or thwart the intentions of particular acts of memory, and fortify or undermine the resources that others need to re-experience their pasts in ways that meet their present needs and interests, including those of challenging dominant views of the past. (p. 212)

In short, questioning my “knowing self” is an act of accountability in which I acknowledge how my “imaginative engagement” might re-create alternative and powerful ways of seeing women’s memories or reproducing oppressive/universalizing representations of women regarding their past and history. Instead of being concerned about representing “an objective reality,” my imaginative engagement helps me to share women’s accounts using my own creations (or words) to represent the ways Quechua
women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and guerrillas in Peru (1980s-1992).

Moreover, recognizing the relevance of making visible my positionality also means to attend to the ways my affective investment affected and is also affected during the research process. I am like the majority of communication and feminist scholars emotionally committed to my work. For that reason, I cared honestly about how this research could affect participants’ emotions when remembering the violence they experienced in the 1980s. In doing so, in the first focus group, I had a psychologist present to help me to learn how to give emotional support to the women when they needed it. During the second focus group, I learned the relevance of spiritual beliefs (Christianity) for some of the women. Realizing the importance of spirituality for participants helped me to give emotional comfort when they needed it.

During the narration of one participant (Catalina), she explained to me how attending a Christian church had helped her to overcome not only traumatic memories of the conflict, but also the emotional consequences of domestic violence. Because I am also a Christian woman, when I saw Catalina emotionally affected during her narration, I asked the other women if they had agreed to pray for each another. They agreed to pray and after praying, I was impressed because they were eager to hug each another. This was one of the poignant moments in which, as a researcher, I experienced the power of being emotionally and kinetically engaged with others’ experiences. I found that the act of praying for participants and listening to them praying for me, helped me to find a common form of identification: Our faith.
Moreover, I experienced the potential of the “imaginative engagement” while listening to Justina’s narration about the way she witnessed her father’s murder in the sierra in the 1980s. Justina told me when she was a little girl, she saw how armed groups beat her father with stones until he died. Justina and her family could not take her father’s corpse, but had to leave it in the sierra. Listening to her narration made me wonder what if I would have experienced seeing my father dying in the same way. Imagining my father’s body made me connect with Justina’s experience. This imaginative act was another moment in which I projected myself into participants’ experiences. I symbolically put myself inside their memories to imaginatively engage myself with their experiences. My point is to emphasize the potential of emotions in the research process to trigger “political” and affective identification with participants, even when we do not share the same memories, past, or identities.

Finally, by recognizing how my political and emotional investment are embedded in the research process, I want to highlight the ways I see knowledge in this research as a situated knowledge. Ramazanoglu and Holland (2004) notice that knowledge from a feminist standpoint is always partial knowledge. In their words:

It is not that knowledge from a feminist standpoint cannot ever be general, but that exactly how general any knowledge claim can be, needs to be established.

There can be grounds for local, regional, or global knowledge, but not for “universalizing discourse.” (p. 66)

My aim was to not oversimplify participants’ accounts and ignore their cultural complexities. One of my challenges in this process has been searching for common
ground to establish connections between participants’ diverse and shared experiences. In this sense, as I mentioned above, the interplay between both methods has allowed me to navigate the complexity of women’s experiences and expose my vulnerability to recognize the indeterminacy of knowledge claims (Ellingson, 2009, p. 4). In short, by combining two methodological strategies (focus groups and the photovoice project), I aimed to acknowledge the difficulties and possibilities of incorporating participants’ voices and embracing their “situational knowledges” (Visweswaran, 1994, p. 49).

Moreover, by mixing methods I obtained different outcomes, which means the emergence of agreements, disagreements, and contradictions among participants. Instead of seeing these “inconsistencies” as “obstacles” to the research, I embraced their possibilities to enhance my understandings of women’s embodied memories. After all, the recollection process of the past is full of human creations and re-creations of history.

Challenges in the Translation Process: “I Dare You to Translate Me!”

I want to finish this chapter by explaining the ways I faced the challenges of translating women’s narrations from Spanish to English. The translation process is more than the process of searching for the “right” words or expressions from one language into another to communicate the “correct” meaning. Translation in the research process must be seen as an exercise of power. The translation process is an epistemological concern that involves approaches to the ways knowledge is produced, my location within social world, and how this site affects the way I see participants’ worlds.

Bakhtin (1982) notices language is overpopulated with intentions. In this sense, “the researcher cannot set aside her own language, life and understandings when she
produces her interpretations” (Smith, 1989, p. 43). Similarly, Temple and Young (2004) add “there is no neutral position from which to translate and the power relationships within research need to be acknowledged” (p. 164). In this research, I consider relevant my role as researcher of “others lives” and translator as well as the act of translation. By recognizing the power relations in the translation process, I reflected on two important aspects: first, my commitment to “translate” women’s experiences as close as possible to their experience of talk and second, who the primary audience of this dissertation is: American scholars.

After listening to participants’ narrations, having the transcripts, and re-reading them several times, this was the main challenge that came into my mind: “I dare you to translate me!” I could almost see participants’ faces and voices re-telling me their memories and feeling myself unable to simultaneously “grasp” their meanings and communicate them to an academic audience.

Because I see myself as active in the research process, I believe I am responsible for the ways I represent others and their languages. As a qualitative communication and feminist scholar, working with women who speak a language other than English, I am committed to the ways my role as researcher and translator affects my representation of the women. In doing so, I consciously face the methodological and epistemological challenges of recognizing that the women, who use different languages, also have different ways of seeing social life. In fact, the entire process of researching others’ lives implies “translating” one culture into another. That is to say, translating is not just a problem of searching for the correct words in a dictionary, but it is “an understanding of
the way language is tied to local realities” (Simon, 1996, p. 137). As the researcher-translator in this project, I frequently made decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries for participants: How could I translate participants’ narrations and “keep” the meanings of their experiences? Which words should I keep in the original language (Spanish or Quechua)?

As I previously mentioned, participants’ native language is Quechua and they also are fluent Spanish speakers. At the beginning of our conversation, I asked them if they felt comfortable using Spanish. All of them agreed to have the conversation in Spanish. However, sometimes they wanted to use short expressions in Quechua. When speaking Quechua, participants immediately translated these expressions into Spanish. Although they always were eager to do translations for me, when I asked them to write the words for me to include them in the dissertation, one of them claimed that writing Quechua is too difficult. For that reason, I could only include in this document a couple of Quechua words. Participants seemed confortable when expressing their emotions and stories in Spanish. When one of them had difficulties finding the “right” words, another participant helped her to construct the sentences.

Since they were comfortable communicating their experiences in Spanish, during the data analysis process I decided to keep some Spanish words—and a couple of Quechua words—that only make sense in the original language. For instance, the notion of forced disappearance or abduction, in Spanish is “ser desaparecida.” The meaning of this expression in Latin America has political and historical implications associated with

4 I also keep other Spanish words, such as animalitos (little animals) or expressions such as llegar a ser una mujer (becoming a woman).
decades of dictatorship and terrorism in the region. “Los desaparecidos” is a political
term historically used to make reference to persons (e.g., children, youth, women, or civic
leaders) who were forcefully taken away in different Latin America countries: Argentina,
Chile, Colombia, and Peru. Because of the political and emotional implications of the
word “desaparecidos,” I decided to keep this word in Spanish. Moreover, when
participants used the word “hills,” in Spanish, cerros, I realized that participants had
emotional connotations and feelings of attachment to the space when they referred to the
cerros where they live today in Lima. Similarly, for emotional attachments to spaces,
participants used the word chakra, a Quechua word referring to the small farms that these
communities used to create in the sierra in Peru. Also, I kept participants’ use of
diminutives of some words (e.g., patito, perrito, and casita) because during the analysis
process I realized the overuse of diminutives in Peruvian Spanish is result of the Quechua
language’s influence on the Spanish language.

Thus, my decision of having Spanish or some Quechua words in my writing had
the purpose of communicating the historical and/or emotional meanings of these
expressions for participants. In doing so, I want to claim that I realized in the research
process of the emergence of words, which are not “translatable.” Moreover, keeping the
words in the original language was a “subversive” strategy to “force” my (English)
readers to enter into participants’ different ways of seeing the world. As Anzaldua (1987)
says, “as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them
accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate” (p. 133). Thus, following Anzaldua’s
strategy to confront “the politics of reception,” I utilized some Spanish expressions to
encourage my readers to move from their “comfort zone.” Moreover, having Spanish words is not only a “subversive” strategy, but also it is an issue of writing style to create my own identity as a post-colonial female writer conversing with U.S. scholars.

*Translating Women’s Talk into Academic Texts*

Because my interest is having academic conversations in Western contexts, where English is the mainstream language, I face the challenge of “clearly” communicating with English scholars. In this sense, it is important to mention that translating Peruvian Spanish or Andean Spanish into English signified considering some specificities; for example, the confusion of gender and number in Peruvian Spanish, the overuse of diminutives (*ito* and *ita*), the duplication of possessives, the use of the verb at the end of the phrase, and so on.

Each of these characteristics meant an important challenge to me. In order to communicate participants’ accounts in English, I had to follow the English grammar structure regarding verb and subject agreement, correct use of possessives, and write verbs in the “right” place in a sentence. Although my goal was not turning participants’ talk into an academic text, I attempted to ensure that my readers could understand participants’ meanings without being distracted by what they might consider grammar errors.

Temple and Young (2004) claim “there is no single correct translation of a text” and “no one can be sure of which concepts or words differ in meanings across language and which do not, or if this matters in the context of the translation” (p. 165). Translation from one language into another is always a process, which is continuously open to
revision and contestation from the audience (academic and non-academic). Even as a native Spanish speaker, I do not pretend to claim the results of this research are near to “the truth” because “speaking for others,” in any language, is always a political issue. My translation of participants’ narrations from Spanish to English undeniably possesses my “marks,” imaginative inventions, and creations.

Conclusion

My goal in this chapter was to introduce the methodology that I used to explore how Quechua women communicate their embodied memories of the conflict and three subsidiary questions: How does *The Milk of Sorrow* illustrate Quechua women’s embodied memories of political violence from the 1980s-1992 conflict in Peru? How do contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict? How do Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima? I began this chapter explaining the thematic analysis that facilitated the examination of how the film illustrates Quechua women’s embodied memories of political violence in Peru, and therefore, provide me with ideas to pursue in the focus groups interviews. In the second section of this chapter, I described the qualitative methods of inquiry that I used (two focus groups and the photovoice project) as well as the process of the data analysis that helped me to identify general themes and subthemes that I present in the next two chapters. I concluded by presenting a careful understanding of my research role in constructing the Quechua women’s accounts. I emphasized how I assumed an active role in the research process as researcher, “audience” of participants’ memories, and
“translator” of their experiences. In Chapter 4, I present the results of the focus group research, which directly speaks to the second subsidiary research question: How do contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict?
CHAPTER 4: QUECHUA WOMEN’S EMBODIED MEMORIES AND THEIR “PRESENT ABSENCE” IN CONTEMPORARY SPACES

During the coding process, following Emerson et. al (2011), I gave priority to what seemed significant to participants, which I connected with both of my research interests, the body and space. First, in going through my notes and transcripts, I began to notice the ways participants “camouflaged” their bodies in the sierra to avoid being abducted, raped, or murdered during the armed conflict in the 1980s in Peru. Second, I noticed participants spent a lot of their time and energy talking about others’ embodied experiences in terrorist times (e.g., parents, relatives, guerrillas, and soldiers). Third, participants frequently privileged narrations about their villages, the landscape in the sierra, their roles as animal caretakers before the conflict, the traumatic events that took place in plazas during the terrorist time, the meanings of home today, and the challenges of adjusting to urban space. Fourth, I engaged in their conversation about the significance of the Quechua language, not only in generating emotional attachments to their community but also in provoking social exclusion and shame in urban scenarios today.

During this process, I deepened and refined the notion of the body and space according to what participants thought was key, and I explored the relevance of the Quechua language in the construction of their everyday practices in Lima.

In this sense, based on participants’ post-viewing film discussions and my research interests (the body and space), I organize Chapter 4 using three themes: the threat of disappearance/abduction, re-defining safe spaces, and re-placement of bodies and/in spaces. It is also important to emphasize that these three themes emerged as a
result of participants’ interpretations of the movie and the ways they related the movie with their own experiences of the conflict and contemporary lives in Lima. In other words, by referring to the meanings of “the milk of sorrow” disease, participants related the film’s story with their own fear of disappearance, the ways they define safe spaces, and the re-placement of bodies in spaces in the hills outside Lima. In short, the film inspired women to start a conversation about their experiences of the conflict and their lives in a post-conflict society.

In the first theme, the threat of disappearance, I illustrate how women’s central fear during the armed conflict was the threat of disappearance (ser desaparecidas); many participants agreed that the female character of the movie (Fausta) has the same fear. Participants expressed their empathy toward Fausta, to whom they constantly compare with their own sorrow. In the second theme, re-defining safe spaces, I examine how the women experienced their villages and homes as no longer safe during the armed conflict; by hiding their bodies in the sierra, participants re-defined the sierra as a safe or “home-like” space in which they are able to make the body disappear. Thus, through camouflaging the body, women remained connected to the land and preserved their lives in the sierra as a new safe space. Finally, in the third theme, re-placement of bodies and/in spaces, I describe how as the women moved to the city, they left the space of extreme violence in their villages, but the violence remained embodied as they re-experienced violence in private spaces as well as social exclusion and delinquency in Lima. Despite traumatic memories of the armed conflict, these women remained committed to preserving their identities as Quechua women by embracing Quechua
language as a positive aspect of their memories that remain embodied within them in urban spaces.

The theoretical idea of embodied memories is drawn upon throughout these three themes to illustrate consistently the ways women’s embodied memories of the conflict are both present and absent in their lives. By being present, first, I am considering that “being a body means occupying a particular location in place” (Trigg, 2012, p. 10). Being “above,” “below,” “here,” and “there” are modes of orientations, which are determined by our bodies’ positions in spaces and affect the ways we experience the world. In this sense, spaces from which participants experienced the conflict and where they reconstructed their houses in Lima are relevant to their narrations. For participants, being present means they saw the unexpected and violent entrance of soldiers and guerrilla into their houses, felt how members of both armed groups touched their bodies, listened to their mothers crying, and felt cold and rain when sleeping in the sierra. Participants can certainly claim: “I was there” and others can claim they saw and felt participants’ bodies too.

Moreover, I understand experiences of being “present” and “absent” in the form of “contemporary embodied memories,” which means the ways “the past becomes vivified in a shared present” (Narvaez, 2006, p. 52). From this approach, the past is unquestionably present in women’s bodies and in the materiality of spaces that women occupy in the peripheral hills of Lima today. For example, in the focus groups, women’s memories of the past “become vivified” by speaking Quechua language in daily basis and “hiding” the body when experiencing domestic violence in Lima.
Second, by being absent, on the one hand, I mean how the threat of disappearance during the armed conflict encouraged participants and their parents to camouflage their bodies in the sierra or behind others’ bodies to protect themselves; for example, being hidden behind trees and inside holes in the ground, and seeing violence from the mountains or through their grandmothers’ skirts. In other words, being absent in the context of the conflict means participants intentionally hid the body to avoid guerrilla and soldiers from seeing them and taking them away from their parents.

Figure 1. Screening of *The Milk of Sorrow*.

Being absent also means participants remained silent when guerrillas and soldiers interrogated them. When both armed groups came to the schools in their villages, participants’ teachers taught them to remain silent. Participants’ silences symbolically mean being absent or detaching themselves from guerrillas and soldiers’ interrogations. Other participants resisted this questioning by responding in Quechua when soldiers were
speaking in Spanish. In doing so, the women separated themselves from this encounter, while courageously reaffirming their cultural Quechua identity.

On the other hand, in the sense of “contemporary embodied memories,” being absent implies that “absences are themselves modes of presentation” (Trigg, 2012, p. 239). Therefore, participants’ memories of the conflict—an set of times and places that are no absent from the women’s contemporary physical surroundings—can nonetheless be re-presented through the body’s performances in spaces and can be phenomenologically present in material objects today (e.g., animals, trees, and/or their children’s bodies). In short, the fact the body is in the world implies the body is always present. We are not able to stand back from the body and its experiences. Even though the body is “camouflaged” or hidden from others’ gazes, the body is always in the world and is able to re-call memories. “Only in death, as a thing, I become finally detached from the world” (Narvaez, 2006, p. 25). Only death separates us from the world.

Hence, for participants, the notion of being absent might be explained in terms of not being in the sierra any longer, but carry those memories with them in urban spaces. Participants’ stories illustrate how the body carries places with it, which implies places habituate themselves in our bodies. Our bodies regularly tend to replicate the same behavior in familiar spaces. Participants narrated how when being in similar spaces like the sierra when in Lima, they used to re-enact in contemporary spaces the same behavior they used to perform in the past. Therefore, participants re-enacted the same performances they did in 1980s when in public spaces in Lima; for example, some participants told me they avoid touching strangers, while another participant told me she
hides herself on the roof of the house or in abandoned buildings in the city when facing
domestic violence.

As I mentioned before, I organized Chapter 4 according three central themes: The
threat of disappearance/abduction, re-defining safe spaces, and re-placement of bodies
and/in spaces. These themes emerged during the data reduction process and I established
connections between these core themes and the theoretical framework of this study.

The Threat of Disappearance

I have organized this theme in three subthemes: first, I describe the ways
participants related *The Milk of Sorrow* with their fear of abduction or ser desaparecidas;
second, I present what I call “disappeared bodies,” which refers to participants’ stories of
relatives and community members that disappeared in the armed conflict; third, I present
the ways participants referred to guerrillas and soldiers as “they.” In doing so, the women
expressed difficulty in identifying the perpetrators of violence because both guerrillas and
soldiers used ski masks. I refer to “they” as “masked bodies” because women could not
place these bodies as belonging to guerrillas or soldiers. In short, participants explained
to me how “the milk of sorrow” disease is the fear of being disappeared and the threat
that “masked bodies” will make their parents and relatives disappear as well.

*The Milk of Sorrow and the Fear of “Ser Desaparecidas”*

Fausta, the protagonist of *The Milk of Sorrow*, was more familiar to participants
than I could predict. Even when it was the first time participants watched the movie, their
commentaries about Fausta demonstrate they already were acquainted with Fausta. Juana,
a 51-years-old Andean woman, was the first participant to confidently declare her
empathy and identification with the central character of the film. “It seems her story is my own story,” exclaimed Juana confidently (Juana, personal communication, December 15, 2014). Juana came from Panguana to Lima during the 1980s. She is a gracefully thin woman with jet-black hair, which charmingly contrast with her honey-wheat skin. Juana’s hair was embellished with a classic topknot and a perfectly cut forelock, which slightly covered her trim eyebrows and part of her slanted eyes.

The contrast between Juana’s delicate body and her assertive speaking captured my attention. Juana seemed self-reliant when reclaiming Fausta’s story as her own. After making this assertion, she paused silently looked at her hands playing with a tissue, and continued: “I have experienced the same. I came from the same place just like her.”

Listening to Juana, I felt intrigued when she said “the same place.” What does she exactly mean by saying “the same place?” I asked myself. Then I realized that even though the film does not explicitly mention the name of Fausta’s village, Juana takes for granted that she and Fausta came from the same town. Now, my understanding is that Juana is not referring to “the same place” in the geographical dimension of that space, but in its symbolic dimension, one which is shared by Fausta (the character of the movie), Juana, and the other participants. “The same place” might be any of the three provinces in the north of Ayacucho in which these women faced the extreme violence of the armed conflict during their childhood. Although Fausta and Juana do not share the same material/geographical space, Juana commentary’s demonstrates her desire to claim she was present in one of the villages where the armed conflict occurred during the 1980s. In
doing so, Juana’s explanation implies how the body was the instrument by which she received and perceived all the information of what happened in those years.

Marcela, the youngest of the group, agreed with Juana:

I have experienced that terror too. She is fearful like me. When I was studying at the school, the teacher told my uncle I was too shy and I did not participate in class. My uncle explained to my teacher I had experienced terrorism in my village and that’s why I could not communicate well with others. I had a trauma and I lived with that emotional shock for many years. Now, I understand that I have this kind of disease, which a fearful mother transmits to her children. (Marcela, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

By watching the movie, Marcela found an explanation as to the origin of her introverted temperament. In this comment, Marcela is specifically referring to one of the scenes of the movie in which Fausta’s uncle explains to the doctor her symptoms and possible cause of the disease:

She lived during very hard times in the village. Fausta was born during terrorism.

And her mother transmitted her fear through her breast milk. “The milk of sorrow,” as we call anyone born that way: Without soul because it hid underground out of fear (without communicative/social skills).\(^5\)

As I mentioned above, Marcela does not only identify her own story with Fausta’s experiences, but also agrees that Fausta’s disease and symptoms were similar to what she felt when she was a child. Marcela said that her lack of communication skills was

\(^5\) Quote from *The Milk of Sorrow* (Llosa, 2009)
because she experienced the armed violence with her mother and perceived her anguish
during those years.

Marcela’s lack of communication/social skills during her childhood indicates her
desire to avoid “facing” or “interacting” with others. Leder (1990) calls this kind of
behavior social dys-appearance, which “results when the body is somehow away, apart,
asunder, from itself, as in spatio-functional or temporal terms” (p. 96). Based on the
notion of social dys-appearance, during her childhood, Marcela had a desire of being
absent or disappearing in front of others’ gazes and interactions. She wanted to hide her
subjectivity inside the body and treat the body as an object, which meant a radical split
between her body and subjectivity. Reflecting on Marcela’s denial to communicate with
others, I thought perhaps she hesitated to see the world as a space in which she dwelled
with others when she was a child.

Today, Marcela is 34 and came from Ayacucho when she was 8-years-old. In the
1980s, she left her parents and siblings in their village and moved to Lima with her uncle.
She lives with her husband and their two children. Marcela was lively answering my
questions and fluently translating her narrations from Quechua to Spanish. In fact, she
several times assumed the role of interpreter in my conversation with participants. In the
focus group, I knew a different Marcela, one who was able to communicate with others
her memories of the past. It was difficult for me to imagine she was a shy girl at school
and eager to be absent from social interactions. Marcela is a wonderful storyteller and
masterfully intertwines her Spanish narrations with Quechua sentences. Her narrations
are filled rich gestures and different voice tones when she wants to represent different characters in her stories.

Like Juana and Marcela, the other eight Andean women expressed their empathy with Fausta’s story and introverted behavior and fear of disappearance. Participants persistently asserted Fausta was afraid of being forcibly taken away from her mother and of never seeing her family again. These are the reasons they considered Fausta's story as their own story. Like Fausta, participants constantly lived the anguish of being desaparecidas by soldiers or guerrillas during terrorist times. Since they have felt similar anguish, they understood and justified Fausta’s fear.

The fear of forced disappearance was constantly present in our conversation when referring to the feelings the movie triggered to them. In each focus group, they constantly repeated: “my mother told me that they [soldiers or guerrillas] might make me disappear [sic].” The continuous recurrence of that phrase in our dialogue made me ask myself: “What does mean desaparecidas for them?” My interpretation was that the notion of “disappearance” is closely related to the fact of ceasing to “exist” and “be” in space with family and community members. Participants’ emphasis on the notion of desaparecidas implies they were intensely frightened of not being found with their families and in their villages then. Since they were little girls during terrorism, they were particularly scared of being taken away from their mother.

Participants’ fear of being desaparecidas might be explained with Trigg’s (2012) notion of the uncanny. Trigg draws on the uncanny to explain the experiential anxiety that we feel when the familiar/the known is interrupted. In everyday practices, we assume
that the space where the body stands is unshakable. However, “the place of things in the
world is not fixed, and when experience is interrupted then we become aware of their
nothingness as a presence” (Trigg, p. 25). According to Trigg, “in modes of melancholy
and joy, the world alters, its tone and atmosphere shifting in a reciprocal exchange to my
own being” (p. 25). During the armed conflict, participants were in a mode of an
overwhelming anxiety and fear. The women moved from feelings of being safe at home
with their parents to emotions of continuous anguish and uncertainty. The “normality” of
their childhood was violently disrupted during the conflict and the women became
undeniably aware of the possibility of losing their parents, homes, and their own lives.
The conflict altered participants’ expectations of how familiar/known things ought to be in the village. By mentioning the fear of being desaparecidas, the women were claiming their anguish of facing the uncanny: The interruption of the familiar. Participants’ fear of being desaparecidas speaks directly to the mode of being in the world, which “suggests an ‘ontological’ continuity between my (mode of) being and the mode of being of the world where I am” (Narvaez, 2013, p. 25). Participants resisted the idea of the disruption of this continuity between their beings and the space they occupied in their villages. They experienced the threat of being cut-off from their emotional communion with their parents.

As Serafina explained to me: “I was scared ‘they’ [soldiers/guerrillas] would make me desaparecer. If I was gone, how would my mother find me again?” said Serafina referring to the distress of being taken away from her mother. Serafina was the first participant I met in Lima. She is a 40-years-old woman who sells fruits and
vegetables in the streets of Lima. The morning we discussed the film, Serafina did not go to her work. She accepted to come and share her experiences of the armed conflict with me. I felt humble and grateful for her decision. Thus, when she entered into the room, even though she looked like a reserved woman, I gave her a warm welcome and a sincere hug. She did not refuse my embrace. At the beginning of our talk, Serafina was silent and seemed distrustful. For those reasons, when she exposed her feelings connected to forced disappearance, I really valued that she shared her memories with me.

Gregoria seconded Serafina’s intervention and said: “I was scared. They could make me disappear too. Where will I go if they take me away? This is what we were afraid of.” Like Serafina, Gregoria sells fruits in Lima and her memories are closely related with the fear of forced disappearance. Gregoria is from Ayacucho and came to Lima in 1984 when she was 13-years-old. Teenage years became stained with the daily anxiety of being taken away from her parents.

In general, for participants, the fear of being desaparecidas is for them a psychological trauma. Juana cried and groaned when re-telling these memories “Ay! Señorita, we have lived with deep sorrow. Tenemos un trauma (We are traumatized),” said Juana while sobbing as if she was still a little girl. The women claim they have an emotional shock as result of the armed conflict and they firmly believe that Fausta has the same trauma as they do: Fear of being desaparecidas.

Gregoria with Rosa and explained: “I think the girl of the movie was scared. When she works and others talk to her, she is scared. I remember everything about that
fear.” Gregoria’s comments about Fausta’s behavior demonstrate the ways they make of Fausta’s story, fear, silence, and introversion part of their memories of terrorism.

For Justina, those memories continually distress her: “It hurts. I do not want remember that.” Margarita concurred with Justina and expressed (personal communication, December 15, 2014):

We don’t want to remember anymore. Sometimes, we are doing chores at home, and then we remember and start to cry. We tell our children, they hug us and start to cry too. My days are so sad. Every space, every day in terrorism times was so sad. During the night, I am sleeping well, but then I just wake up. Thoughts come and I start to think. After that, I stay up. My little daughter notices when I cry during the night. When she wakes up, I have many tears. Do you understand me? And my daughter asks me “are you crying?” And I say “no, mi hijita (my daughter).” Then, she just hugs me.

Rosa: We have a trauma! (estamos traumados) We have psychological damage. Who is going to repair this? Nobody!

Gregoria: During the day or night, we remember just one word, and then, we remember everything. Those memories came into our mind again.

Rosa: The mind is like a computer. Everything is recorded within it. You watch one thing and then remember again. We see or hear about a delinquency here in Lima, and then we remember what we lived in the sierra.

As the women discussed below, they explained primarily terrorism’s aftermath as psychological damage. Rosa explicitly compared her mind with a “computer,” which
suggests she is stressing the “cognitive” dimension of memories. However, participants’
discussion also illustrates how memories are not only situated at the cognitive level, but
also how memories are activated when the body encounters physical factors or stimuli in
the world. As Narvaez (2013) notices “we don’t perceive like machines” (p. 161). We do
not merely “scan” the world and storage information in our mind. We perceive
cognitively, emotionally, and socially the world. As participants mentioned, hearing “one
word” or seeing “one thing” activated their memories of the sierra. These women’s
stories demonstrate how the environment (e.g., sounds, the appearance of things, and
smells) might trigger memories, which are communicated through the body.

In this sense, although some participants labeled the effects of violence as
“psychological damage,” others claimed they feel the effects of traumatic events in the
body too. Justina explicitly said how she experiences this trauma in her body when
touched by others:

I do not like anybody to touch my body. I scream. I feel anxious. I just think what
happened to me. I worked in the farmer market in Lima and my friends tell me:

‘why do you always scream? How do you sleep with your husband?’ (Justina,
personal communication, December 15, 2014)

In this sense, some of the women have learned to explain their trauma from a
biomedical/psychological approach while other participants consider the trauma is
experienced in/on their bodies as well.
Rosa also explained how the fear of being desaparecidas is present in the body as well. In doing so, she specifically related Fausta’s bodily symptoms of “the milk of sorrow” with the fear of abduction. Rosa said:

She bleeds from her nose. People say she was born with a disease, and say her mother passed on to her the fear of terrorism. This film was made in Huanta. There were a lot of terrorists in Huanta. Maybe, terrorists wanted to kill Fausta and she has the same fear like her mother. Maybe for that reason Fausta was born sick. Also, they talked about the potato. Why a potato? In Ayacucho, they raped young and old women. Maybe some of us we have lived the same, but we cannot tell. (Rosa, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

By referring to Fausta’s symptoms (bleeding from her nose) and her decision to insert the potato into her vagina, Rosa’s commentary demonstrates how the body carries the fear within it across time and space (from Huanta to Lima).

To summarize this initial theme, first, since participants were little girls during the conflict, they do not explain the disease as a sorrow transmitted from the mother’s body to their babies. In fact, participants were present in the villages in which violence occurred and shared the anguish with their mothers. Rather than listening to their mothers’ memories of terrorism (like Fausta did), participants vividly recorded and accumulated in/through the body what happened during those years.

Second, for participants, “the milk of sorrow” disease is about the fear of being desaparecidas. Specifically, they were afraid that guerrillas or soldiers might forcibly take their bodies away from their families; in other words, they were scared their bodies
would be absent from the world. Although some participants explain the fear of being desaparecidas as psychological trauma (mind), others women believe the fear is in/on the body. Thus, “the milk of sorrow” is the fear of facing the uncanny, which implies the potential interruption of the familiar and their modes of being in the world (in the sierra). Participants’ fear was primarily the possibility of abduction. These women were not desaparecidas, but they lived scared of that happening.

Disappeared Bodies

In addition to narrating their fear of ser desaparecidas, participants told me how they remember the disappearance of others’ bodies in the conflict. I present, in this part of the analysis, participants’ stories of others’ bodies: Relatives and community members, those who experienced abduction, torture, and murder in the 1980s. The organization of this section is based on the question: “What is [participants] relationship as [bodies] to other persons who are also bodies?” (Frank, 1995, p. 35)

In order to explore this question, I use Frank’s (1995) dyadic body to explain “the recognition that even though the other is a body outside mine, ‘over against me, this body has to do with me, as I with it’” (p. 35). I think women’s narrations about the ways others’ bodies experienced abduction, torture, and murder become illustrations of a dyadic body. Women’s stories of others’ bodies become one medium through which participants communicate the ways they shared others’ suffering in the village. Thus, “storytelling is a privileged medium of the dyadic body” (Frank, p. 36). By narrating what happened to others’ bodies, participants associate their bodies with others to tell the stories they (siblings, neighbors, community leaders) are not able to unfold today. I start participants’
stories of others’ bodies, first, by presenting the ways both armed groups recruited children to “teach” them violence; second, by depicting how guerrillas and soldiers “celebrate” public judgments in the plaza of the villages; finally, by highlighting participants’ grief because of the impossibility of burying their loved one’s corpses.

Children as Soldiers: Confronting Quechua Values of Compassion for Life

My conversations with participants about the disappearance of their loved ones started by discussing the meaning of “teaching violence.” When narrating young boys’ abductions, participants usually explained such disappearances like “training” children to be “soldiers.” Participants described how soldiers and guerrillas forced boys to drink blood, eat body parts, and kill others to prove if they were brave enough to be recruited (personal communication, December 15, 2014).

Juana: They abducted boys who were 12-years-old. If the boys wanted to live, they had to kill others. The boys had to obey them.

Rosa: That’s true. They did not have mercy on children or elder people. They forced us to kill others and drink their blood. If you did not want to drink the blood, they killed you. We were not accustomed to kill people. For that matter, we were scared of killing even a little animal. But they could force you to kill a dog. That’s happened to my cousin. They forced him to kill a dog, cut/quarter, and eat it. That’s not fair! And did they call this justice? How can a person, who says he is struggling for social equality and freedom, do this? That’s not fair, Señorita.
Justina: They abducted many of our relatives. We never saw some of our family members again. They killed them. My cousins were 12, 14 and 18-years-old. They never came back to the village.

Margarita: They abducted one of my siblings. I never heard from him.

Berta: Terrorists abducted young boys to recruit them.

Women’s accounts about the ways soldiers and guerrillas taught children how to kill all forms of life (humans and animals) reveal how both armed groups extremely transgressed Quechua’s values of compassion for life. Bolin (2006) explicated how Quechua children grow up knowing respect for others: “As soon as the children become conscious of their environment, they are introduced to a culture of respect” (p. 33). In their narrations, women expressed solidarity and respect for all forms of life (“we were scared of killing even a little animal”), and consciousness that human intervention is necessary to make a living.

The Quechua belief contrasts with the purpose of these “rituals” of forcing children to drink blood and eat body parts. As children, participants shared and understood young boys’ suffering, obligated to reject emotional reactions to seeing people’s pain, negating others’ cultural value of the sanctity of life, and showing indifference toward others’ bodies. When narrating these experiences, participants explicitly questioned practices in which children learned how to kill and torture members of their own communities. Children became “torturers” and learned how to make others’ bodies and pain absent, to magnify the distance between them and others, to experience
their own body as opposite to other forms of lives, and how to objectify others’ bodies and pain (Scarry, 1985).

_Bodies in Pain: Deconstructing Others’ Voices in the Plazas_

The plazas in the villages frequently were the scenarios where guerrillas and soldiers performed “public judgments” and tortures in 1980s Peru. In their narrations, participants mentioned several episodes in which extreme violence occurred in the plazas. By narrating stories of trials in the plaza, participants spoke on behalf of those families and peasants who were not able to communicate their experiences of the conflict today. Participants’ narrations imply a notion of a dyadic body, which indicates a mode of narration to reach out empathetically toward those who experienced extreme violence during the armed conflict. Although participants did not directly experience others’ suffering (e.g., sibling, children, and political leaders), they were able to make others’ sorrow their own pain.

Juana narrated the day when soldiers came to her village, and violently kicked in her house’s door. Juana told her story in this way:

They forcibly took us away from my house to the plaza. Once we were in the plaza, they started to torture men and women to get information about local leaders. They beat everyone. I was a little girl and I was with my grandmother. I remember she was accustomed to wearing long and wide skirts with many layers. So, when the soldiers came, she hurriedly hid me inside of her skirts. I quietly remained there. When she walked, I walked with her. My grandmother hid me

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6 Juana’s story is what _Commission of Truth and Reconciliation_ of Peru has identified as public judgments in its officials reports.
because she wanted to avoid having me see and listen to the soldiers’ insults. However, I listened and saw everything through her skirts. They insulted my grandmother very badly! I cannot repeat those words again!! Because I was inside my grandmother’s skirts, I could hear those insults very clearly. Suddenly, they beat my grandmother and one of them pulled me out of my grandmother’s skirts and said disdainfully: “What is that?” I was scared of being raped! (Juana, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

While narrating this compelling event, Juana showed an intense discomfort for her own body. She frowned and looked at her lap and legs, and started to cry, while insistently repeating: “what is that?” I noticed that while retelling this story her body was recalling the soldier’s gaze over her again and his rejection of her grandmother’s body.

Juana’s story and body language while remembering this experience illustrate the ways racial and ethnic discrimination were part of the armed conflict. Both armed groups treated the female Quechua body (the Indian body) with disgust and labeled it as “dirty” and deserving of sexual assault. According to the *Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (2001), “many times, ethnic and racial differences—converted into criteria for naturalizing social inequalities—were invoked by the perpetrators to justify actions committed against those who were their victims” (Vol. 8: 123). In this respect, Theidon (2008) notices “lighter-skinned women were reserved for the officials; the “cholas” and Indians were turned over to the troops” (p. 12). Juana’s physical characteristics suggest soldiers classified her body as an Indian body, which signified rather than officers, the troops might rape her.
Generally speaking, Juana’s story might be situated in the larger context of the colonial gaze over Indians’ bodies. Smith (2005) explains how for the colonial imagination, native bodies “are considered sexually violable and “rapable,” and the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not count” (p. 12). In the Peruvian armed conflict, having a Quechua body meant that Juana perceived her body as unworthy of bodily integrity. Thus, Juana’s story demonstrates how self-perception of the body is related always with history, gender, and race. As Narvaez (2013) discusses, “the perceptual act carries a history” and “these perceptual structures, much as other social or political structures, can mark the life of the percipient and the life of the group” (p. 162). Juana’s perception of her body demonstrates how such perceptions are individual, but is also result of socio-historical mediations that construct the indigenous bodies.

The next conversation illustrates the kind of torture indigenous people suffered in the armed conflict. Juana and Rosa connected their personal stories with the ways soldiers and guerrillas used to torture Quechua leaders to get information in the plaza (personal communication, December 16, 2014):

They interrogated us about our political leaders in the plaza. They called us bocones (gossips) and beat us until we bled. When they found the leaders, they put them on the floor and stepped on their heads. They tortured them. Some of the political leaders ran away to the mountains.
Rosa: Yes, they gathered people of the village in the plaza. They forced us to do rows: men, women, and children. And they started saying “you are a traitor” and fired their arms at us.

Justina: They cut my uncle’s mouth to keep him from speaking. After that, my uncle ran away to Cangallo to look for someone to sew his mouth.

Rosa and Juana’s narrations illustrate how the purpose of the torture “is not to elicit needed information but visibly to deconstruct the prisoner’s voice” (Scarry, 1985, p. 20). These episodes speak directly to the use of torture to literally destroy human capacity for word making (Scarry, p. 6). By calling Quechua population bocones and cutting individuals’ mouths, both armed groups were literally affecting their possibility of communication. Participants’ accounts suggest that during “public judgments” soldiers and guerrillas used the body as a “marker” to publicly warn members of Quechua population of the consequences of being a “traitor.”

Juana narrated how her community was profoundly impacted with the story of a family, who experienced one of these judgments, but inside their own home:

In Cajamarca, a small village, there was a family who wanted to keep them from stealing the family’s cattle. So, they forced the family to enter into their own house. Then, they burned the house with the family inside of it. The next day, my family and I saw their bodies—the father, the mother and their children—Everything was burned. I was scared of this. They burned entire families. (Juana, personal communication, December 15, 2014)
Although Juana’s account was not situated in the plaza, the story of this family demonstrates one of the ways both armed groups exercised “justice” when arriving in the village and searching for “traitors:” Burning the bodies.

In general, according to the women, the plaza was a space of public humiliation and extreme fear for the Quechua population during the armed conflict. When participants were not able to run away to the sierra, their family members and they were forced to be present in the plaza to participate in two central events: public judgments and communities’ parties celebrated by both armed groups. Juana brought out some of their memories of those trials and soldiers’ parties:

I have witnessed everything. I would not want to remember that. It is so painful. “They” gathered everybody in the plaza, my uncles, and my relatives. Soldiers tied us with ropes. They forced us to kill each other. If we do not kill others, they will kill us. One day, soldiers gave my uncle a knife and forced him to cut a man’s neck. I went crazy and ran toward the sierra. This is a trauma. (Juana, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

I asked participants if anyone wanted to share a specific instance of the kind of “celebration” guerrillas and soldiers used to do in the plaza. Rosa explained to me:

They had pots and told us: “comrades, let’s go to the plaza!” Sometimes, we were forced to go to both meetings [soldiers and guerrillas]. If we did not go to one of these meetings, they labeled us terrucos. If we did not obey, they would kill us.

Juana: Soldiers stole our animals to eat them in the parties they held in the plaza. They forced women to cook for them. Women must serve them very well. If
women do not serve them, they will rape them. During those years, I was 8-years-old and was scared of being raped too. They threatened me by saying “look, we are going to rape you too just like we did with the others.” Although cachaquitos (soldiers) sometimes left our villages, they came back again and accused us of being terrorists. Soldiers killed our peasants too. (Rosa, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

From Rosa’s explanation it is clear how the conflict permeated the most intimate aspects of the social life of Andean communities (e.g., collective celebration and sharing food). Blunt and Dowling (2006) note: “food and the social cultural practices of cooking and eating are important for charting and maintaining a collective memory and identity” (p. 212). Particularly in the context of Andean communities, food has played a symbolic and relevant role. Krogel (2011) explained that “in Quechua verbal and visual art, narrators often present themes involving food preparation and marketing as empowering, everyday rituals” (p. 93). For Quechua women, traditionally the act of cooking and preparing food for others does not mean to be a servile act or oppressive. In fact, cooking is an “act of resistance against the attempts of a patriarchal and often racist society to exclude and devalue their voices, skills, and creativity” (Krogel, p. 963). Therefore, in contrast to seeing themselves as subordinated individuals when cooking, Quechua women embrace their culinary abilities as a resource to gain socioeconomic independence. In this sense, when both armed groups forced women to cook for them, they undermined women’s sense of empowerment, mocked Quechua women, and placed them in a submissive role.
Undeniably, the public judgments were one of the most traumatic and sensitive memories for participants. The women were afraid not only of witnessing torture, but also of observing how both armed groups publicly humiliated their parents (e.g., humiliating their parents and forcing women to cook). Despite the disturbing memories of these trials, what made public judgments even more unbearable was the fact that both armed groups prohibited peasants to bury the corpses of those who were tortured to death. In the final subtheme of the “Disappeared Bodies,” I present women’s feelings of frustration when guerrillas and soldiers prohibited peasants from burying the corpses. The impossibility of removing the corpses was a complex theme for participants.

*Graves as “Textures” of Death*

By narrating other bodies’ tortures and murders, the women emphasized how guerrillas and soldiers warned them about the dreadful consequences participants and their families would experience if they buried corpses. In this regard, Donatella said: “I remember they killed pregnant women and then, they put a rock over their bodies. We could not take the corpse to bury,” recalled Donatella. According to Rosa, the consequences were: “We could not bury the corpses. If we did it, we were terrorists. So, to avoid being called terrorists and being murdered, we let the dogs and pigs eat the corpses.” (Rosa, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

During different moments of our conversation, they made connections between the maltreatment of dead bodies during the conflict and the movie’s portrayals of corpses. For instance, Gregoria said the movie reminds her of the lack of resources to bury her loved ones: “The movie talks about poverty. The mother died and the daughter did not
have money to bury her. I remembered poverty.” Moreover, Rosa questioned the way
Fausta leaves her mother’s corpse in the ocean:

I remember her mother died and she [Fausta] did not have money to bury her. She
decided to leave her mother in a desert. Why did not she bury her mother in the
hole that her uncle was digging in the backyard? If she would have done so, she
could visit her mother whenever she wants to do it. But no, she just left her
mother’s corpse in the desert. That’s not fair. I am going to bury my mother in a
place where I can see her anytime. (Rosa, personal communication, December 16,
2014)

Rosa’s declaration reflects the frustration and disturbance that participants felt when
leaving their relatives’ corpses in the village without possibility of burying them.

Participants frequently lamented the impossibility of having a grave to visit their
loved ones today. They expressed grief because of the lack of a fixed location where
visiting and remembering their parents and siblings. According to Trigg (2012), the
commemoration of death occurs on the material dimension of space. He explains “the
individual human subject stands before the monument [the grave]. The object is neither
passive nor indifferent to the viewer” (p. 93). In this sense, the grave presents itself as an
object to communicate to the viewer the meaning of the body as an eternal entity. In other
words, the significance of the grave is that it provides the appearance of the
transcendental.

Although only in death the body becomes finally detached from the world, the
grave and its materiality emphasize the transcendence of the death and the affective
dimension of the viewer when visiting the grave. Some of the women mourned the impossibility of having a grave as a site of silence, memory, commemoration, and meaning, underlining the anonymity of their relatives’ death during the armed conflict. Participants miss a fixed site to point out when telling their relatives’ stories, an intimate space to remember their deaths in a mindful way. This is the affective dimension of the grave one that marks an intimacy between others’ bodies and them. For the women, the graves have the power to create emotional attachment to spaces by their own physical presence.

*Masked Bodies: Guerrillas or Soldiers?*

In the last part of this sub-theme, I present the ways participants narrated their descriptions of guerrillas and soldiers or what I call masked bodies. The women explained to me how both groups used ski masks during the conflict, which made it difficult to identify; the women could not tell if they were members of guerrillas or state forces. As a result of this masking, the women used the generic “they” because of the impossibility to place these bodies as belonging to guerrillas or soldiers. I argue the notion of masked bodies functions as a ghost figure in women’s narrations. Based on the idea of “the phantom zone” (Trigg, 2012), I explain the masked bodies metaphorically represent an alien/colonial presence that surrounds women’s memories. Since the masked bodies are disturbingly present in participants’ mind and body, women resist their spectral manifestation by using the generic “they.” The use of “they” demonstrates women’s intentions of being emotionally detached from traumatic events.
During the months before my departure to Peru, I spent most of the time reading several academic and nonacademic accounts about the Peruvian conflict. I was particularly intrigued about the performance of two of the actors in this conflict: soldiers and guerrillas. I was eager to make sense of the relationship between both groups together and the Quechua community. During my fieldwork preparation, I realized that historical, and anthropological accounts define such a relationship as a complicated one in the context of the armed conflict. This sense of confusion and the impossibility of identifying who the “good” or “bad” guys were in the conflict were sometimes left me feeling frustrated when trying to understand the features and the internal dynamics of the conflict.

Thus, when I arrived in Peru, I was eager to meet the real experts. For me, participants in the focus groups would have the knowledge and skills to unpack the complexities of soldiers and guerrillas’ actions within the Quechua communities. Participants definitely could understand the contextual dynamics better than I could interpret as researcher. They have the knowledge and are eager to transmit their understandings and experiences.

However, despite participants’ authority to provide an explanation of the armed conflicts and their enthusiasm (and of course my undeniable desire to obtain responses), asking and answering questions about soldiers and guerrillas was not an easy task. I realized, when talking about these groups’ identities, the women clearly hesitated and used “they” interchangeably when referring to guerrillas or soldiers. I started to gain, among other things, familiarity with the participants’ sense of fear, and a reluctance to
explicitly name and point out who the “terrorists” were. When I asked: Could anyone explain to me who “they” were? A tense silence followed my question, and then Gregoria said (personal communication, December 16, 2014):

We slept on rocks. We could not sleep at our homes because “unknown” people might come to abduct us. We were scared of that.

Justina: It is too difficult to say. They were encapuchados (masked). In the village, people said, they were soldiers.

Justina paused and looked at the floor and emphatically finished her account saying: “They were unknown people.” Her response only piqued my interest. I was very curious and asked myself: How can participants say that the encapuchados were soldiers, and then two seconds later no longer holds that belief and say “they were unknown people?” By referring to the movie, Marcela jumps into the conversation and tried to explain to me the meanings of “they:”

In the movie, I remember how her mother passed her fear through the breast milk.

For that, she [Fausta] is scared. Her mother told her what happened when “bad people” came to the village. (Marcela, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

Listening to Marcela’s account, I realized how the film worked as a stimulus to trigger details about soldiers’ and guerrillas’ performance in the conflict. I asked participants why it is difficult to provide specific details to distinguish soldiers’ and guerrillas’ behavior.
After perhaps five seconds of complete silence, Donatella, who was seated with her head thrown back and crossed arms, began to vociferously speak with a wheeze: “We were scared! Madame.” Then, she suddenly paused because a whistling sound in her chest constantly interrupted her narrations. “One sees they came with ski masks!” Donatella said this firmly and decided not to continue her narration. Her tone of voice and words were overwhelming for me. I thought evoking these images evidently opens old wounds and offends Donatella. There was another moment of quietness while Donatella stared at me. Participants and I saw a new Donatella’s face with an air of confidence and command. While I remained silent trying to get the appropriate “probe” to retake the conversation, Rosa said:

We did not understand. They confused us. Sometimes they kindly said:

“Comrades, how are you?” but we did not know if they were terrorists or soldiers.

Marcela: They came with candies and I did not understand what was happening.

They came and said: “comrade, take this.” They tried to get our family’s trust.

(Rosa, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

Having Donatella, Rosa, and Marcela’s stories, I started to understand the relevance of ski masks and why they contributed to participants’ confusion of soldiers and guerrillas’ performances. I began to make sense of the meanings of the “unknown” identity of these groups within participants’ communities.

Berta, who was silent during the last couple minutes, had the desire to claim her position in the conversation. Berta explained:
I do not support terrorism. However, at least, guerrillas talked to us. I do not know how to explain this, but they did not provoke more destruction or generate more violence. In my personal experience, soldiers killed and abducted many of our paisanos (countrymen). I remember an armed conflict in Ayacucho. The community asked for state forces’ support, but when soldiers came to the village, they indiscriminately killed women, children, and elderly. They did not care about pregnant women or persons with disabilities. Again, I don’t favor any of these groups, but this is my personal opinion. When soldiers found a puppy, they just killed it. During terrorism, there was no regulation. There was no a single person who said “Stop! Do not do that!” Soldiers came to countryside and automatically killed people. (Berta, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

When Berta said this, I saw a brave Berta, who overcame the fear of speaking and confidently expressed her opinion about the central actors of the conflict. In doing so, Berta opened a new venue in our conversation pointing out the differences between guerrillas and soldiers. Based on this account, Berta is emphasizing how one central difference between the “masked” bodies was that guerrillas’ members were more inclined to socialize with the Quechua communities than soldiers.

When I asked other members of the group want to say about Berta’s comment, Marcela offered her perspective about guerrillas’ socialization and soldiers’ violent performances:
Soldiers were really cruel. They were mainly the ones who raped women and stole our animals to feed their troops. They stole corn and potatoes. They stole our best crops too! (Berta, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

I sought to get more details and examples about guerrillas and soldiers’ behaviors and Justina was willing to give me more illustrations. I learned from Justina how the female body was “at service of the troops.” She explained to me the ways the troops committed gang rape and forced women to cook for them:

They stole our animals, killed them, and had parties. They forced women to cook for them. Women had to serve them very well. If women did not serve them, they raped them, no matter a women’s age, young or old women.

Donatella: Where I lived, they entered using ski masks. Yes, they raped good girls. They took them to the bushes and raped them. Also, they raped older women. They threatened women with stones and machetes. Many mothers lost their husbands! Some husbands never came back. (Justina, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

These women do not deny guerrillas performed violent behavior too, but they noticeably emphasize the abuse they and their loved ones received from state forces during the armed conflict.

Indeed, the relationship between the women and both groups is too complicated and complex. They were little girls at that time; most of them were between 8 and 12-years-old, and they define guerrillas and soldiers’ performance according to the treatment they and their families received from these groups. However, the use of ski masks
complicated these scenarios by reducing the possibilities of identifying the members of each armed group. Participants could not identify if the same group who came in the morning and was generous to them, would be the same group stealing their animals, torturing their parents, and raping them and their mothers during the night.

Finally, although “ski masks” made it difficult to identify the identities of these groups, participants indicated how a significant difference was that among guerrillas members were not only male men but also women. Juana said:

There were women among terrorists and the women laughed at us. For them, the violence was like a game. They acted like drug addicts, who never realize their harmful behavior. Well… it is like a game. (Juana, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Margarita proceeded to elaborate on the ambiguous behavior of both groups in the armed conflict:

Guerrillas and soldiers performed the same behavior. When soldiers came to the village, we said “they are going to protect us,” but no. They did not defend us either. Soldiers committed the same violence as guerrillas. (Margarita, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Serafina explained how sometimes soldiers and guerrillas fervently searched for a specific type of the female body. I learned from Serafina how these armed groups searched for girls who had light skin. According to Serafina, they called these girls “gringuita.” Serafina said how soldiers and guerrillas considered her a “gringuita.”
When I was 16, I was herding my uncle's cows. Then, four men and two women came with ski masks and weapons. They told me: “hi, girl” and I told them “hi, uncle/aunt.” In the sierra, we are accustomed to friendly greet others calling them uncle/aunt. One of the women told me: “you are so beautiful, you are like gringuita, very pretty. We want to start spending time with you. Where do you live? Who are your parents? We have never seen you before. How old are you?” And the woman was gently touching my hair. Suddenly, one of the men came close to me and I felt really scared. The woman continued touching my blonde hair. I recalled my mother had blonde hair too; she was “gringuita” just like me. So, while the woman was touching my hair, I remember what my mother used to tell me: “they are going to desaparecerete! (make you disappear)” and I said myself: “This is a terruco (terrorist), they are going to disappear me, if they do it how will my family know where I am? They are going to suffer.” So, I decided to stop talking with them. However, the woman insisted on touching my hair! And she said “comrade, do not be scared of me,” and I answered her: “you know, aunt, I have to take care of my animals.” (Serafina, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

After this frightful encounter, Serafina went back into her house where she lived with her aunt. Her aunt warned Serafina to avoid strangers because they could abduct her anytime. According to Serafina, this was the last time that she experienced the fear of forced disappearance.
According to these stories, participants interacted with both groups; they experienced feelings of both safety and fear. Participants never knew what to expect from “the bad people” but confusion. In Justina’s words: “They killed innocent children. What kind of heart could those men have?” The women did not understand how these groups could proclaim discourses of democracy, social inclusion, and human rights but at the same time could exercise extreme violence on people that they called “comrades.”

My interpretation is that “they” might be symbolically called a “masked body,” a body unable to be identified. The use of ski masks during the armed conflict intentionally aimed to conceal the physical features of the perpetrators. In this sense, Theidon (2004) explains that perpetrators of violence could be male Quechua peasants, who sometimes exercised the role of aggressors within their own villages. The role of peasants in the war generated confusion among Quechua communities and made the conflict more complex. This uncertainty explains why women did not know what to expect when guerrillas and soldiers came to their villages. As Marcela said: “I remember that ‘they’ came with candies to convince us to support them,” but other times “they” performed extreme violence when encountering the Quechua population. According to Theidon, the process of putting on a ski mask, which allows the appearance of a “shadow self,” works in two directions. On the one hand, the aggressor (when male Quechua peasant) distanced himself from his own actions and was able to act using his “double.” On the other hand, community members were not able to recognize who the aggressors were. The impossibility of recognizing who the perpetrators were meant the participants interpreted these bodies as “strange bodies.” For that reason, during the focus groups, the women
used the generic “they” when referring to guerrillas and soldiers and frequently claimed: “It is difficult to say who they were.” Moreover, the use of the generic “they” suggests women’s intentions of distancing their selves from “these strange bodies.” Saying aloud who “they” were means to participants to face their memories of the conflict. Selecting “they” demonstrates a form of distancing their bodies and de-personalizing their memories of the conflict.

In women’s accounts “masked bodies” or “strange bodies” function as ghost figures, which haunt their narrations. In other words, “masked bodies” metaphorically represent “the death returning to haunt” the women’s bodies. The presence of the ghost figures (“masked bodies”) in women’s stories might be illustrated with Trigg’s (2012) notion of “the phantom zone:” “the opening in which the ‘self’ directly witnesses its own body being colonized by a foreign agency” (p. 255). By recalling the “masked bodies,” participants realized that “they” have returned to haunt (or “colonize”) their present and bodies. Therefore, when narrating their experiences, the women kept “vigilant” detaching their memories from “masked bodies” using the generic “they.” In short, “masked bodies” are not only the absence, but also the presence and the invasive force that haunts women’s childhood memories.

Although these memories are distressful for participants, some of them confidently claim that they do not want to forget what happened to her and her family in terrorist times. For example, Berta has decided to transmit those memories to their children: “I tell my story to my children, because maybe, I hope it will not happen again,”
said Berta, while looking at me with an air of authority that was palpable. Margarita had the same opinion like Berta and expressed:

I talk with my children about why I came from my village. My children do not know my village and ask: “Mom, why did you leave your village?” and I tell them “I came from my village because when I was a child it was terrorism time. Many people died. We suffered a lot and lived scared. In spite of all that, I lived. Then, I moved from the sierra to Guancayo and from it to Lima. You were born in Lima.” That’s what I tell my children. My younger child was born in Lima and she tells me: “Mom, you have gone everywhere!” I tell her: “yes, you are right. I have been in many places because I did not know where I should stop.” (Berta, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

Margarita sounded distressed and then, she started to cry. Justina and I were close to her and our reaction was to extend our hands toward Margarita’s hands as an act of consolation. Justina also expressed her empathy and solidarity with Margarita’s account, declaring the ambiguity of wanting to go back to her hometown and wanting to forget the village.

In contrast to Margarita and Berta, other women claimed they do not tell their memories to their children. Rosa answered “No. I don’t talk about it with them. This is a traumatic history.” Donatella concurred with Rosa and said: “No, they would grow up with a trauma!” Meanwhile, Gregoria recalled a particular instance when she decided that she would not transmit memories of terrorism:
One day, my children were watching a movie. It was about terrorism and a group of people that were abducted in the mountains. For my children, the movie was a game, but for me, this is real and I started to cry. So, I prefer do not talk about it with them. (Gregoria, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

For Gregoria, experiencing how their children perceive terrorism as a “game” was the central reason because she determined she would not share those memories with her children.

In the first theme, “the threat of disappearance,” I explored how participants interpreted “the milk of sorrow” disease as their fear of being desaparecidas; the ways the women remember how “others’ bodies” experienced abduction, torture, and murder, and participants’ relationship as “a body” to these other persons who are also “bodies.”

Finally, I presented how participants referred interchangeably to guerrillas and soldiers as “they” (masked bodies), which suggests emotional detachment from their traumatic memories. The three subthemes speak directly to women’s fear of being disappeared and the ways participants experienced abductions and public tortures of their siblings, parents, and relatives in the plazas of the villages.

Re-defining Safe Spaces and Disappearing as an Act of Agency

In this theme, I present women’s meanings of two spaces during the conflict: their homes and the sierra. I start by examining how participants experienced their homes as unsafe spaces during the armed conflict throughout which they hid their bodies in the sierra (a home-like space). Moving from their homes to the sierra might be seen as a
home-making process in which home extends to include not only the material space of the house, but also the wider landscape that surrounds it.

Based on participants’ experiences of home, I define home from a complex and political approach rather than an ideal and stable place. Home can be not only a space of safety, but also a space of fear, violence, power, and abuse. Women’s narrations of home are full of both feelings of attachment and alienation. Blunt and Dowling explain “home can be created and takes different forms, in unlikely dwellings” (p. 121). In this sense, before terrorism, the women used to experience their homes as safe and familiar, but during the conflict their feelings toward home drastically change. In the 1980s, participants ran from their homes to the sierra, which they re-experienced through processes of home-making.

The Uncertainty of Home

After watching The Milk of Sorrow, participants explicitly related Fausta’s fearful behavior in public spaces with the anguish they experienced during terrorism. The women confidently declared they comprehended Fausta’s performances when encountering strangers in spaces. In Gregoria’s words:

In 1983 and 1984, this little girl [Fausta] had the same fear just like her mother. Her mother had too much terror. We also had fear of sleeping at home during the night, even during the day. Our mother told us “run away to the mountains. You cannot stay at home. You must sleep in the mountains.” We slept in rocks, but we didn’t sleep inside the houses. Our parent left us in the mountains because strangers could come to abduct us. When I watched the movie, I remembered
everything that I lived. For that, the little girl is scared. (Gregoria, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

Gregoria’s comment suggests that the Fausta character raises feelings of identification with her own suffering. Participants deeply understand Fausta’s fear when being in public spaces. They justified Fausta’s fear because of the continuous anxiety and anguish of experiencing their homes no longer as safe spaces during the armed conflict. Although Fausta’s performance does not take place in the sierra in the 1980s, Gregoria’s narration demonstrates her association of feeling “much terror” when being in spaces (home) that generate concern and distress.

Rosa referred to Gregoria’s comment and added how guerrillas and soldiers’ interruption in their houses means to her specifically the fear of sexual assault (personal communication, December 15, 2014):

   When they entered into our houses if we were sleeping, they raped us. No matter if our parents were there or not. They raped us anyway.

   Margarita: They acted like “kings.” What could we do? They had power; we had to let them do whatever they wanted.

Margarita’s comment speaks directly to Juana’s interpretation of what happened when guerrillas and soldiers entered in their homes:

   Houses’ doors in the village usually had fragile locks. So, soldiers could easily kick down a door. They entered into our houses with violent behavior. One day, they entered into my house and started shouting and banging everything. After that, they took us to the plaza to public judgments.
Juana’s commentary speaks to the ways terrorism tragically altered their childhood routines too early. Sleeping with unlocked doors was not safe anymore, and being at home with their parents did not guarantee avoidance of sexual violence either.

Juana’s and Margarita’s accounts illustrate the relationships between home, power, and identity. Blunt and Dowling (2006) explain how “the violent displacement and dispossession of indigenous people [is] a result of imperial nation-building” (p. 258). By comparing soldiers and guerrillas to “kings,” participants’ commentaries demonstrate the ways both armed groups performed a colonialist stance when exercising violence, oppression, and control over the Quechua population’s homes, lands, and their bodies as well. In this regard, Smith (2005) points out “native people have become marked as inherently violable through a process of sexual colonization. By extension, their lands and territories have become marked as violable as well” (p. 55). Women’s narrations suggest the ways guerrillas and soldiers sought to control indigenous communities, lands, and homes.

During the internal conflict, guerrilla and soldiers displaced the women and their families, which forced them to assume a new normality: staying up every night, internalizing parents’ cautions of potential abduction, and taking seriously communities’ warnings of the arrival of strangers to their villages. In Gregoria’s words:

We used to be in our homes; then, we listened about terrorist attacks in others’ homes. So, we warned each another to run away to protect our lives. We avoided being in the place where a terrorist attack just occurred. (Gregoria, personal communication, December 16, 2014)
Participants and their families learned to attentively listen to communities’ warnings in order to know when to leave their houses and prevent unexpected attacks during those years. In this sense, the women’s meanings of home shifted from a familiar and known space to a strange and foreign and insecure space. In the 1980s, the traditional definition of home generated feelings of being vulnerable, threatened, unstable, and unsafe for the participants.

In this sense, Tuan (1977) asks: “What does it mean to be in command of space, to feel at home in it?” and “What does it mean to be lost?” (p. 36). Tuan explains that feelings of being at home are related with knowing the objective reference points in space (landmarks and cardinal positions). In contrast, Tuan explains that when we are lost “front and back regions suddenly feel arbitrary, since [we] have no better reason to go forward than to go back” (p. 37). Being lost means we still do not know where we are.

Participants experienced the transition from confidently moving in their private spaces to feeling their bodies lost and vulnerable inside their homes. Sleeping inside their houses and closing the doors with “fragile locks” did not provide a safe space for them and their families. Being at home during the night represented the possibility of experiencing rape and witnessing parents’ torture within private spaces. For that reason, participants’ meanings of home had different and ambivalent forms: familiar and dangerous. Since the materiality of the houses did not represent safety for them, participants experienced the sierra in home-like ways.

Before describing the ways participants experienced the sierra in home-like ways and camouflaged their bodies in the land, I describe how witnessing guerrillas and
soldiers exercising violence over their parents increased participants’ feelings of un-home-like.

Maltreatment of Parents’ Bodies

Participants explained to me how both armed groups came into their houses to question their parents about their affiliation with the “enemy,” and recruit their children (their brothers) to their militant groups. Rosa brought out to our conversation the kind of questions soldiers and guerrillas asked their parents while they tortured them. Rosa is a 57-years-old woman who came from Ayacucho to Lima in 1982. She performs a confident attitude expressing her thoughts. Rosa narrated how soldiers interrogated her parents:

Soldiers and guerrillas asked my parents: “where did you hide your children?”

They wanted to teach us their way of killing others. But you know, people in my village used to respect others’ lives. We were not accustomed to kill each another, but during those years we had to obey them [soldiers/guerrillas]. Otherwise, they killed us. That was our fear. (Rosa, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Rosa’s intervention highlighted how parents hid their children in the sierra to prevent soldiers and guerrillas from making their children “soldiers.”

In addition to Rosa’s commentary, Margarita said how their parents protected her and remained vigilant during terrorism: “My mother and father stayed at home. My parents told us: “you run away. We will take care of ourselves” but my siblings and I watched from the mountains.”
Like Margarita’s parents, Justina had to hide in the mountains while their parents experienced all kind of tortures:

I told my father “daddy, you look so bad” and he answered me “yes, I know! But you have to run away now.” My father commanded us to hide in the sierra, no matter if it was raining or not. When they [soldiers/guerrillas] came to the village, “they” forced my father to kneel and then beat him. “They” called my father terrorist (terruco). (Justina, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Justina’s father died during terrorism, but her mother, who is 90-years-old, is alive. Despite such abuses against their parents’ bodies, participants remember their parents as having strong bodies, which were able to defend the participants, and resist physical aggression for the sake of their children. Despite remembering that their parents had strong bodies, participants knew their parents were not physically able to protect them.

Although the women primarily mentioned how their fathers were violently stoned and beaten, their mothers suffered these aggressions, too. I asked Justina if during that episode she narrated, soldiers and guerrillas beat her mother too. She said: “Yes, Señorita. When we came back, my mother told me how they beat her and forced her to cook for them. My mother cried a lot.” By listening to how Justina’s mother cried because of the abuses that she experienced, Catalina connected Justina’s narration with her mother’s suffering and the film: “When I listened to the songs of the movie, I remembered my mother. She cried and cooked. Each word of the song moved me because it makes me remember.”
Moreover, Rosa’s account illustrates the ways her mother’s body carries on the physical and emotional trauma of terrorism: “In 1984, I brought my mother to Lima. She was psychologically traumatized. They beat her because she did not obey them.”

Justina, who is 51-years-old, timidly decided to enter into the conversation to express her agreement with Berta:

Yes. I experienced the same in Panguana. I was very little too. We were in the highlands when they beat my father; we cried. We had run to the mountains. When we were in the sierra, my father exerted force over enormous rocks to move them and find giant holes to hide my siblings and I. My father sometimes hid with us. One day the soldiers found us. They pulled my father out of the hole. They beat him and threw stones over his body. (Justina, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Justina paused and started to cry. Every time she remembers her father, her voice trembles regretfully. She could not contain her tears. All of us kept silent in the room. Our silence showed Justina our respect, understanding, and empathy for her pain. Justina breathed deeply and tried to continue her narration, but she could not do it. I thought her words and reminiscences were drowned in tears. Justina’s memories traveled in a stream of moans on her cheeks. I could not capture or touch any of these memories. I could only use my imagination to understand her sorrow. I thought, “what if I witnessed others beat my father in front of me?” By placing myself in the hypothetical situation “what if,” I tried recognizing and empathizing with Justina’s narrations. Even though I did not
experience what Justina lived through, I was able to use my imagination to empathize with her pain (Bakhtin, 1982; Frank, 1995).

Our silence was gently interrupted by Gregoria’s voice. Like the other participants, Gregoria explained to me how her parents left her in the mountains in Ayacucho to prevent an unwelcome encounter with soldiers or guerrillas. Gregoria was 11-years-old in the 1980s and remembered:

My parents did not want us meet them [soldiers/guerrillas]. My mother literally left my siblings and I in the sierra. She ran with us to the mountains and hid us. Then, she and my father went down to our house. They stood guarding the house during the night. Sometimes, my mother had to cook for them [soldiers/guerrillas] and she cried while cooking. (Gregoria, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Participants’ accounts illustrate how their parents trusted in the qualities (material and imaginative) of the sierra to camouflage and protect their children’s bodies as well as their courage to remain on “guard” in their houses in the 1980s. In short, for participants, painful memories bring up not only the fear of abduction, but also the astonishing frustration of witnessing how their parents experienced extreme violence and abuse while children watched everything hiding in the sierra.

Moving to the Safety of the Sierra

In this part of the conversation, I present women’s accounts about how their parents saved their lives by leaving participants (when being a little girls) in the mountains. Their parents taught them how to camouflage/mask their bodies in/within
nature. Participants camouflaged their bodies by hiding behind rocks, climbing trees, and covering their bodies with dried branches. The children learned how to make their bodies invisible to guerrillas and soldiers in the sierra. While the body was invisible in the sierra, participants silently recorded from the mountains their parents’ traumatic memories. In doing so, participants’ narrations are not only their memories but also another way to narrate their parents’ stories from a different perspective.

Like Fausta (the character of the movie) participants learned silence as a strategy of protection. In Berta’s words: “I did not speak with strangers. When I walked, I walked with my brother or I hid myself in any place when it was dark. My parents insistently told me “don’t talk with anyone!” that was protection for me.”

They learned to survive thanks to their parents’ teachings: Hiding their bodies underground and keeping silence! Silence was a frequent strategy used by participants during terrorism. Berta clearly remembers how her teacher repeated everyday: “Don't tell your last name! Don't tell who your parents are. Don't tell who you are.”

Since home was not a safe space for the women, the sierra became the space that relatively represented safety for them. In the mountains, participants soon learned to be quiet in order to avoid soldiers and guerrillas taking them away and killing them. Although participants were already familiar with the sierra because of their work leading their animals (sheep, cows, llamas, and alpacas) to higher regions, they re-discovered spatial characteristics of the sierra in order to learn the ways of hiding and protecting the body. Thanks to their parents’ direction, participants identified the “appropriate” trees and holes on the ground to hide themselves according to their bodies’ sizes.
In the sierra they learned not only to be silent and invisible but also to observe and wait the right time to back to their houses. The mountains hid their bodies and gave them an extensive view to witness the armed conflict and register history in their minds.

Margarita spoke of her experience in this way:

We have many memories. I experienced terrorism time from the 1980s to the 1990s. They came to the plaza to gather everybody in the village. When they came, my cousins and I ran to the mountains. We stayed in the mountains until they left. They killed people…and we cried while watching everything from the mountains. They abducted one of my siblings and we have not heard from him since those days. Soldiers did the same. They came to our village and behaved similarly to guerrillas. (Margarita, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Like Margarita, Serafina recalled how remaining hidden in the sierra was part of a new routine during those years: “Every day, by 6:00 pm we were in the sierra. The next morning, at 7:00 am, we saw from the distance how our house was.” After going down from the sierra, what they mostly found was more destruction: guerrillas or soldiers had abused their parents, murdered some of their relatives, and stolen their animals. As Justina told me:

I remember that before terrorism I use to graze my sheep and sing while I was in the sierra. When terrorism came, I just ran away and left my animals. I sadly sang in the mountains. After we went down from the mountains, we did not have anything to eat. They came to eat the animals we raised. This is so sad! They ate
our best animals. They killed our cattle. (Justina, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

At the beginning of the armed conflict, participants did not completely leave their homes. As I mentioned above, they created new routines of being at home and leaving it when both armed groups came to their villages. The women and their families continued performing some of their responsibilities, like the herding of animals, because they recognized their animals “cannot survive without human protection, and they [recognized] equally that humans cannot survive without [them]” (Gordon, 2014, p. 42). Like the other participants, Justina’s emotional attachment to her animals demonstrates how the women see the animals not as resources to be managed, but as their partners in mutual relationship in a shared space.

In short, the arrival of terrorism into women’s houses meant to them feeling *their bodies lost* and exposed. The way that participants see their bodies as vulnerable is tied to their experiences of home as an unsafe and uncertain space. Seeing home as an unsafe space might be connected to women’s recognition that their parents were not able to protect them inside their houses. This increased women’s uncertainty at home. According to Tuan (1977): “to the young child the parent is his [her] primary ‘place.’ The caring adult is for him a source of nurture and a haven of stability” (p. 139). As a result of the impossibility of providing “care” to their children, participants’ parents left them in the sierra to hide and protect their bodies from the extreme violence in the 1980s. Before soldiers and guerrillas could make their children disappear, parents left their children in the sierra.
Camouflaged Bodies

Before mentioning the ways participants hid their bodies in the sierra, it is important to say that the women’s roles in herding the animals gave them the spatial skills to be familiar with the geographical characteristics of the Andean mountains. Bolin (2006) says that when taking care of their animals, Quechua children used to “walk alone to the valley—a distance of between sixteen and thirty-one kilometers” (p. 73). From childhood, participants acquired spatial abilities to know the sierra, which meant they were “trained explorers” of the terrain before the armed conflict. Since they were little girls herding llamas and sheep, participants learned to calculate distance by walking several kilometers in the sierra to bring back their animals. Tuan (1977) explains how with long distance commuting “many people have known what it is like to display spatial skill and geographical competence” (p. 69). Participants’ roles in herding their animals gave them “geographical competence” and knowledge to survive in the sierra during the conflict.

In the 1980s, they used these spatial skills to explore spaces in the sierra in which they might hide their bodies from both armed groups. In the focus groups, participants recalled how, often, instead of going to the sierra to herd sheep and cows and hang out with siblings and friends, they fearfully ran to the sierra to save their lives during terrorism. Marcela described to me how she and her siblings had to accustom themselves to a new ‘normality’ during those years. She narrated how, as soon as the night came, dogs started barking, and her mother anxiously yelled in Quechua: “Now, run fast to the mountains! Let's go! You have to run away, hide in the mountains, they are coming!”
While Marcela remembers those days, she is trying to make sense of those events today. Since she was just a little girl during terrorist times, she has vague memories about her mother’s suffering:

I was very young; I did not understand what was happening. My mother said:
“take a blanket, a sheepskin, a small bowl with soup and potato.” We ate in the highlands. We slept inside of a hole in the ground or in the rocks; it didn’t matter where we slept. I did not understand what happened, but I remember many mothers cried during those years. (Marcela, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Because she was very young, Marcela only recalls confusion surrounded by mothers’ sorrow and the pain of seeing their children running away through the mountains. Despite the mothers’ anguish of seeing their children “disappearing” in the sierra, they trusted that their children would know how to protect themselves in the land. As I mentioned, participants’ roles as herders gave them the spatial skills to confidently move in the sierra.

During their childhood, participants also believed the sierra would protect them. By spending hours quietly in the sierra, this land became a “safe space” for them. Tuan (1977) explained, “permanence is an important element in the idea of place” (p. 140). As a natural, rather than human construction, the sierra offered a space of permanence that the participants’ homes could not provide during the 1980s. For Tuan, the sense of “place” evokes a sense of emotional and material attachment. Participants’ commentaries of feeling safe in the sierra demonstrate their emotional attachment to the land. For
participants, the sierra became an intimate space, which the women materially and symbolically created with “the touch and heart” (Tuan, 1977, p. 140). The sierra hid the women’s bodies, embraced them, and gave the affective and physical caring their parents were not able to give them when armed groups interrupted their lives. While disconnecting from the home, the women emotionally and physically remained connected to the sierra.

By experiencing the benefits of the sierra in protecting their bodies, participants persuaded other little girls (cousins and sisters) to hide their bodies in the sierra, too. One of the participants, Margarita, is from Huancavelica and recalled how she sometimes had to boldly convince her cousins to leave their parents and run away through the mountains until next morning. Margarita also narrated how she pulled some women’s arms to get them to go to the sierra. She remembered the episodes when she and her cousins hid themselves in the mountains of Huancavelica during terrorism. Margarita explained to me: “Since the mountains were close to our houses, when we listened to the dogs, we immediately ran though the sierra. When we came to the sierra we said: ‘they are not going to find us!’”

Margarita is a tall woman of 43 and although she has a sweet and leisurely tone of voice, she is really a strong and brave woman. The sharp features of Margarita’s face were merely a reflection of her entire body structure. She has a square jaw, bright, dark eyes and furry eyebrows. While attending to her story, I could imagine Margarita fearlessly holding some women’s hands and gently persuading them to save their lives in the mountains. Undeniably, Margarita and other children bravely ran through the
“tunales” (tunnels) that their parents had built through the sierra to facilitate the moments when their children fled from their houses to the mountains.

Following Margarita’s account, Berta provided specific some aspects about what happened after they ran to the mountains to save their lives. Like other women’s narrations, Berta’s accounts suggest how their strategies of camouflaging the body in the sierra might be understood as a form of disembodiment. Participants “disassociated” their bodies from the space by the body “mimicking” the forms of other elements in the space (e.g., rocks and trees). Margarita, for example, narrated how she and her cousins hid in the sierra: “We covered our bodies with dried branches of trees; we lay down on the ground to watch what was happening with our parents.” For these little girls, sleeping peacefully was never again part of their childhood routines; being awake and watching anxiously as their parents protected them from extreme violence were their unquestionable practices during those days.

Berta added even more details to Margarita’s explanation of being in the highlands during the nights of terrorism: “My mother and father hid hammocks in the trees and we slept in them. We slept hidden in the trees of the sierra.” Berta firmly believes that her parents’ tactics to survive in the mountains kept her alive: “Our parents always tried to protect us. They always looked for one way or another to save our lives. We slept among corns, in any place when the night came, but we never woke up at home.” At the age of twelve, Berta left Ayacucho and came to Lima. Bertha is now 45-years-old and seems self-reliant when telling her memories of the conflict.
In this theme, “re-defining safe spaces,” I illustrated how the notion of home is a variable term for participants. By moving from a safe home during terrorism, participants explored a range of home-making practices that created affection toward the sierra in the 1980s. According to participants, the sierra gave them the physical caring that their parents were not able to give them inside their homes during the armed conflict. In the sierra, participants camouflaged and transformed their bodies into inanimate objects (e.g., trees and rocks) to avoid soldiers and guerrillas making them desaparecer.

Re-Placement of Bodies and/in Spaces: Contemporary Embodied Memories

In this final theme, I describe participants’ arrival to the city (Lima) and the ways violence remained embodied as they re-experienced violence in private spaces and social exclusion and delinquency in the city. However, despite traumatic memories of the armed conflict, these women remain committed to preserve the Quechua language as a positive aspect of their identities.

Before presenting participants’ contemporary embodied memories, I explain how the notion of “becoming a woman” was one of the main conditions that encouraged participants’ parents to decide the “right” time when the women must move from the sierra to the city. Then, I describe participants’ arrival to Lima and their re-encountering of political violence and other forms of violence: delinquency and domestic violence. I end this chapter discussing women’s resistance to being defined as helpless victims of the conflict, but their intentions of underlining Quechua language as a positive aspect of their memories and identities that remain embodied within them in urban spaces.
Becoming “A Mujer” and the Transition to Urban Space

The continuous risk of unavoidable abduction of their children and potential rape prompted participants’ parents to realize that their daughters could not remain in the sierra when they became teenagers (“becoming a woman”). According to participants, the probabilities of abduction and rape increased for them when they became a mujer (a woman). Thus, Berta said: “My parents always protected me. When I was 12-years-old, they told me, you must go to Lima now. They might desaparecer (they might make you disappear).”

Participants categorically claimed that although soldiers and guerrillas sexually abused women, no matter what their age, they primarily raped young women. Juana recalls how soldiers raped one of her cousin, who was 14-years-old: “I was scared of rape. I did not want them to rape me like they did with my cousin. They made her disappeared, and then they sent her back when she got pregnant.” I find this experience of “becoming a mujer” and the impossibility of remaining in the sierra during those years particularly suggestive. This idea demonstrates that when participants became a mujer, the sierra was not enough to hide the female body and keep it safe. Participants had to leave the sierra and enter into a new space during their teenage years.

Parents were afraid their daughters would experience gang rape and the most offensive consequence of sexual assault: pregnancy. Rape, as a war weapon, aims to leave “permanent” consequences not only in the female body, but also in the Quechua women’s communities. If a woman got pregnant during the armed conflict, her community could expel her from the village (Peel, 2004). Therefore, in the context of the
war, the female body might be considered as an expression of community dishonor when being assaulted by the enemy. Said differently, the female body becomes the site that could make or break family and community structure.

Therefore, in order to avoid rape, pregnancy, and, consequently, community rejection, their parents moved the women to the city when participants started becoming mujeres. Thus, as soon as their parents noticed participants were experiencing puberty, they believed their daughters might be victims of rape, so they commanded them to go live with their relatives (e.g., uncles) in the peripheral hills in Lima.

*Re-experiencing Violence in the City*

Most of the participants told me that when they came to the peripheral hills in Lima, they lived with some relatives (e.g., uncles and aunts) while their parents remained in the sierra, taking care of their land. Marcela narrated how she came to live in her uncle’s house and herd adjustment to new routines in the urban space. She explained to me:

> When my uncle registered me in the school in Lima, I realized children in the city were more extroverted than I. I was alone without my parents. I always was thinking “Will the terrorists have entered at my home? Are my parents alive? Have the terrorists mistreated my parents?” In the school, I was not a smart and sociable girl. I was always thinking about the fate of my parents, grandparents, and the village. Over the years, I started to adjust to Lima. (Marcela, personal communication, December 15, 2014)
According to Marcela, her uncle assumed her father’s role. He took care of Marcela and supported her during her first years in Lima. Like Marcela, Berta also narrated the importance of her uncle when she came from the sierra:

I call my uncle “daddy” because he took care of my siblings and I. We celebrate his birthday and say: “Happy birthday, daddy.” He says: “I am not your father,” but we say: “You are our father because you took care of us.” (Marcela, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Despite the caring and protection participants received from their relatives, especially their uncles, the women told me how they re-experienced violence and fear in public spaces in Lima. Participants’ narrations about their arrival in Lima illustrate how the armed conflict continued to follow them in public and private spaces. Thus, concerning her arrival in Lima, Rosa told me (personal communication, December 15, 2014):

When we came to Lima, we realized terrorists were here too. One morning, we saw how they came down the street. There were more than 30 members of Shining Path walking on the street. Every morning we watched the red flag in the mountains. We lived scared that they could enter into our houses.

Catalina: They entered into my house. I was with two of my children. Do you remember? (Catalina was asking Rosa. Rosa assented and Catalina proceeded) they peacefully approached me to ask for water. They asked if I agreed with communism or with the government. I pretended to be sonsa (stupid) and said “I do not support anyone.” And they asked me “do you agree with the kind of life

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7 The red flag is the symbol of communist party
you have here?” and I said “what else I can do? My partner is poor and I am not an educated person.” They replied “don’t you want a better quality of life? Don’t you want in Peru exists just one ideology rather than rich people eat better than poor people?” and I said “No, I feel comfortable with my life.” So, they used to persuade us to support them.

Rosa: Yes, that’s right. Also, I remember that some of them came into mi compadre (godfather) Victor’s house and called through megaphone: “long live the president!”

Rosa’s and Catalina’s stories denote the tension they had to face in Lima after leaving the sierra. Participants’ stories of coming to Lima demonstrate they learned to live dealing with a constant presence and oppression of both groups when trying to adjust to a new life in the city.

As the years passed, the women experienced how other forms of urban violence took place in Lima. Marcela expressed her emotions when she arrived in Lima in the 1980s (personal communication, December 16, 2014):

When we came to Lima, things were weird. There were many gangs. It was not like the village. I thought that people would be friendly and talk to me in Lima. However, as the years passed, I realized things are different in Lima. People did not talk to me. I felt safe because, in contrast to my village, in Lima there were police in the streets. Nevertheless, I always made sure to avoid talking with strangers.
Berta: Things might change in Lima, but one prefers to be in guard. It is not terrorism time but there is delinquency. So, when we are walking down the street, we avoid being distracted.

While living in Lima, Marcela and Berta have continued associating the “unknown” and “the strange body” with violence and threat. For that reason, participants preferred to be on guard. In doing so, they are re-enacting embodied practices, which they performed in the sierra during terrorist times. Participants’ attitude of “being on guard” in the city and protecting the body against harm illustrate the ways “we carry places with us” (Trigg, 2012, p. 11). The attitude of being on guard as re-enactment of the past in the present might be understood using the notion of “habitual body memory” (Casey, 1984).

According to Casey, “[the] habitual in a narrow sense refers to routinized actions undertaken wholly without premeditation” (p. 282). Therefore, by re-enacting earlier performances (being on guard), participants are replaying an action that is familiar for them. During their commuting in the city, the women demonstrate how the past exists through/in the body.

Moreover, in Lima, participants became the foreign and “the strange body” for urban inhabitants. Rosa explained how living in Lima represented being labeled not only as “poor” but also as “terrorists” in urban spaces. Rosa said she noticed that people in Lima explicitly discriminated against the displaced population:

I feel angry. I left my village because of terrorism. We left our fathers, siblings, relatives, and the origin of our culture. Additionally, we came to suffer more in Lima. We have experienced many difficulties, such as poverty and hunger. If we
said that we were from Ayacucho, people did not hire us. We could not work. In Lima, people thought that we were terrorists too. (Rosa, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

Rosa’s words compellingly denote her frustration of being subjected to discrimination and oppression due to stereotypical beliefs, which associated Ayacucho communities as being responsible for the armed conflict. Such discrimination increased the impossibility of access to socio-economic resources to improve their quality of life.

In this sense, Blunt and Dowling (2006) explore how the idea of the “foreign” has “material and imaginative implications for indigenous people who were displaced and dispossessed by imperial nation-building, and for those people who have experienced racial violence” (p. 257). Feeling like a “foreign body” in urban spaces means that participants experience social exclusion in the contemporary politics of homeland security. Participants referred to what they consider as lack of government support. Rosa and Gregoria expressed their opinion regarding government indifference. Rosa said (personal communication, December 16, 2014):

We have suffered a lot without the government’s support. As organization8 we do not have a space to meet. We have gone through many hardships. When we came, we did not even have water. We went to non-profit organizations, and they just want our votes. The government does not attend to our claims. The government says “this year,” “next year”… How many women were raped in our village! We

8 Rosa is referring to ASFADEL.
have a house in Lima thank to our own effort and work. Nobody has given us houses!

Gregoria: The only president who helped us was Fujimori. When he won the elections in 1990, he supported peasants in the villages. He gave weapons to young people in the sierra to defend us. When Fujimori was the president, murders were reduced.

Rosa: Yes! Fujimori created intelligence services. So, government officials dressed up like peasants to capture Shining Path leaders. Fujimori, we called him el chinito (the Chinese),9 he was committed to extending roads into marginal areas in which there was not transportation. Thanks to these road constructions, Shining Path members could not hide in these areas anymore.

Gregoria: I remember thanks to Fujimori, soldiers and government officials used customs like peasants. They did not look like soldiers. Thanks to Fujimori we are alive today. He brought peace to Peru.

Rosa and Gregoria credit Fujimori with the ending of the armed conflict in Peru and regret that he is in prison today. Although most Peruvian populations celebrate Alberto Fujimori as the central figure who ended terrorism in Peru, Fujimori is in jail for violation of human rights and corruption. However, participants did not emphasize these charges against Fujimori, but praised his support during the early years in the 1990s. They compared government indifference they are receiving today with Fujimori’s support two decades ago.

9 They called to the ex president Fujimori “the Chinese” because he is a Japanese descendent.
However, although being in Lima has forced participants to face up to the continuation of the armed conflict, the experience of urban violence, and lack of government support, participants categorically rejected the possibility returning to their homes in the sierra. As Berta claimed:

I do not like to travel to other places. My husband works in different provinces. Although I travel with my children, it is difficult for me. I came when I was 12-years-old to Lima. After terrorism times, I traveled to my village twice but only for one day. My brother persuaded me to go back to the village. When I realized the night was coming, I insistently said to my brother “we have to look for transportation now. Let’s go!” However, since it was too late, we had to stay in the village that night. I started to cry and I couldn’t sleep. Then, I just slept sitting up. I was scared again. I was afraid that suddenly a foreigner would come anytime and hurt us. I told my brother “you are so mean! You promised me that we will go back yesterday.” The next morning, I told him: “well, now, you cannot stop me. If you do not come with me, I will go back by myself.” My brother told me “that’s fine. We are leaving now. I see that those wounds are never going to heal.” So, we just came back that morning to Ayacucho and I said “finally, we are in a city again!” For me, it is a huge terror that people ask me to visit the sierra. I cannot even think about it. My brother insists “let’s go to the sierra” and I say “no! Have you forgot that our father was killed there?” I do not want remember those things. Last year, I traveled because my daughter asked me; she wanted to know the place where I was born. I told my daughter: “I will travel with one condition: We
will leave the village at 6:00 pm. I will not stay one night there.” Sometimes I
wish I could turn back time and stay with my parents in the village again, but
then, I say to myself “how could I do this?” My daughter asked me “mom, please,
forget everything that happened. Can you forget for us? We need you strong; look
at your grandchildren! You have to meet your great grandchildren too!” (Berta,
personal communication, December 15, 2014)
Berta believes that returning to her hometown and starting a new life in the village is not
an option for her. Berta’s traumatic memories of the village are so painful that she
declares she cannot spend more than one day in her village.

The difficulties and the trauma of returning home is an important and recurrent
theme for participants. Returning home is such a difficult and dangerous process that
participants do not want to even consider it. Despite the social exclusion and violence in
Lima, participants believe being in the city has more possibilities than returning to the
sierra. Participants’ ambivalent feelings for the sierra and Lima imply the ways they
create and re-create their notions of home. In Lima, participants have produced a range of
home-making practices (e.g., creating farmlands in the hills in Lima) that make them feel
affection and a sense of belonging toward the peripheral hills where they lived in Lima.
Justina expressed her ambivalent feelings of returning home in this way:

Sometimes, I want to go back to my village in Panguana, but we don’t have a
house anymore. Everything fell down. We don’t have many relative to visit there.
I just have an aunt. (Juana, personal communication, December 15, 2014)
Berta, Margarita, and Justina’s stories communicated to me the emotional strain between the desire of forgetting painful memories and remembering again those stories across time and space. While thinking on their stories, Juana shared with me her denial to go back to Ayacucho too:

We have a trauma of returning to Ayacucho. I went back to Ayacucho with my mother and I remembered when going down to the plaza where my uncles were murdered. Those memories (…) (Juana, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Juana paused to take a breath of fresh air in through her mouth and continued:

I started to cry and I said to my mother “I do not want to go down to Panguana.” So, we came back the same day. I did not sleep during the trip, but I stayed up crying all the time. It is traumatizing to return to Panguana. (Juana, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Juana and the other women are too vulnerable to face the materiality of the space (particularly, La Plaza) in which they learned too early what extreme violence means to them, their family, and communities.

Gregoria entered into the conversation while we were co-constructing the meanings of returning to the village:

I came to Lima when I was 13-years-old. My mother sent me to live with my uncle. After a couple of years, I came back to visit my mother, but I was scared again. I was scared if they could make me desaparecer (disappear). (Gregoria, personal communication, December 16, 2014)
My own interpretation of Gregoria and the other women’s accounts is that when they go back to their village, the body might physically remember the same anxiety they experienced more than twenty years ago. For the women, the materiality of the space evokes the memories in the body. When being in their hometowns, they relieve through their bodies what they experienced: the fear of disappearance, rape and torture, and murder. In Juana’s words when she is in the village she believes: “We are traumatized because of what we experienced. We think somebody might come and hurt us.”

Gregoria’s account of the fear of returning home illustrates again the continuous presence of “the phantom zone” (Trigg, 2012) in women’s narrations about the conflict. Trigg explains that when individuals narrate traumatic memories they re-experience the colonialization of the body by a foreign agency. When considering the possibility of visiting their villages, participants re-experience the anxiety of imagining that soldiers or guerrillas might colonize their bodies. In other words, the women relived the past as if (Kirby, 1991) any of these groups will come to them again. Their memories of the village in terrorism times and the image of the “masked bodies” continuously haunt their bodies in the present. Regarding participants’ re-enactment of the threat of disappearance today, Casey (1984) explains how “remembering is a replicative replay of the past in some specifically representational guise” (p. 280). For Casey, remembering, in particular habit memory, is not a mere depiction of the past, but an action that the body performs in the present and projects ahead to the future. By expressing what it means to them when considering visiting the sierra, participants’ bodies re-enact in the present the same anxiety they experienced during those years.
In the first part of the theme re-placement of bodies and/in spaces, I have presented the ways violence remained embodied to participants as they re-experienced violence in social exclusion and delinquency in the city. Moreover, I explored the ambivalent feelings of returning home and how traumatic memories continuously “haunt” participants’ bodies when thinking about the sierra. In the next section of this theme, I present how the women experience violence not only in public spaces in Lima, but also in private spaces. In their narrations, the women illustrate how home can be a place of violence.

*Facing Violence at Home*

Like other young women, participants started their own families with great expectations. Juana summarized her hopes in one sentence: “I definitely wanted to grow old with my ex-husband.” However, Juana’s expectations faded away when she gave birth to three girls. She recites what happened at that time: “He battered me because he said I was not able to give birth to a male baby. He blamed me and said I was the one responsible for not getting pregnant with a boy.” Her words suggest she has internalized her ex-husband’s accusations that she has a “deficient” body, unable to procreate male babies and accomplish her ex-husband’s expectations.

Not seeing herself as a woman able to satisfy her ex-husband’s desires generated suicidal tendencies in Juana. During our group conversation, she disclosed the day she decided to commit suicide by jumping off a ravine after having a discussion with him. In her narration, Juana demonstrates how her body and mind were separated when she considered committing suicide. She narrated this event in this way:
It felt I was walking in the clouds; the world was just passing by, and I continued walking. My daughters were behind me. They were pulling at my arms. I do not how I came to the edge of the ravine. My daughters were screaming “mommy, do not jump.” That was the moment when I pulled myself together. I knelt down and hugged my daughters. I realized at that moment I have suffered so much for a man who does not deserve all this love, and who had caused so much pain.

(Juana, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Juana recovered her desire to live because of her three little girls. However, when she decided to leave her ex-husband, he came one day and threatened Juana. He beat her again; one of her daughters tried to keep her father from beating Juana, but he pushed her daughter away. That day, Juana had a miscarriage as result of her ex-husband’s physical aggression. In Juana’s words: “I was pregnant. I was expecting a boy, but that day I had a miscarriage.”

Like Juana, Margarita has experienced domestic violence and her children were the main motivation to end the relationship with her ex-husband too. Margarita said: “I divorced two years ago. He almost killed me. He stabbed me. He almost cut my neck. I told him “I prefer to live with terrorists. Kill me!” I live for my children.” In claiming, “I prefer to live with terrorists,” I believe Margarita was making a powerful and evocative statement that immediately caught my attention. Margarita’s words imply she was choosing the extreme violence that she experienced during the 1980s over the abusive behavior her partner was exercising on her body. Margarita’s expression (“I prefer to live with terrorists”) suggests her embodied memories of the conflict are pulled from the past.
by her experience of domestic violence, which made Margarita realizes that violence is still present in her life and body.

Meanwhile, Catalina expressed she knows what domestic violence is. Even though she divorced ten years ago, violence continues in her life. Catalina said: “My ex-husband always stalks me. He knows my routines, my friends, everything about my life! The worst is that he is turning my children against me.” Catalina spoke slowly and her tone of voice suggested she was full of melancholy and frustration. She felt that she gave her best years to her ex-husband and now she thinks she is unattractive and old. Catalina expressed her emotions in this way: “I feel that I threw away my youthfulness and now I am alone. Before, I felt angry when I saw other couples in the street. I thought: “happiness and love are too short.”” Catalina’s long wavy black hair is stunning and her skin is a curious combination of maturity and youthfulness. While listening to her, I could not help but think she is a beautiful mature woman who is gracefully aging.

Reflecting on these stories of domestic violence, Berta tried another approach to make sense of these narrations: “We have the violence of terrorism inside of us. Violence is always with us and violence generates more violence.” Listening to Berta I thought, although participants were adamant ensure they were not recruited or trained by soldiers or guerrillas to exercise violence, participants had internalized other ways of normalizing and experiencing the violence during those years. Apparently, the domestic violence brought into the present the extreme abuse they lived during terrorism.

As I mentioned earlier participants’ narrations of their arrival in Lima illustrated how they continued experiencing violence not only in public spaces but also in private
spaces in the city. Concerning violence in private spaces, Rosa expressed: “If you experienced violence in your village and then you got married, you would experience the same violence at home too.” Rosa firmly believes that the origin of the domestic violence they are living though today is a result of the armed conflict they experienced during the 1980s. In speaking about experiencing domestic violence after terrorism, Catalina said:

I know what it means to live this kind of violence at home. I experienced this nightmare with my ex-husband. He is from the north area in which the conflict was really harmful in Peru. After what I lived though with him, I was traumatized and hated each man in this world. I divorced ten years ago. I have children, and he continues battering and stalking me. I saw a psychologist and he explained how my ex-husband was traumatized too, because of the armed conflict. I believe it is true. (Catalina, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

Sadly, Catalina’s ex-husband continues exercising violence against her and her daughter. Concerning Catalina’s story, Juana narrates an episode in which she confronted Catalina’s older son who was battering his little daughter. Juana wanted to protect the girl in this scene of domestic violence:

I argued with my friend’s son because he was beating her little sister. I told him: “why are you beating her? She is younger than you; you should treat her like a princess.” So, he did not like that I confronted him and told me that he will hurt my daughters too. (Catalina, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

Participants’ explanations about how the armed conflict produced ruptures in the family seem comprehensible to me. In each focus group, there were at least four women who
explicitly expressed that they have faced domestic violence. Regarding this abusive behavior at home, Juana and Margarita share their experiences of domestic violence too. Juana boldly says: “I have three daughters. The older one is 5-years-old, and the little one is 3-years-old. I presented charges against my ex-husband and now he is stalking me.”

Like Juana, Margarita has experienced emotional and physical abuse from her ex-partner:

My husband used to convince me to come back with compliments, and then I went back with him because I thought it was the best for my children. So, we were just fine one or two weeks; then, he started battering me again. He threw stones at me, threatened me with knives, and forced my younger daughter and I to leave our house. We slept in the streets and my neighbors gave us their food. She remembers everything that we lived through at that time. She sings and cries narrating those memories. Also, she tells me: “mommy, it’s over. My daddy is not going to hurt us again. We serenely live now. Thanks God, he did not kill you,” said my daughter. (Margarita, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

Generally speaking, participants frequently connected embodied memories of the conflict with the domestic violence they experience today. In doing so, they relate the current violence with the past abuse in the 1980s. By linking past and present, the women illustrate what Sweet (2014) calls a multi-temporality “in which the past abuse is linked to the victim’s current presentation” (p. 49). Thus, participants’ accounts demonstrate how their experiences of past political violence are connecting into the domestic violence in the present while reanimating the past.
In the last part of this chapter, I explore how women embrace the Quechua language as a positive aspect of their memories and identities that remain embodied within them in urban spaces. This theme illustrates that the women do not want to be defined solely by their traumatic experiences nor do they want to ignore positive memories from their formative years when they lived in the sierra. My interpretation of participants’ comments about the Quechua language is based on the notion of embodied voices (Fisher, 2010). In this sense, embodied voices means to consider more than the separation between voice and the body, but identifying the “voice” with the body. From this perspective, I understand the voice (Quechua language) in terms of identity. According to Fisher (2010):

The role of voice in identity, agency, and the creation of meaning, and the phenomenological thematization and theorization of phenomenal, lived experience, lead to a deeper understanding of the importance of the materiality of the voices with which we speak, and their role in both subjective and intersubjective experience. (p. 83)

The interplay between voice and identity is the central aspect that I aim to emphasize in women’s narrations about the use of the Quechua language. By using the Quechua language, participants intend to connote their presence as members of a social group, despite their absence from their communal home space, as they communicate their subjective/intersubjective experiences in contemporary times in Lima.
My conversation with participants about the Quechua language started when I started asking participants how they felt listening to the Quechua songs in the movie, Justina said:

I remember that I used to sing in Quechua when herding my sheep and cows. When terrorists came and I ran away to the sierra, leaving my animals, I started to sing sad songs about terrorism. (Justina, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

When speaking about Quechua songs, Justina’s account has two different temporal moments: before and after the armed conflict. For Justina, singing in Quechua was directly attached to her everyday practices when she was a child in the sierra. As an Andean child, Justina embraced proudly her work as a herder when singing in the mountains. She enthusiastically sang when she was in the sierra helping her parents take animals to pasture. By singing while working, Justina’s comment demonstrates how doing her work, as herder was a pleasure for her. Bolin (2006) stated “the meanings of work and play differ when we consider the lives of highland pastoralists as opposed to people in urban societies” (p. 71). Thus, the meaning of work for Serafina was associated with feelings of enjoyment (expressed through Quechua songs) and proud to be able to work hard for her family. Thus, Serafina’s excitement and enjoyment of being a herder was expressed through Andean music.

When terrorism came to the sierra, Serafina’s enjoyment of taking care of her animals was altered by the unpredictable arrival of armed groups and the uncertainty of her animals’ destiny. Serafina saw herself forced to abandon her animals knowing that
she would not see them again. She changed her songs from enjoyment to lyrics of anxiety and pain. As Arguedas (1986) explained, indigenous songs are the voice of the heart and soul and Andean communities sing melodies to communicate their sadness and happiness to others.

Concerning the emotions present in Quechua songs, Donatella expressed her feelings that she believed were present in the songs of the movie:

What they [Fausta and her mother] sang, that’s what we felt when we were little girls. The songs make me remember my deep sorrow. I also remember how terrorists abused pregnant women and then killed them. (Donatella, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

In Donatella’s commentary, I could see not only the ways the Quechua songs of the movie evoked feelings of sorrow but also how the character of Fausta’s mother spoke directly to Donatella’s memories about women’s traumatic experiences of rape in the conflict. Donatella’s quote suggests she was able to grasp the contextual meaning of sexual violence of the songs in the movie. Donatella’s commentary of opening song of the movie speaks directly to participants’ experiences of terrorism as women and daughters. Juana equates the Quechua songs of the movie with her mother’s suffering: “My mother sang to me to help me to sleep. When listening to the songs, I remembered my mother during terrorist times.”

Juana’s relationship between the Quechua song and her mother suffering is not only at a subjective and interpersonal level but also at a collective level with the Quechua language. As a participant, Berta, insightfully explains: “Quechua is a form of
identification.” Berta situates her mother language in a macro social level and considers that speaking Quechua is an advantage today in Lima. Berta explained:

Young professional people want to speak Quechua, but it is not easy. My brother is a lawyer and he is a Quechua speaker. He took an exam to prove he can speak Quechua. One day, a Quechua-speaking woman came to his office and my brother was able to help her. Speaking Quechua is easy, but writing Quechua is too difficult. I hang out with people who speak Quechua and I feel is a great advantage for us. (Berta, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

Berta’s opinion about how Quechua is a plus today in Lima also might be illustrated in the following event. When I asked what participants like about the songs, Berta spoke part of her response in Spanish and the rest in Quechua. This is the way I recorded the event: Berta started by saying: “The girl of the movie is so sad. She thinks the bad people will come.” Then, Berta paused and said in Quechua these two expressions: “they are coming” and “Let’s go!” I was exciting listening Berta’s first language and she felt very comfortable and proud speaking Quechua. She took for granted that I also understood Quechua. Thus, I excitedly asked her: “Could you write for me those words?” She categorically said no. She argued writing Quechua is too difficult.

While the other women started to figure out the ways to write Berta’s Quechua words for me, Berta insisted proudly: “No, no. That’s not the way to write them. Writing Quechua is difficult.” Despite Berta’s palpable reluctance, I tried to recover and be courteous with Berta. It was not easy for me. Then, I figured out a way to overcome this
situation. I remembered that I was recording her words, so I could ask to one of my Peruvian friends how to write those Quechua expressions.10

Now, when I reflect on Berta’s response, I can only conjecture that maybe her behavior is a way to set apart her personal and collective identity as a Quechua woman from others’ dominant cultures (Spanish speakers). After all, I was for her an outsider, a woman who belongs to a Spanish speakers group. My interaction with Berta made me realize that no matter how friendly I was with participants, I was always a foreigner for them.

Certainly Berta is unquestionably proud of being a Quechua speaker in Lima today. For Berta, the Quechua language is a synonym for pride and cultural identity for this indigenous population in Lima. When narrating her past in the sierra and speaking Quechua with her family, Berta recalled:

We danced and sang in Quechua. We used to call and greet from the distance in Quechua; for example, “donde esta mi tioooo?” (Where is my uncleeee?) If my dad was far away we said “papaaaaaa” “buenos diaassssss” (daddy, good morning).

(Catalina, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

In this quote, Berta emphasized how the Quechua language has sounds and rhythmic patterns that are “analogous to English speakers’ use of onomatopoeic words” (Nuckolls, 1996, p. 3). In fact, the Quechua language is “molded on sounds, patterns, movements, and rhythms of the natural world and of one’s bodily experiences in it, [and] are, to a significant extent, rendered with sound-symbolic words” (Nuckolls, p. 6). Following

10 “They are coming!” = Hamuspa Kashankichis/Kashanku “Let’s go!” = “Riyku prpers”
Nuckolls, sounds-symbolic words in Quechua gives “an outward form to the inner movements, sensations and awareness experienced through one’s body” (p. 6). Nuckolls demonstrates the meaning of sounds-symbolic words in Quechua by referring to “processes enacted by one’s body, such as tearing, fissuring, cutting, and bursting” (p. 6). Therefore, the sounds of Quechua words communicate the relationship between physical stimuli in the world and the body’s reactions to such events. Said differently, the use of Quechua words represents individuals’ reflections of being-in-the-world. The sounds-symbolic words of the Quechua language have inspired many of these communities to use music and poetry to preserve their language, maintain a sense of belonging, and feel solidarity with their own culture.

Berta is proud of being a Quechua speaker; her pride contrasts with the feelings of shame that other indigenous people experience in Lima when using Quechua language. By being proud of the Quechua language and considering herself as a bilingual person, Berta embraces her ethnicity as an important marker of her identity. Rather than hiding Quechua language, Berta stresses it and resists being silenced and forced to negate her subjectivity as a Quechua speaker. She celebrates the use of Quechua language and is eager to express her feelings and opinions speaking this language. Berta’s sense of identification with Quechua language might be compared with Fisher’s notion of the identification of voice, which implies “representation, agency, selfhood, and discursive power, while the lack of voice is the emptying of such possibilities in the multi-dimensional character of silence, and silencing” (Fisher, 2010, p. 84). Thus, the use of
Quechua for Berta suggests a sense of agency to perform her identity as an indigenous woman.

However, although Berta is pleased with her identity as a Quechua speaker and celebrates the particularities of her mother tongue, she also believes that her native language is considered a marginal language in Lima: “Even though my mother and I speak Quechua and Spanish, there are people who only speak Quechua because they do not have the possibility to practice Spanish.”

Berta’s reflection about the peripheral status of Quechua in Lima encouraged Margarita and Juana to express their beliefs about Quechua. For them, speaking Quechua is a private (practicing at home) and minor tradition rather than a general and accepted practice in Lima. Margarita explained (personal communication, December 15, 2014):

When people are used to speaking Quechua, they do not want to speak another language. So, if you want to speak with these persons, you have to speak Quechua. For example, her mother [Fausta’s mother in the movie] is the kind of person who does not speak Spanish.

Juana: I also speak Quechua with my mother. My mother does not understand Spanish very well. When I hang out with my parents, we speak only Quechua. Sometimes, my daughter asks me “what you are talking about?” so, I have to explain it her. Also, my sister-in-law asks us, “please, explain to me” because she believes we are insulting her.
Although Juana considered the Quechua language as a private or intimate form of communication, for Juana, Quechua is associated with shame and social stigma in the city:

For me, learning Spanish has been so hard. When I came to Lima, we had been grown up. I remember that I lived with my sister and she ashamed of me because I only spoke Quechua. She slapped me, and told me “learn to speak Spanish, you shame me!” Her friends laughed at me. Now, I can say that I learned to speak Spanish because my sister slapped me. I shamed her a lot. She used to tell me “speak well!” (Juana, personal communication, December 16, 2014)

I could see how expressions such as “speak well!” are forms of social regulation and control and acculturation that these women have experienced by moving from Quechua to Spanish, in Lima. Juana’s experience with her sister illustrates the ways the Quechua language and consequently the indigenous bodies have become marginalized within Peruvian society. The marginalization of the Quechua voice and the body is part of the colonial imagination that considers native as savage, dirty, and uneducated. Because Quechua bodies are considered as illiterate and “out-of-control,” the colonialist ideology justifies all kinds of discipline and forms of regulations over the indigenous during social interactions.

In this regard, Donatella and Serafina provided other instances to illustrate how they had experienced social exclusion and the limitations of being Quechua speakers in Lima. Serafina commented:
I remember my aunt helped me to find a job baby-sitting a little girl. In the sierra, we were accustomed to holding babies with a blanket; so, when I started that job, I used to have a blanket when I was babysitting. One day, my boss, the mother of the baby, wanted to get a similar blanket. However, since I only spoke Quechua, I could not communicate with my boss very well to let her know where I bought the blanket. I got the blanket from Ayacucho, but I knew my boss would not go there to get a blanket (Serafina laughs recalling that episode).\footnote{I interpreted Serafina’s laugh as an irony. Because Ayacucho is associated with terrorism and social marginalization, Serafina knew that her employer (a white and high class woman) would not travel to that region.} I remember that was the day when I started to learn Spanish. Thank God! I learned Spanish. In Lima, we have to learn to speak Spanish. (Serafina, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

By narrating this event, Serafina demonstrated to have a strong sensation of relief because she is currently a fluent Spanish speaker. Although she is satisfied being bilingual, her laugh at her boss’ alleged attitude of rejecting a trip to Ayacucho suggested Serafina was aware of social discrimination. Serafina’s reaction indicated how she believes others associate Ayacucho with a “marginal” region and a place of extreme violence in Peru.

By referring specifically to the use of Quechua during the armed conflict, participants claimed that both groups communicated in Quechua and Spanish, but some participants did make certain clarifications. Juana said (personal communication, December 15, 2014):
Soldiers insulted us in Spanish. Some of us did not understand what soldiers said because we had not studied Spanish yet. We were scared when they yelled at us! However, I spoke Quechua and Spanish. I heard insults both in Quechua and Spanish. They told my grandmother offensive words that I cannot repeat.

Justina: I spoke Quechua and I did not understand what they said in Spanish.

Serafina: Terrorists spoke to me in Spanish. I answered them in Quechua.

Their accounts suggest that even when guerrillas and soldiers used these two languages interchangeably, participants concurred to claim that listening to Spanish was like listening to a foreign language while Quechua was and is their native and emotional language. Particularly, by answering in Quechua, Juana demonstrates how she was bravely performing her identity and resisting the imposition of Spanish to communicate her subjectivity.

Based on the notion of embodied voices, the idea of being a Quechua female speaker cannot be disassociated from the body. The sounds, intonations, and rhythmic patterns are undeniably entangled with the Quechua female body. Fisher (2010) insists that undeniably there is interplay between the voice and the body. For some participants, losing their voices mean losing their indigenous identity. Women’s use of the Quechua language in their narrations implies the presence of the indigenous bodies and their subjectivities. By using Quechua, each participant placed herself as a subject speaking, who actively narrate her experience and resists the idea that others speak for her. Negating the Quechua voice/language means to the women: Detaching their subjectivity from the body and losing agency in the co-creation of meaning as well.
In Chapter 4, I explained how contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict (the secondary research question) by referring to “the milk of sorrow” as the threat of disappearance, redefining safe spaces, and re-experiencing violence in their contemporary lives. In the first theme, I illustrated how women’s central fear during the armed conflict was the threat of “ser desaparecidas,” which they related it with Fausta’s fear. Participants expressed their empathy toward Fausta, to whom they constantly compare with their own sorrow. In the second theme, re-defining safe spaces, I examined how the women experienced their villages and homes as no longer safe during the armed conflict; by hiding their bodies in the sierra, participants re-defined the sierra as a safe or “home-like” space in which they are able to make the body disappear. Finally, in the third theme, re-placement of bodies and/in spaces, I described how as the women moved to the city, they left the space of extreme violence in their villages, but the violence remained embodied as they re-experienced violence in private spaces as well as social exclusion and delinquency in Lima. Despite traumatic memories of the armed conflict, these women remained committed to preserving their identities as Quechua women by embracing Quechua language as a positive aspect of their memories that remain embodied within them in urban spaces. To conclude this chapter, I discussed women’s rejection to be described as powerless victims of the conflict and their intentions to celebrate Quechua language as an encouraging aspect of their individual and collective identities that remain embodied within them in Lima.
In Chapter 5, I present the results of the photovoice project, which aims to address the third subsidiary research question: How do Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima? While Chapter 4 has thickly described women’s embodied memories of political violence and the ways participants re-enact those memories today in Lima, the photovoice enhances those memories by considering the intersections of individual and collective perspectives. In the next chapter, I illustrate the interplay between the micro and macro level of participants’ experiences on two central themes: The Quechua female body remembers and carving a space for their own. The first theme reflects women’s issues of the female Quechua body in the conflict and in contemporary spaces in Lima. The second theme shows how the peripheral hills in Lima materialize women’s embodied memories and the ways women perform agentic practices to overcome socio-economic difficulties in their communities.
CHAPTER 5: RE-CREATING WOMEN’S EMBODIED MEMORIES THROUGH PHOTOVOICE

In Chapter 5, I report the results of women’s stories of the photo-voice project. Like chapter 4, the two themes that emerged in this chapter are a result of participants’ conversations about the movie and the ways they related the movie with their own experiences of the conflict and contemporary lives in Lima. Therefore, by comparing the “the milk of sorrow” disease with their own fear of disappearance, participants visually recreated the ways they used to hide their bodies in the sierra to prevent being taken away from their parents as well as the affective meanings of the hills outside Lima. In short, in the photovoice project participants visually recreated how the film inspired them to recall their bodies in the conflict and their emotional relationship with the hills in Lima today.

Moreover, the pictures of this project enhance the conversation of the lives of displaced population in post-conflict societies. On the one hand, the ways women denounced the socio-economic marginalization that they have experienced as members of displaced communities in the peripheral hills in Lima. On the other hand, participants shared their sense of agency to overcome such challenges by re-constructing social and familial relationships and carving a space for those relationships in urban spaces. As Venturoli (2009) explained, the consequences of the political violence not only were deaths, forced disappearances, rape, and continuous violations of human rights, but also the destruction of the socio-economic life of Quechua communities, the disintegration of families, and the fragmentation of collective and personal identities.
As a result of the political violence, participants and their families experienced the impact of being forced to leave their lands, entering in urban scenarios where social marginalization is part of their everyday practices. When arriving in Lima, participants built their houses in the peripheral hills in Lima (los cerros). For these women, living in the periphery has meant being associated with poverty, violence, lack of education, and poor health conditions. Participants had to construct their houses on terrains with continuous risks of flooding and landslide during rainy seasons. Their houses are made of fragile materials (e.g., wood and cardboard), without running water or electricity. Inhabitants in Lima associate los cerros with higher levels of violence and delinquency, which isolates these communities materially and symbolically from the rest of the city.

However, despite the undeniable difficulties these women have faced in Lima, in the photovoice project participants reflected on how they overcome these challenges, which suggests a sense of agency, responding to the dynamics of a specific context. Some of the pictures illustrate the ways participants have been eager to create material and symbolical spaces for their own.

I have organized Chapter 5 around two central themes: The Quechua female body remembers and Carving a space for their own. In the first theme, I shared participants’ pictures that illustrated issues concerning the body in three ways: Re-presenting the female body in the armed conflict, illustrating women’s embodied agency in contemporary spaces today, and photographing others’ bodies (relatives). Some participants photographed objects (e.g., a doll, a tree, and rocks) to construct their own body image or recreate memories about their bodies in space during the armed conflict.
Other participants took pictures of their daughters to communicate the ways their bodies, as little girls, looked like during the years of the armed conflict. Additionally, it is important to mention that some of the women asked their relatives or friends to snap pictures of them rather than taking pictures of their bodies by themselves. The action of giving the camera to others might be interpreted as the way women want to be present in the pictures, in see how their embodied selves look and/or their possible lack of confidence taking photographs. Moreover, Bourdieu (1990) explains the camera is “often the common property of the family group, [and] it becomes clear that photographic practice only exists and subsists for most of the time by virtue of its family function” (p. 19). In this sense, the act of giving the camera to relatives suggests women saw the camera as “a family property” and a form of reinforcing the integration of the family group during the photovoice project.

In the second theme, carving a space for their own, I organized women’s pictures in three subthemes: Andean Cosmovision, carving a home in the peripheral hills in Lima, and Quechua women’s encounter with the city. Pictures of spaces compellingly evoke how their memories of their native village are currently materialized in urban spaces in and around Lima.

The Quechua Female Body Remembers

The next stories are related to the ways participants describe their body image, meaning participants’ beliefs about their own appearance (memories and assumptions), and how they feel in their body not just about their body. In some of the participants’ stories, participants explicitly or implicitly reference to the relationship between the
armed conflict and their bodies looked in those years and how their bodies look today. I start this theme by presenting participants’ meanings about their bodies in three different moments: The indigenous female body in the conflict, Women’s embodied agency in contemporary spaces and Others’ bodies and memories.

*The Indigenous Female Body in the Conflict*

When snapping some pictures, participants visually represented the ways they remembered their bodies during terrorism in the sierra. In doing so, they asked relatives to photograph their own [participants’] bodies in *los cerros* where the participants live in Lima today. Other participants took pictures of objects (e.g., doll, trees, and rocks) to re-create what those objects meant to them be during those years in the sierra. In order to illustrate women’s embodied memories of the conflict, I present two stories that speak directly to the body image that participants had when being in terrorist times: “The indigenous female body and La Gringuita,” and “The camouflaged body.”

*The Quechua female body and “La Gringuita”*

This is Juana (see Figure 2). I introduced her in the previous chapter and described her as “a gracefully thin woman” with a gentle body language. In this picture, Juana’s posture, hands-on-hips, suggests she feels comfortable in her body. Her body language implies she is taking up more space and preventing others from approaching or trespassing her personal space. Indeed in this photograph, Juana has an assertive body language, which denotes she is ready to take action on something. Perhaps Juana is also communicating that she is not only comfortable with her body but also eager to protect her body and space.
In the next picture (see Figure 3), Juana explicitly celebrates her body image, particularly her body shape. Juana proudly said:

I feel like a Barbie. You can pretend I am this Barbie, who is vigilant looking at the Huaico (the stream), which might suddenly come to destroy our home.

Me: Juana, I am very curious; why did you choose a Barbie?

Juana: I like my body. My co-workers in the market use to tell me “you are so skinny like a Barbie.” (Juana, personal communication, December 18, 2014)
Although during the training session, I encouraged participants to experiment with the camera and stage photos, I must confess Juana more than surpassed my expectations. I was honestly impressed by Juana’s provocative photograph. Her picture might be read as what Theberge (2006) calls “theatrical photograph” which is a particular genre where participants experiment with the camera and come up with an idea for staging a photograph. For me, Juana was remarkably creative and skillful, placing a doll over a rock in this landscape and uses this to frame the composition. By using an open frame, as viewers, we have the sensation that the landscape goes on and on. A doll wearing a pink dress and performing a delicate posture of contemplation subtly interrupts the continuation of the landscape.

In addition to the inspiring visual composition of this photograph, Juana’s meanings of the picture caught my attention. In this photograph, Juana told a story through the dramatization in the picture and through the story produced by her. Juana claimed that the doll represents her body, which suggests she used the doll for constructing her own body image in the space. Based on Juana’s comment, the doll is not a mere object, but it seems the doll is a subject too. Juana gave to the doll the ability of thinking and communicating her perspective of being in the world. The doll (or perhaps Juana) is looking attentively at the potential threat of flooding, which might eventually destroy or make her home desaparecer (disappear).

This attitude of deep observation, quietness, and silence remind me of participants’ behavior when in the sierra, soundless and motionless, observing from the
mountains guerrillas and soldiers exercising violence over their parents. By being silent and immobile in the sierra, participants learned what to do to survive in the conflict.

Even though the silence and the survival that resulted from it was implied in Juana’s photograph, I was still intrigued about Juana selecting a Barbie to represent her body in this space. Instead of focusing my attention on the use of the doll as a reproduction of Western representations of beauty over the Latina/Quechua body, I decided to interpret the meanings of the doll’s body image (white woman, blue eyes and blonde hair) in the context of the armed conflict. In doing so, first, I recalled Theidon’s account (2004) regarding the ways soldiers and guerrillas searched for two specific types of the female body: Young women with light skin and blonde hair or “gringuitas” (sexually assaulted by the captain) and women with dark skin (sexually assaulted by troops: Gang rape). Based on this “categorization,” Quechua women’s skin color was used to determine the kind of sexual “treatment” they received during the armed conflict.

According to Theidon (2004), the ways that women’s skin color determined if they would or would not experience gang rape might be considered as a kind of “sexual privilege.” However, I differ from Theidon’s use of the word “privilege” in this context. Rape never represents “privilege” no matter the number of perpetrators. Sexual assault is always a tool of patriarchal oppression to indescribably destroy the materiality and subjectivity of the female body.

For me, instead of seeing gang rape as a lack of “sexual privilege,” I explore how this arbitrary classification (women’s skin color vs. “type” of rape) determined women’s experiences in the conflict and how participants learned to see their bodies through
others’ eyes. Learning to see themselves [or their bodies] through others’ eyes connects with Narvaez (2013), who notes “we cannot even think of ‘self’ except in terms of the other” (p. 28). The body image is always a result of our social interactions in the world. Following Narvaez, who also said “we often see the world and ourselves largely through the eyes of history, through the eyes of the spirit of the times” (p. 29), the way we see our own bodies and our ways of feeling are the result of socio-historical processes and everyday interactions with others. The self arises through communication and “the self can never be constituted by internal input alone” (Narvaez, p. 29).

The ways others’ gaze determine self-representation might be understood through Leder’s notion of social dys-appearance, which explains how “one incorporates an alien gaze away, apart, asunder, from one’s own, which provokes an explicit thematization of the body” (p. 96). In this sense, the way participants see their own body is not only a personal or intimate gaze, but it is also a social and “alien gaze” that they have embodied when referring to and depicting their own body image.

By using Leder’s notion of social dys-appearance, I make sense of Juana’s narration of her body in the focus group and her picture of the Barbie. As I reported in the focus group’s results, Juana explained to me how when she was a child, a soldier pulled her out of her grandmother’s skirts, looked at her body, and said disdainfully: “What is that?” I clearly remember Juana’s discomfort while narrating this compelling event. In that moment, it seemed to me that while repeating this episode, Juana’s body was recalling the soldier’s gaze over her again. In fact, when Juana repeated the soldier’s
words in her narration ("what is that?")", she continued her narration, disclosing her main fear: "I was scared they would rape me!"

From my perspective, her words and body language demonstrated Juana has incorporated an “alien gaze,” which makes her see her body as an “object” that she used to reject because of others’ gaze over her. My interpretation is that the “alien” gaze might be the colonial and patriarchal gazes that historically have seen native bodies as the “dirty” and “rapable” (Smith, 2005).

In the picture, Juana intentionally wants the doll to be present as a relevant physical representation of her body in space. Juana neither asked others to take a picture of her body nor took a picture only of the landscape, but she wants to be present in the picture in the shape of the doll. Juana sees the doll’s body, idealizes it, and seeks to become the image of the image of that body. I am not arguing that Juana preferred the kind of “sexual privilege” light-skinned women had during the armed conflict: Being raped only by a captain. My point is that, during her childhood, Juana was aware of how guerrillas and soldiers “repulsively” looked at her body and treated it as an object that “deserves” the most aggressive treatment because of its physical traits.

Moreover, Juana’s story and picture of the Barbie remind me Serafina’s story in the focus group when narrating her encounter with the masked bodies (guerrillas or soldiers). In her narration, Serafina told me how when she was 16-years-old, members of these groups used to admire her blonde hair. In fact, one day, one member of these armed groups gently touched Serafina’s hair while saying: “You are so beautiful, you are

12 Serafina has blonde hair, which is uncommon among Quechua women.
like gringuita, very pretty. We want to start spending time with you.” Serafina’s narration about how others “appreciated” her body highly contrasts with Juana’s story in which she remembers how members of armed groups disdainfully treated her indigenous body. Serafina’s narration and Juana’s picture (see Figure 3 above) demonstrate that while armed groups in the conflict celebrated Serafina’s physical features (blonde hair like the Barbie), both groups disdainfully treated Juana’s body (indigenous body).

To continue unpacking Juana’s narration of the photovoice, I present two more photographs in which Juana illustrated the ways her body looked like when she was a little girl during the armed conflict (see Figures 4 & 5). Both pictures added a new dimension to Juana’s self-representation as a little girl during terrorism. Juana explained these photographs to me in this way:

This is my beloved daughter and my mother. My daughter is two-years-old. I was two-years-old when terrorism came to the sierra. When I took this picture, I remember that during terrorism, my mother left me with my grandmother in the sierra. My mother moved to Lima to take care of my siblings. I took this picture of my daughter and my mother because it reminds me of when I was a little girl and lived with my grandmother. I stayed with my grandmother in the sierra until I was 7 or 8-years-old. (Juana, personal communication, December 18, 2014)
Listening to Juana, I noticed these pictures speak to a common situation in Peru during terrorism times: the raising of children by grandmothers following the death, disappearance, or immigration of parents to the city. According to Juana, she spent almost five years with her grandmother in the sierra because her mother had to take care of her other siblings. When referring to her grandmother, Juana is affectionate, grateful, and respectful. Juana’s memories of the conflict are always connected with the care and protection she received from her grandmother.

The particular construction of this picture suggests Juana photographed her mother’s body to recreate the absence of her grandmother as well as she registered the image of her little daughter to depict her body image during terrorism. In other words, it seems to me that Juana is doing more than just representing her daughter and mother in these pictures; she is evoking her memories of her own body and grandmother during those years. She is actively creating what she considers was her embodied self-representation of the past through her daughter’s image.
Juana’s discussion of these photographs emphasizes photovoice’s potential to narrate invisible aspects of the social world, the body, the self, and add new dimensions to collective and individual memories. Particularly, Juana’s stories of the photographs illustrated how pictures allow us to recall an absent loved one. Through pictures we are able to transform our loved ones “from somebody merely seen to someone really felt” (Batchen, 2004, p. 94). Juana and other participants’ narrations of their pictures not only emphasized the physical presence of the photograph itself, but also the emotional meanings toward people who are absent/present in the photographs. Moreover, these photographs (see Figures 4 & 5 above) remind me that remembering is not only about recalling the past (her grandmother), but it is also about looking at present and toward future (her daughter).

*The Camouflaged Body*

During our conversation, some participants shared photographs that evoked feelings of fear, death, and disappearance during the armed conflict. The next two photos (see Figures 6 & 7) come from Justina and Margarita. In the interviews, both participants...
talked about how they hid or camouflaged their bodies in the sierra behind trees and in rocky terrains during the armed conflict.

Figure 6. Rocks in the sierra (Justina)

In Justina’s photograph we see a rocky terrain on the peripheral hills in Lima. When I asked Justina about why she took this picture, she said (personal communication, December 18, 2014):

Those rocks remind me of my hometown in Ayacucho. Where I lived in the 1980s, I used to see the same kind of rocks in the mountains. I hid myself in those rocks during those years. There are similar rocks where I live now in Lima. For that, I took the picture. I remember we slept inside of the rocks. We run in the night. It was too dark. We did not see a light and we did not have any matchsticks. We stayed quiet there. Next morning, we came back to herding our sheep. Suddenly, we listened again to people screaming and warning us from the other side of the sierra: “Terrorists are coming!” So, we hid ourselves again in the forest. That’s what the rocks remind me of.
Me: Justina, because I am not familiar with the terrain where you lived, I do not clearly understand your description of the space. So, I have a question, where you lived in Panguana, are there rocky terrains and forest as well? Is that correct?

Justina: That’s right.

Me: So, did you hide in both rocks and trees?

Justina: In both.

Me: How did you hide in the rocks?

Justina: We hid in rocky terrains because in the sierra, rocks are too big. So, we moved a big rock and some of us could enter in a hole in the ground.

Me: Ok, so did you hide in holes that rocks usually make in the ground?

Justina: Yes, we hid in the holes where there were big rocks.

Me: Justina, I just want to be sure if I understand what you said. So, you and your relatives moved the rocks and then all of you entered inside of the holes that the rocks formed in the ground. Is that correct?

Justina: Yes. We spent the night in the holes in the ground. We ran in the middle of cold nights to sleep in the holes. Sometimes, we did not have time to get a blanket.

My conversation with Justina illustrates what feminist scholars claim regarding the influences of researcher’s identities in the process of knowledge construction. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, feminist scholars warn how researchers know from a specific location (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). My “knowing self” undeniably signifies that I have limitations and possibilities to understand participants’ narrations. Since I am from
the Caribbean area in Colombia, where we do not have mountains, I must confess that I had difficulties trying to understand what meant for participants living in the mountains and developing an emotional attachment ("feelings of safety") in the highlands. For that reason, it was difficult for me to try to understand the materiality of the context in which Justina and her relatives hid during the armed conflict. I am from a coast region in Colombia with no mountains, which means I am not familiar with the landscape of the Andean mountains and the ways people interact with this space. As an outsider, I wanted to be sure about what Justina wanted to communicate when narrating the ways she camouflaged her body in rocky terrains during terrorism in the sierra.

Moreover, my conversation with Justina means how mixing two methods (focus groups and photovoice) might enhance the possibilities of seeing a particular phenomenon and relate it with the context. My point is that listening to Justina and seeing her picture increased my understanding of the ways participants hid themselves in rocky terrains during terrorism.

Similarly, Margarita’s photograph (see Figure 7) enhanced my understandings of how spaces in the sierra looked like in which women hid. Margarita said:

I planted this tree in my house in Lima. I took this picture because there is the same kind of tree in my hometown in Ayacucho too. I recalled that when terrorists came, we ran toward the mountains. My cousins and I hid behind these kinds of trees. We stayed quiet behind those trees. These trees have a black fruit called “unca.” (Margarita, personal communication, December 18, 2014)
Putting together Justina’s and Margarita’s pictures of the trees and rocks, I gained a better sense of the scenario in which they hid their bodies during the armed conflict. When I heard their stories of being hidden in the rocks and trees in the focus group, I could barely imagine how this occurred. However, by seeing the pictures and asking questions about the images, I could understand how these practices happened. Now, I have a visual image about the ways participants camouflaged the body in rocky terrains and behind leafy trees in the sierra.

Figure 7. Hidden behind trees (Margarita)

As Mitchell (2011) advises in photovoice projects researchers should focus on a sense of presence and absence in the pictures. In other words, researchers must ask questions not only about what they think the pictures show us but also what they do not show us. In this sense, my interpretation of both pictures (figures 8 & 9) is that what is present is the space, the “setting” in which women used to hide when guerrillas and
soldiers came to their village. Regarding absence, what is absent in these photographs is the body.

Neither Justina nor Margarita is physically present in their pictures. The two bodies are simply not there; they do not appear. However, although their bodies are not portrayed in the picture, I might consider that participants’ bodies are symbolically present through their narrations of the pictures. Justina and Margarita explained to me how they remained silent and immobile in the rocky terrains and behind trees to avoid guerrillas and soldiers noticing their presences. Thus, participants masked the body with nature in ways that the armed groups could not find them. Justina and Margarita are present in the pictures only if, as viewers, we use our imagination to recreate the scene in which they disguised their bodies from others’ gazes.

It seems Margarita and Justina used trees and rocks as tools to re-create and materialize their mourning and memories of terrorism. Both pictures call into question their memories of political violence and how their bodies “appeared” and “disappeared” in the sierra. They recreated a specific performance of hiding the body and remaining quiet to save their lives during the armed conflict.

Although Justina and Margarita were the only participants who photographed trees and rocks and related them with their memories of political violence, the other participants previously mentioned, in the focus groups, the ways trees and rocks are meaningful memories of the conflict for them. In this sense, Justina and Margarita’s photos exemplify how photovoice is a resource of building individual and collective
memory experiences (Nash, 2014). Photographs might contribute to an understanding of a common reality and sharable aspects of the social world.

In short, both pictures (trees and rocks) illustrated the relationship between the notion of being absent and the women being threatened with disappearance. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, the threat of participants’ disappearance encouraged participants to camouflage their bodies in the sierra. For them, being hidden behind trees or inside holes in the ground, as well as seeing violence from the mountains, signified voluntary disappearance. In other words, being absent meant participants intentionally hid their bodies to avoid guerrillas and soldiers seeing them and taking them away from their parents.

*Embodied Agency of Quechua Women in Contemporary Spaces*

The following stories illustrate how participants’ realities are constructed in Lima today and how the body is actively involved in this practice, which I identified as embodied agency. I understand agency as the way “we respond sensitively to a specific context, adopting an orientation—that is, a direction for both thought and action—adequate to the discovery of what is required to really live better in specific respects” (Babbitt, 2009, p, 236). The notion of agency speaks directly to participants’ abilities to act, react, and transform the spaces where they live today in Lima. In other words, the women’s pictures directly reflect on women’s personal capacities to materially and symbolically affect their surroundings and social interactions in Lima.

Participants’ arrival to Lima meant to them the exploration of new ways to construct their families both emotionally and economically. In their narrations,
participants emphasized how without government support, and sometimes in conditions of extreme poverty and social exclusion, they have faced the challenges of re-organizing their familial and social life. In the city, displaced women have assumed new roles inside and outside the domestic sphere to earn money in order to support their children. Two participants told me that in Lima they work as animal caretakers (raising ducks and pigs) in their houses. The other eight women work as informal vendors in the streets and employees in houses with domestic duties. Although these achievements are modest successes in the general picture of the complex socio-economic situation of displaced populations, these accomplishments give the women visibility, and legitimize the role of Quechua women in the production of livestock and other activities in Lima.

*Making and Unmaking*

![Figure 8. “I can make and unmake with my hands” (Marcela)](image)

Marcela took this photograph (see Figure 8 above) because she said her hands are what she likes most of her bodily parts. I asked her: Why did you choose to take a picture of your hands?
Marcela: Because I can do everything with my hands. I can make and unmake
with my hands. I like the ways I can move my hands when I am doing something.

(Marcela, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

In this photograph, Marcela invites viewers to appreciate her hands as the central
protagonists of the image. She asked another person to take the picture of her hands,
while she placed her hands in the center of the frame.

Marcela’s uplifted palms suggest a nonaggressive pose that requests viewers’
empathy with her gesture. As viewers we might think she is waiting to receive
“something” or she is actively offering “something.” No matter if the action is requesting
or giving, Marcela’s hands are not passive objects in the picture, but “active agents” who
actively perform an action of making/unmaking. In doing so, it seems that Marcela gives
“agency” to her hands, which means a capacity to symbolically and materially affect or
influence her surroundings (persons, objects, and spaces).

Although Marcela’s gesture of palm-up suggests she is open to interact and share
her feelings and moods with others, it is curious why her face is absent in this
photograph. Perhaps the absence of Marcela’s face suggests her intention to avoid a close
examination of her subjectivity or, Marcela’s “social shyness” of presenting the body to
an unknown audience. In both possible situations, this picture implies Marcela’s denial of
“facing” others when visually presenting her face. After all, the socially constructed
meaning of face-to-face relationship implies the ways individuals project the content of
their subjectivity outward to others.
Although Marcela’s face is not present in the photograph, it does not affect the agentic dimension of the picture. For me, in the image, two temporal/spatial moments intersect compellingly: embodied memories of the conflict and contemporary embodied memories. First, I believe Marcela is “hiding” (or perhaps “camouflaging”) her face from others’ gaze like she used to do during the armed conflict. Second, she is highlighting her “ability to apprehend [the world] and take up meaning at a perceptual motor level” (Campbell & Meynell, 2009, p. 29). Despite her “social shyness,” Marcela emphasizes what her body can do through her hands to affect the space she occupies in Lima today. She did not specify what kinds of things her hands could make, but she reflects on the body’s possibilities in the world. In this respect, the fact her face is absent while her hands are present might re-signify the time in which she camouflaged her body in the sierra while her hands depict new possibilities of creation and desires of being-in-the-world.

Despite their traumatic memories, the women have learned to assume leadership in the re-creation of their lives. Literally through their hands these women have re-constructed social and family structures in Lima, structures they lost when leaving their village in the sierra during terrorism. Venturoli (2009) explains that the necessity to supply economic needs and reclaim civic rights encouraged Quechua women to raise their voices and re-construct a new normality for them and their families in Lima.

In short, Marcela’s picture and narration demonstrate how “the human body is an agent, inevitably transforming through its actions both the world and itself” (Campbell & Meynell, 2009, p. 1). In doing so, Marcela ties agency to the body capacity and highlights
the capacity of the Quechua female body to affect the space and transform its surroundings.

Performing the Role as Animal Caretakers

The next stories illustrate specifically how women’s bodily capacities affect materially and symbolically their spaces in Lima. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, like other Quechua children, participants learned to be herders and animal caretakers during their early years in the sierra. According to Connerton (1989), “our bodies, which in commemorations stylistically re-enact an image of the past, keep the past also in an entirely effective form in its continuing ability to perform certain skilled actions” (p. 72). By performing the role as animal caretaker, participants re-enact in the cerros in Lima an image of their past in the sierra.

During their childhood, participants acquired spatial abilities to know the sierra and strategies to take care of their animals in higher regions. The next story illustrates how the women re-enacted their roles as animal caretaker in the peripheral hills in Lima today. In Margarita’s photograph (see Figure 9), she re-enacts her image and skills as animal caretaker in the sierra during the armed conflict. She asked her daughter to take this picture in front of her ducks. Although I told her that I loved this picture, she did not. Margarita told me that this photograph is not her favorite picture. Margarita said:

I do not like this picture because I look fat. Years ago, when I was married, I was very skinny. Before I got pregnant, my weight was 125 pounds. After having my baby, I gained some pounds. But, when I got divorced…well, I feel overweight. I
don’t like this picture. What I like of this picture is that I am close to my animalitos (animals). (Margarita, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Figure 9. “Taking care of my animals” (Margarita)

Margarita described her body as “fat” and related “fatness” with her last pregnancy, but mostly with her divorce. She explained to me how after she got divorced she was distressful and gained more pounds than during the pregnancy. By highlighting “fatness” as the central characteristic of her body image in the picture, Margarita’s interpretation suggests she believes her body is not “worthy” of being photographed. The fact that she does not like her body in the pictures communicates something about the ways she conceptualizes her body. It seems that what Margarita considers “photographable” has been determined by aesthetic values socially established for the ideal female body. After all, pictures also represent how others see the body. Her words denote a kind of “social shyness” and shame of presenting the body to an audience and
being subject of “public” scrutiny. Margarita’s visual and narrative accounts of feeling overweight might be related to social approval or rejection of the female body.

In contrast to her body image, what Margarita did consider as “photographable” were her animalitos. She emphasized what she likes most in the picture is that she is close to her ducks. For Margarita, her ducks appear aesthetically appealing in photographs, but not her body. It seems that Margarita’s intention was to make her ducks more visible than her own body. In other words, this photograph implied that Margarita mainly desired to communicate her identity as animal caretaker rather than her other identities (e.g., woman or mother).

By emphasizing on her ducks in the photograph, Margarita denotes her emotional attachment to her work in the sierra as animal caretaker. In the focus group and the individual interview, she recalled the joy of being with her animals before the armed conflict and the anxiety and fear of losing her animals during terrorism. In this photograph, she wants to be present close to her animals.

My interpretation is that even though she does not seem comfortable with her body image, she is definitely confident performing her role as animal caretaker. Margarita’s gesture of being close to her animals with her arms close to her torso might signify comfort in that space protecting her animals. As Margarita said: “Today, I know terrorists are not going to steal my animalitos. That’s what I thought when taking that picture.”

In the next picture (see Figure 10), Margarita photographed her daughter in front of the ducks too. When I saw her daughter in the same space in which Margarita was in
the previous photograph, I wanted to know if Margarita intentionally wanted to create a self-representation of her childhood as animal caretaker through her daughter’s image like Juana did (see Figures 3 & 4).

However, rather than photographing her daughter to represent Margarita’s childhood in the sierra, she took a picture of her daughter to express how, during domestic violence, they supported each another. For Margarita, her daughter is a trustworthy storyteller of the domestic violence they lived through together a couple years ago. Margarita’s photograph of her daughter depicts her emotions around the ways they coped together with issues of domestic violence. Margarita said:

This is my little girl. She has suffered too much, Señorita. When her father beat us, we slept in the street protecting and hugging each another. We slept in different places in the street. We spent days without eating. My daughter remembers everything. If you ask what happened, she would tell you every detail. I have suffered with her a lot. For that reason, I took the picture. We have gone through many difficulties together. (Margarita, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Figure 10. “My little girl.” (Margarita)
Generally speaking, this photograph and Margarita’s narration serve as useful examples to explore the intersections between domestic violence, homelessness, and post-conflict. Listening to Margarita’s description, it seems that she re-experienced what it meant to be a displaced woman in the armed conflict when dealing with domestic violence in Lima. Margarita recalled how her husband forced her to leave the home with her little daughter. She and her daughter used to hide in what they call huecos (holes) in the city, which means empty lots, abandoned buildings, and other desolate properties in urban spaces. According to Margarita, she and her daughter spent the night in the huecos until next morning when they came back to their neighborhood. Once again in the neighborhood, a neighbor occasionally gave them something to eat, offered emotional support, and encouraged Margarita to leave her partner. By living together in domestic violence, Margarita situated her daughter as a reliable narrator of their memories of the violent behavior of her ex-husband. In Margarita’s words, “if you ask her what happened, she will tell you every detail.”

Margarita’s experience about the ways she used to hide her body in the sierra and the spaces where she protected herself when experiencing domestic violence demonstrate the notion of habitual memory (Connerton, 1989). Connerton states, “many forms of habitual skilled remembering illustrate a keeping of the past in mind that, without ever reverting to its historical origin, nevertheless re-enacts the past in our present conduct” (p. 72). Margarita’s body knows how to identify a safe space to protect itself. In doing so, her body re-enacts the spatial strategies in terrorism in her present when dealing with domestic violence. In this narration, the body actively is involved when remembering the
spaces and its postures when hiding in the sierra during terrorism. As Connerton explains, “postures and movements which are habit memories become sedimented into bodily conformation” (p. 94). Bodily practices demonstrate how memory is sedimented in the body. Therefore, Margarita’s story of the picture Huecos (empty lots and abandoned buildings) remind her of safe spaces where her body used to resist violence. The body always knows! Margarita carries places and communicates their existence through her body.

In conclusion, Margarita’s role as an animal caretaker has meant to her the possibility to transform/affect the peripheral hills in Lima into a livable space where she re-enacts one of the positive memories she has from her childhood before terrorism: taking care of her animals. Margarita’s narration speaks directly to the notion of women’s embodied agency in contemporary spaces. For that reason, I might say that Margarita’s transformation of space in the peripheral hills is achieved through her body’s capacities. In other words, her picture of herself as a farmer is the Quechua female body’s agentic possibilities to affect the world.

*Women as Informal Vendors: Reclaiming Economic Independence in the City*

Catalina’s picture (see Figure 11) of her as an informal vendor in Lima speaks also to the notion of women’s embodied agency. In her narration of this picture, Catalina highlights her personal capacities to reflect and act as a displaced woman within the informal market in which she daily sells merchandise in Lima. This picture inspires Catalina to talk about her sexual agency, resistance against sexual harassment, and her
body’s skills when lifting up boxes in the market. She is proud of having her own business in this sidewalk, which she considers as her space.

Catalina considers herself as an independent woman, who has been able to run her business and gain control of making personal decisions on her own. By describing this picture (see Figure 11), Catalina celebrated how she became an autonomous woman after she got divorced. Catalina said (personal communication, December 19, 2014):

“This is my business. I took this picture because I feel safe in this space. I am an autonomous woman now. I do not depend on my sisters, brothers, nobody! I do not borrow money from others. Do you know my story?

Me: I will be happy to hear now, Catalina.

Catalina: When I got divorced, I came to this sidewalk that you see in this picture. I opened a T-shirt and put my own watch, necklace, and a remote control that my son gave me to start my business. All these items were my first retail items. This

Figure 11. “I will not give up.” (Catalina)
is the way I started my own business. This is my space now. My ex-husband told me: “the day you leave this home you’ll have to ‘rent’ your buttock!” and I answered him “you know what? If I give my buttoc to someone it is because I want to, but you will see that I will not have to do that! I am not like you. You do not know what kind of woman I am.” Then, I told him: “I can be fucked, but I will not give up, and I will overcome all this!”

Catalina’s narration denotes she has gained control over her life and body, which signified autonomy not only from her ex-husband but also from relatives and friends. In her narration of the photograph, she established a link between her business and her autonomy in decision-making. Catalina is proud of the independence she has gained in deciding on her personal issues including her sexual life. Her words imply a sense of sexual agency, which might be interpreted as her ability to perform what she wants sexually and what she does not want. In other words, Catalina feels capable of enforcing decisions about her sex life. She confidently claims that she can say “yes” or “no” and make her voice heard with her ex-husband. In her narration, Catalina declared how she is not concerned about economic issues that might remove her ability to make free choices about her life.

However, although Catalina is proud of what she has achieved on her own, she also recognized that she has faced several difficulties as a displaced woman running her informal business as vendor in public space in Lima:

In this picture (see Figure 12 above), I have all my items inside of this cart. I used to push the cart every night. That’s fine. I can do it because I do not have a
problem with that. The only difficulty is when El Seranazo (custom police) come and confiscate all my items. One day, they took all my things and one of the policemen harassed me. He told me “come to the police station tonight at 11:30 PM and I will give you back all your merchandise.” I told my friend what happened to me: “a papichulo (policeman) asked to see him during the night.” My friend told me “don’t go he wants to abuse you.” So, I did not go and my son gave me the money to start my business again. (Catalina, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

Figure 12. “Unwelcome encounter in the night.” (Catalina)

In this photograph and story, Catalina illustrated one of her negative experiences in the city. Generally speaking, Catalina’s photograph and commentary show the interaction between Andean-immigrant women and the police force, which represents power and control in the city. Specifically, in this event, Catalina brought out how local authorities not only attempted to control the informal dynamics in public spaces (e.g.,
informal vendors), but also the ways the female body is subject to violation and control in these scenarios. Despite the tension of this experience, Catalina highlighted her self-image and self-understanding as a woman full of courage and with the potential to actively resist others’ abuse in public spaces. She was eager to maintain and defend the autonomy she believed she has gained through divorcing her ex-husband and running her own business.

At this point, it is important to clarify that the notion of embodied agency that I have exposed does not see women as radically autonomous but as relational subjects. I understand autonomy and agency “in ways that recognize the importance of relational support” (Campbell & Meynell, 2009, p. 7). In her narration, Catalina explained how she shared with one of her co-workers that she was experiencing sexual harassment, which helped her to search for alternative forms to overcome this situation. Her co-worker’s advice helped Margarita reaffirm her desires to protect herself and understand the power dynamic of public space in Lima.

To conclude, in the subtheme “Women’s embodied agency in contemporary times in Lima,” I have emphasized how Margarita and Catalina’s pictures depict their personal capacities to reflect and act as displaced women in urban spaces in Lima today. In my interpretation of their stories, the body is actively involved in the ways participants live and transform spaces. Their stories are about how participants have responded sensitively to a specific context and discovered what they require to really live better with their families in Lima. The women’s pictures directly reflect on women’s personal capacities to materially and symbolically affect their surroundings and social interactions in Lima.
In the last part of this theme, “The Quechua female body remembers,” I describe how participants decided to visually narrate their traumatic memories of the conflict by photographing family members. Most participants became undoubtedly comfortable and proud when photographing their loved ones. Via their photographs, women were able to discuss their feelings and relationships regarding their children, grandchildren, husbands, and ex-husbands. Bourdieu and Whiteside (1990) claim the presence of a camera in the family reinforces the notion of integration of the family group. Particularly, “the social function and meaning of photography are never more clearly apparent than in a rural community, strongly integrated and attached to its peasant traditions” (Bourdieu & Whiteside, 1990, p. 19). In this sense, when Juana saw her mother pruning her plants in the backyard, she photographed her because the pruning reminded her the peasant’s practices cultivating in the sierra (see Figure 13).

Juana said:

She is my mother, Felicitas. She loves cultivating. So, when I saw her, it reminded me how my grandmother used to cultivate in the sierra too. I remember how my grandmother cultivated potato, quinoa, choclo (corn), and ullucos (Andean tuber). For that reason, I photographed my mother. (Juana, personal communication, December 18, 2014)
Listening to Juana, I recalled Juana’s photos and stories (see Figures 3 & 4) about how her mother left her with her grandmother in the sierra during terrorism. Again, in this picture, Juana suggests how she was physically and emotionally closer to her grandmother than her mother. My interpretation of this picture is that Juana photographed her mother to register a scene that evokes a past event in which her grandmother is the central character. Her mother embodies the absence of her grandmother and illustrates her agricultural traditions in the sierra.

In line with the camera presence and its family function, Justina introduced me to her granddaughter and explained to me the day they traveled together to Justina’s village (see Figure 14). Justina said:

She is the older daughter of my son. We traveled together to the sierra in Ayacucho and I came back crying. However, she wanted to know where I lived and where we buried my father’s corpse. She loves to visit the sierra and know how I lived when I was when I was a little girl like her. (Justina, personal communication, December 19, 2014)
For me, Justina’s narration of the photograph provides two different readings of the sierra. On the one hand, her granddaughter sees the sierra with great fascination and desires to explore the space where her grandmother lived during her childhood. She wants to “be present” in the sierra and do the same things that her grandmother used to do (e.g., herding sheep). On the other hand, going back and being present in her village in Ayacucho means for Justina a refreshing of unpleasant memories of the armed conflict.

In the next picture (see Figure 15), Justina provided more explanation about her trip with her granddaughter to her village. Justina told me: “These are my grandchildren.” (personal communication, December 19, 2014)

Me: Who was the one who traveled with you to the sierra?

Justina: The girl who is wearing a pink shirt and has two ponytails.
This picture brought out more information about Justina’s travel to the sierra and the memories that came out during and after that trip. I asked Justina: “Why did you decide to travel with her to the sierra?” She said that her granddaughter insisted that Justina travel there. Although Justina does not have a house in the village, Justina acceded just to please her granddaughter and visited the sierra after many years. Justina explained to me:

We stayed in my aunt’s house and my granddaughter enjoyed that time a lot. She did not want to go back to Lima again. She told me “please, can we stay here? There is really good food here.” My granddaughter likes to eat cheeses, sopa de moron (beef head cream of wheat soup and corn). She did not want to come back; she cried when we left the village. (Justina, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

After listening to Justina, I wanted to clarify my understanding of her granddaughter’s emotions when traveling to Justina’s hometown: “So, it seems she enjoyed a lot of your
town. Is that correct?” Justina answered: “Yes. My granddaughter told me ‘we have to stay here and build a house.’ That was what she told me while we were herding some sheep together.”

Thinking about Justina’s narrations, I was intrigued by the encounter of two opposite emotions and meanings toward the same space. On the one hand, her granddaughter was clearly excited at being in the sierra and doing the same routines that Justina had done many years ago. In contrast to her granddaughter’s enthusiasm, Justina experienced the anxiety of being in that place where she experienced traumatic events (her father’s death) in the 1980s. These two different readings of and feelings toward the same space triggered my desire to know more about Justina’s response toward her granddaughter’s behavior. Thus, I asked again, “So, how do you feel seeing your granddaughter wanted to live in the same space that you left many years ago because of the political violence?’ Justina said:

I told my granddaughter, “This is the space where I was in terrorism. I hid myself here. I bred my cows here. I live in las alturas (height) here.” Then, I thought “how could I bring my granddaughter to this space!” My granddaughter asked me: “why was there a time of terrorism?” I answered her: “I do not know mami.” After saying that, I felt fear again. I thought “they” [guerrillas and soldiers] might climb the mountains. Because of this fear, I cannot travel there because I do not have a house. Sometimes I would like to live there, but I think maybe terrorism is still in Ayacucho. I know many people who have traveled to my hometown and
they are doing their chakras (small farm). It is true. My granddaughter is very happy in my village. (Justina, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

While for Justina this is the space of loss and violence, for her granddaughter it is a space of enjoyment and new beginnings. Even though Justina still wishes to return to her hometown, the fear is stronger than the hope of starting a new life in Ayacucho.

Like the other participants, Berta photographed some of her family members. In this picture (see Figure 16), she took a photograph of her granddaughter and two daughters. When I asked why she photographed her granddaughter, she started by saying:

My granddaughter is a beautiful little girl who stole my heart despite of the circumstances in which she was born. My daughter dropped out of school because she got pregnant. So, at the beginning I rejected my daughter’s baby because I was afraid that my daughter would not continue studying. I thought “well, my daughter will not pursue her education anymore.” When the baby was born, I rejected the baby because I thought my daughter’s life was over. We had no resources to raise a baby; for example, we did not have any clothes for the baby after the delivery. The baby’s father does not know her and he never wanted to support his child. I realized that the baby needed many things. When I came back from work at night, my children said “the baby needs this (…)” so I gave them the money to get those things. Day after day, I started to love my granddaughter. One day my husband wanted to kick my daughter and the baby out of the house, and I said “Do not kick your daughter out of the house. Nothing good waits for her in the street without us. If you kick her out of the house, I will go with her.” So, my
granddaughter started to gain my love. She is a sweet girl who greets others in a lovely ways; if she sees you, she will call you tia (aunty). (Berta, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Figure 16. “She stole my heart.” (Berta)

Berta is evidently proud of supporting her daughter to raise her little girl. When Berta narrated the story of the picture and the reason she photographed her granddaughter, she smiled frequently and looked with love at the picture. Although Berta thought her daughter would drop out of school after giving birth, her daughter is pursuing her education in a college and working part time to support the baby.

Berta is not only proud of her granddaughter but also is profoundly grateful with her two daughters. When talking about the next picture (see Figure 17), Berta explained what her two daughters mean to her:

These are my two daughters. The younger is everything to me. She is my hands and feet. She is my whole body. She has supported me every moment in my life.
When I had a surgery, she took care of me because my older daughter has to work and study in college. She is a cute girl who is always with me. Although the two girls are with me, my younger daughter spends more time close to me because she has more time at home. She is always concerned with keeping the house clean. In this picture, they are decorating the Christmas tree. My younger daughter wants to decide where to put each ornament; the older daughter argues her. So, they were fighting because of the tree decorations. (Berta, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Figure 17. “She is my hands and feet. She is my whole body.” (Berta)

In the next photograph (see Figure 18), Justina emphasized how her husband has become her mainstay since they met at the school years ago. Justina expressed her feelings toward her husband in this way:

This is my husband and I am very happy with him now. Years ago, my life with him was terrible. He is from Cusco and he did not want to travel to my hometown.
He used to say: “In your hometown, there were a lot of killings.” When we discussed for any reason, he battered me, beat me, and chased me with a knife. My younger child hid himself in the house. But now, we have grown older together, and we live peacefully with our grandchildren. Things have changed since we have had our grandchildren. (Justina, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

In her narration, Justina is highlighting how her husband’s attitude toward her hometown illustrates mainstream discourses that depict in the Ayacucho population as communities that “learned” to live with violence. For Justina, her husband cannot understand the violence she experienced because he is from Cusco, a different area where the conflict was less intense than Ayacucho. Justina did not provide details about her experience of domestic violence; she made no connection between her past with its armed conflict and domestic violence. She preferred to emphasize the peaceful years she
is living with her husband and grandchildren today. For Justina, her husband has given her a shoulder to lean on when she feels tired and hopeless. In Justina’s words:

During the night I have cramps in my hands. It is very painful. So when my husband is not working and has a day off, he helps me with the chores; for example, he washes my clothes. (Justina, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Undeniably, Juana emotionally and physically leans on her husband and feels his support in everyday practices at home. His support at home demonstrates how women’s efficiency in public work (e.g., as farmers, informal vendors, and housekeepers) has broken traditional opposition of gender roles in the domestic sphere. Similarly, Coral (1994) explains the ways urban conditions have helped displaced women enter into the public arena and Coral also explains how their public achievements have encouraged men and women to share chores at home.

Figure 19. “My daughter-in-law is like a daughter.” (Justina)
Besides her husband, Justina considers that she finds on her daughter-in-law, another shoulder to lean on. When referring to the next picture (see Figure 19 above), Justina said: “This is my daughter-in-law. I love her so much; she’s like a daughter. She is a good woman who helps me with the chores at home.” Justina claimed that her body was exhausted from taking care of her mother, who is 90-years-old. Also, Justina is psychologically fatigued from thinking how to overcome the difficulties she and her family face as a displaced family in Lima.

In the next photograph (see Figure 20), Justina is close to Margarita. In this photograph, Justina wanted to capture a moment close to her friend Margarita to represent the solidarity and empathy they have constructed together through the post-conflict years. Justina expressed that Margarita has shared not only her personal difficulties but also the struggle of being displaced persons in Lima:

This is my friend Margarita. We have lived together many difficult times. My mother had a motorcycle accident recently. She fractured her hip and has a lot of pain. I have cried a lot with her and I said “How long is my mother going to suffer?” I have suffered with her since I was a child. My mother protected me from being raped. How long we are going to continue this journey? Some displaced people have received money because their relatives were murdered. My father, siblings, and nephews were killed, but we received nothing. What we have lived through has been so sad. Sometimes I feel sick with this concern. Even though I feel cramps in my hands and bone pain, I have to take care of my mother. However, although I have a lot of stress, I don’t give up because I know
my mother and husband support me. I have siblings but we are not very close to each other. I have a brother who was abducted. “They” [soldiers and guerrillas] gave him a weapon to kill a peasant, but my brother did not want to do it. In fact, he had never used a gun. One night, he was walking with “them” and he stayed behind the group to run away. He walked all night and came to our home the next day. My mother told him: “You need to go to Cantagallo. They might kill you.” My mother, my brother, and I cried during my father’s funeral. It is so sad to remember where we left my father’s corpse. These memories are so sad. (Justina, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Figure 20. “Margarita and I: We have gone through everything.” (Justina)

Justina and Margarita are members of Displaced Family Association in Lima (ASFADEL). Like other displaced women, socio-economic difficulties have encouraged Justina and Margarita to enter into a public and institutional space to get financial resources to support their children. Their active participation in ASFADEL demonstrates
how displaced women have not only entered public spaces to informally work, but also have entered institutional scenarios to re-construct the social interactions they lost during terrorism. As Cordero (1994) noticed, one of the most important achievements of these women has been their presence in the public arena. These women have learned how to fight for their citizen rights in government institutions and have been able, in some cases, to teach their husbands how to do the same.

The picture with Margarita inspired Justina to talk about their journey as displaced women in Lima. By starting her narration talking about the emotional attachment she has with Margarita, Justina claims that this journey is not only hers, but the struggle of thousands of displaced families. In this narration, Justina summarized her journey as a displaced woman, beginning when she was a little girl in the sierra in the 1980s. She pointed out two of her most painful memories of the armed conflict: Her father’s death and her brother’s abduction. In doing so, she claimed that she has not received any government support or reparation as a result of her lost family. However, despite the difficulties that she has experienced as a displaced person and her body pain (cramps and bone pain), Justina is eager to protect her mother as her mother protected her when Justina was a little girl in the sierra. Justina distressingly asked how long her mother’s suffering would last.

In her narration about her mother’s physical suffering, Justina highlights how traumatic memories of terrorism are present in her body today and interrupt her daily routines. The relationship between Justina’s cramps and her trauma might be explained with Leder’s (1990) notion of “the affective call.” According to Leder, “pain has a unique
qualitative feel that sets it off from other sensory experiences: namely, it hurts. Pain is the very concretization of the unpleasant, the aversive [the affective call]” (p. 73). Although pain is not a constant accompaniment of Justina’s normal bodily activity, her bone pain and cramps tend to call affectively at times when remembering traumatic memories of the sierra.

The connection between trauma and pain implies that physical discomfort “cannot be reduced to a set of immediate sensory qualities. It is ultimately a manner of being-in-the-world. As such, pain reorganizes our lived space and time, our relations with others and with ourselves” (Leder, 1990, p. 73). Justina’s bone pain and cramps have encouraged her to re-organize her life asking others (e.g., her husband and daughter-in-law) to help do the chores that she used to do.

Following Leder’s notion of the affective call, Trigg (2012) explained “coming to standstill, suddenly the [visceral] body’s materiality becomes a foreground issue for the traumatized subject: ‘I feel it physically’” (p. 250). In Justina’s words: “Sometimes I feel sick with this concern.” Justina’s commentary demonstrates how painful memories call suddenly to her body and she can feel them through her whole body as a mass of suffering in her muscles. Justina might feel her inner body (muscles and pain) when remembering her past in the sierra. In this sense, Leder points out “my viscera are ordinarily hidden away from the gaze by their location in the bodily depths” (p. 44). The visceral body is often silent and absent from conscious experience except at times of
discomfort. Justina’s traumatic memories bring out the hidden reality of the visceral body,\textsuperscript{13} which means traumatic memories bring to her awareness of this corporeal reality.

My conversation with Justina about this picture was not the first time that Justina claimed that painful memories hurt her body. However, it was the first time I could easily notice how when claiming that her “memories are so sad,” Justina’s body evidently expresses that pain. During my dialogue with Justina, she frequently rubbed her hands trying to alleviate the bone pain of her fingers. Listening to Justina’s account, I could make sense of how traumatic memories of the conflict produced noticeable effects on Justina’s body and emotions.

In general, by photographing family members, participants narrate their traumatic memories of the conflict in order to register the death and disappearances of their relatives, to contrast their own fear of going back to the sierra with their grandchildren’s desire of being there, to express how their daughters are the main motivation to carve a space in Lima today, to illustrate how gender roles have changed for displaced families and the value of women’s participation in the public arena, and to narrate the difficulties of taking care of others when feeling intense pain because of traumatic memories.

To conclude, in the first part of Chapter 5, “The Quechua female body remembers,” I described participants’ pictures that illustrate issues concerning the body in three ways: Through re-presenting the female body in the armed conflict, illustrating women’s embodied agency in contemporary spaces today, and depicting the connection between others’ bodies and participants’ traumatic memories. In doing so, I shared stories

\textsuperscript{13} The visceral body represents digestive, respiratory, cardiovascular, urogenital, endocrine, and spleen systems.
that illustrate participants’ experiences of others’ gazes (“alien/colonial gaze”) over their native bodies, and shared pictures that depict how participants intentionally hid their bodies to avoid guerrillas and soldiers taking them away from their parents.

Also, I interpreted some of the pictures using the concept of embodied agency to explore how participants’ realities are constructed in Lima today and the ways the body is actively involved in this practice. In this respect, I presented women’s pictures where they were performing their roles as animal caretakers and informal vendors in Lima. These pictures directly reflect on women’s personal capacities to affect, both materially and symbolically, their surroundings and social interactions in Lima.

I ended this theme by putting together participants’ pictures that represent their memories through others bodies’ images. The pictures show the difficulties of taking care of others when physical pain and memories overwhelm their bodies, the ways women’s performance in public spaces have broken the traditional binary of gender roles in the domestic sphere, and the solidarity and empathy the women have constructed among themselves through the post-conflict years.

However, although women’s roles in displaced communities have been significant, discrimination against women still remains strong and many women are abused and devalued, often publicly and sometimes in private spaces as well. In the last part of Chapter 5, I deepen the meanings of the difficulties of carving a space for Quechua women, and I explore specifically the complications when reflecting on the significance of home.
Carving a Space for Their Own: Between Agency and Social Exclusion in Lima

I end Chapter 5 by demonstrating that through photovoice participants have creatively articulated the depiction of their agentic practices to overcome social exclusion, the ways the women denounce marginalization of displaced communities in Lima. I illustrate these ideas by organizing this last part in three central subthemes: Andean Cosmovision and the ways Quechua communities understand reality, participants’ meanings of home in the peripheral hills in Lima, and Quechua women’s encounters in urban spaces.

First, drawing on the notion of Andean Cosmovision (Gordon, 2014), I explore how living in the highlands has determined the ways these women see and relate to the world (Nature and Cosmos). Participants’ frequent use of high-angle shots to portray the hills, rocky terrains, vegetation, and livestock suggest living in the mountains have defined their viewpoints when registering visual spaces. Second, I present participants’ intimate gazes into their private spaces: their homes. Pictures of homes materialize pleasurable memories of their native villages before terrorism in the sierra (e.g., livestock and agriculture practices). Participants felt proud of re-enacting the role of animal caretaker in the city, which has signified new socio-economic opportunities for their families. By referring to the farming practices in their homes, participants use a sense of “smallness” (diminutive words), which denotes affection and protection to express their gentle feelings for living creatures and nature. I argue such sense of “smallness” might be related with the Andean Cosmovision to the extent this perspective perceives the “little ones” through a caring and loving gaze regardless of the distance.
In contrast to pleasant feelings of home, the women also depicted private spaces as dangerous spaces because of domestic violence that some of them have experienced in Lima. Finally, I put together participants’ pictures that narrate their first encounter with the city in the plaza as well as images that denounce socio-economic difficulties, marginalization of displaced communities, and lack of support from government institutions. In short, the results of the photovoice method showed how the pictures not only triggered participants’ memories of the conflict, but also elicited reflections of agency, thoughts about social exclusion of displaced communities, and stimulated the women to think on the relationship between past and present in Lima today.

The Andean Cosmovision through Quechua Women’s Eyes

The frequent use of high-angles in some of the pictures (see Figures 21, 22, 23, & 24) was a compelling finding that encouraged me to explore the relationship between this “aerial perspective” and the meanings of being born in the Andean mountains. In order to make sense of participants’ use of high-angles, I asked myself: “How should I approach participants’ viewpoint of seeing the world from the heights?” To do so, I turned to Gordon’s (2014) description of Andean Cosmovision.

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14 Delinquency, water scarcity, and continuous risk of flooding and landslide,
Gordon (2014) explains that “the Andean Cosmovision has its roots in the indigenous culture of the Andes of South America where it informs the lives of people who live in isolated villages high in the mountains, far from the nearest road” (p. 1). Participants grew up in the Andes Mountains in South America, looking upon the world. Living in the mountains has determined their Andean Cosmovision and the way they understand and relate to reality. The mountains are not only sacred places and sites of contemplation for Quechua communities, but the highlands also reflect the perspective that “the Andean people live in a world where the mountains, the trees, the rivers are as aware of the people as the people are of them” (Gordon, p. 4). From this viewpoint, the body, Nature, and Cosmos are intimately linked and they know each other spiritually and materially. Rather than claiming an opposition between the mind and the body, Quechua people communicate with Nature not only through the spirit, but also through the body. Webb (2012) notices “there is a very definite ideological and practical commitment within indigenous Andean life to bringing the seemingly conflicting opposites into
Thus, the Andean Cosmovision views the articulation mind and the body as essential, harmonious, and complementary form of being in the world.

Figure 22. Andean Cosmovision. (Rosa)

These communities believe that the harmonious and shared encounter with Nature is a vital experience of being-in-the-world. As Gordon (2014) notices, “being in harmony with the Cosmos is a large part of what the Andean Cosmovision is all about” (p. 31). Andean people feel and know they fit perfectly in the environment that surrounds them and this recognition allows them to enjoy and respect the good qualities of Nature and show gratitude for the good things they receive from the world.

Gordon’s notion of Andean Cosmovision is a relevant concept that inspired me in the interpretative process of viewing participants’ pictures in relation to their meanings of living in the peripheral hills (cerros) in Lima and their (dis) encounters with/in the city. The Andean Cosmovision helped me to see why the cerros in Lima provoke in the
women feelings of enjoyment, protection, and safety, but at the same time I argue the cerros represent emotional and physical detachment from the city.

Figure 23. Andean Cosmovision (Marcela)

Los “Cerros” in Lima: Embracing the Safety of the Mountains and Detaching from the Body of the City

In this project, I define the hills as the cerros limeños around the urban periphery in Lima. The cerros limeños were the first space where participants started their processes of territorialization within the city. In the cerros limeños, the women and their families began to organize their lives and daily routines when fleeing from the villages to the city in the 1980s.

Displacement is a process. For participants, it began with hiding in the sierra, sleeping in caves, in trees and rocky terrains, and leaving their parents at home. The next step was to leave their villages to go to small towns within the same region (Ayacucho, Huamanga, and Huanta). The final stage was the capital city: Lima. When being in the
city, participants came to informal settlements on the cerros in the city. In this sense, Giraldez, Calderon & Peña (2010) explain:

In Lima, informal settlements emerge from the construction of straw houses in the desert under poverty and precarious conditions. However, after seven decades of existence, they have transformed into relatively integrated neighborhoods in the city, with considerable level of development. (p. 77)

As one participant said: “When I came in the 1980s, there were not many houses in the cerros. If I looked at the cerros, I saw only desert and rocks” (Catalina). Today, the conglomeration of houses contrasts with the grey, dry, and rocky landscape of the cerros limeños.

Figure 24. Andean Cosmovision. (Donatella)

In the pictures, participants’ gazing over the cerros was a frequent perspective. Some participants used a high-angle viewpoint to register moments, spaces, and the faces
of their loved ones. As I mentioned before, the use of this “aerial” perspective inspired me to interpret their pictures based on the Andean Cosmovision. In my research, the notion of the Andean Cosmovision facilitates and problematizes participants’ meanings of being from the highlands in two senses. On the one hand, this aerial perspective demonstrates emotional attachment to the land: feelings of enjoyment, safety, and protection. On the other hand, the use of high-angle viewpoints suggests a sense of detachment and distance from urban spaces that indicates participants’ feelings of social exclusion. Thus, participants’ pictures suggest the ambivalence between views of attachment and detachment of being in the world.

Participants’ emotional attachment and feelings of safety in the heights might be illustrated with the sacred dimension of the mountains for Quechua communities. According to the Andean Cosmovision, the mountains are sacred spaces where the spirit of the mountains lives: Apus. This nature deity inhabits and rules the peaks of the highest highlands. Gordon (2014) says, “the Apus is the great conscious Being who is the majestic mountain peaks” (p. 18). Since the Apus is in the pointed top of the mountains, he sees everything that people do in the sierra. For that reason, Quechua communities consider seriously what the Apus expects from them: Respect, protection, and care for all forms of living beings.

In response to their good behavior, Quechua people know the Apus gives back the same kindness. This is the principle of reciprocity (Ayni), which guides Quechua communities’ relationship with Nature and the Cosmos. Ayni or reciprocity might be seen in the relationships among humans and with the animals upon which they depend.
Ayni is mutuality with all forms of living beings. If Quechua people give care and respect, they will receive the same back. This idea of reciprocity and being in harmony with the Cosmos, Nature, and Deities (Apus) are the core of the Andean Cosmovision.

In this research, participants expressed they feel care and protection in/from the heights. Margarita told me she has felt such safety both in the sierra and in the cerros today. To illustrate feelings of security, she used a high-angle view to take a picture (see Figure 25) of her house in the cerros. For Margarita, living in the cerros means enjoyment and safety. As she said:

This is my house. I like to be in the heights at my house. I feel happy and away from the problems.\footnote{Margarita is referring to the domestic violence that she mentioned in the focus groups.} There is a space in my house that it seems like a hole. I took this picture from a high wall. I used to sit on the top of this wall. Every time when I sit on the wall and look down, my house is like a scenario. So, I like to sit on the top of the wall arrumadita (curled position) and look at my home below.

Me: Margarita, can you tell me if you find any relationship between this picture and the ways you used to hide yourself in the sierra during the armed conflict?

Margarita: My village is on the top of the mountains and the plaza of the village is on the flat area. We used to observe from the mountains when terrorists gathered people in the plaza. Well, my house in Lima is very similar to my village in the sierra from which we observed what happened during those years. (Margarita, personal communication, December 18, 2014)
I think Margarita’s aerial perspective and narration of her picture brings out meaningful contributions about the meanings of being an immigrant Quechua woman in Lima and the notion of Andean Cosmovision. First, Margarita thoughtfully reflects on her position as a subject who looks down upon a space and subject. She explained to me the corporeal language and the physical position from which she observes her home as a “scenario.” Regarding her body language, Margarita told me that when she has problems, she sits on the wall arrumadita (a curled or fetal position). This position communicates that she is trying to protect her body and self from a threatening situation, particularly, domestic violence. The top of the wall is a space of safety and/or protection for Margarita, and the wall has the same meanings that the sierra did, the caves, the holes, and the trees where she hid during terrorism. Margarita’s commentary demonstrates she is mindful of her body’s gesture when looking from the heights. She highlights that in the heights she assumes a fetal position. When mentioning her body language, she re-enacted corporeally this action to illustrate what her body looks like in the heights. Her awareness
of the body language indicates she is aware of the space, as the space is aware of her body.

As viewers, we might think the use of open frame and high-angle gives Margarita autonomy and freedom to express herself visually. Through the camera, Margarita has discovered a space, which she wants to share with us! Even when her daughter is the picture, Margarita did not place her as the central focus. Instead of focusing on her daughter, Margarita used an open frame and avoided privileging a particular object or character in the space. Thus, the use of high-angle and open frame invites viewers to freely explore the possible meanings of the image. As viewers, we are encouraged to have a “participatory gaze” when looking at Margarita’s picture.

By assuming a “participatory gaze,” I focused my attention on her daughter in the image. In the picture, her daughter is explicitly posing in front of her mother’s “aerial” gaze, which suggests she wants to perform the role as the central character of the image. I think the little girl’s purpose of capturing the viewer’s attention is really successful. As observers, we cannot avoid the gaze over her gesture and body language. The little girl’s right hand is covering her mouth and her thumb is pressed against the cheek as she tries to suppress words that are being said. Her left hand is on her hip, which might mean she feels comfortable with her performance in the space. Her self-confidence is evident by looking at the camera and facing her mother’s gaze as photographer.

A Western view of this image might suggest that the use of a high-angle shot communicates the presence of a master gaze over a vulnerable body. From a Western perspective, the master’s high-angle gaze uses distance to create an image of a
defenseless and passive object. In contrast to this approach, the Andean Cosmovision informs me that seeing the world from the heights do not mean bodies on the ground are vulnerable and helpless beings, but suggests mutuality and a loving gaze regardless of the distance. Such mutuality and a “shared” gaze might be illustrated with the figure of the Apus (the majestic mountain peak), which, as the Andean Cosmovision might suggest, perceives others from the heights in a caring and affectionate relationship.

In this sense, by connecting Margarita’s photovoice with the Andean Cosmovision, her gaze over her daughter might be metaphorically compared with the Apus’ gaze: A caring and protecting look. Thus, despite the visual and physical distance, Margarita remains emotionally connected to her daughter in a nurturing relationship. Being in the heights, while taking care of her daughter, indicates Margarita’s agency and her responsibility to protect others.

Margarita’s sense of agency to protect and care for her daughter contrasts with her fear when being in the sierra observing her parents’ suffering during terrorism in the sierra. In those years, she did not have the capacity to protect her parents, felt but the urgency of surrendering her body to the sierra’s protection. As a little girl, Margarita had no emotional or physical strength to defend her parents, but only the belief that the sierra had the power of taking care of her.
Serafina also related the heights with feelings of care, protection, and enjoyment. For Serafina, being in the cerros in Lima is like being in her native community before the armed conflict. In the next picture, Serafina seemed proud of living in the cerros in Lima (see Figure 26 above). In this photograph, she connected her current life in the cerros in Lima with pleasant memories of her life in the sierra before terrorism.

I like this picture because it is similar to Huamanga [her village]. When I see this picture, I feel happy as if I was in my village in Huamanga again. This is my neighborhood in Lima. If you look closely, it is the entrance to my neighborhood. I used to say this is Huamanga. I am in my chakra! (Serafina, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Serafina’s neighborhood is the cerros in Lima. Her narration of this picture implies she feels confident being in the top of the cerros limeños because of her pleasant memories of
her village before terrorism. By relating the cerros with her native village, Serafina suggests she continues to emotionally attach to that space when being corporally present in the cerros. When she says: “I am in my chakra!” her commentary illustrates how the materiality of the space brings out her emotional attachment to the land and pleasant memories of the village.

In her narration, Serafina mentioned one of the basic concepts of the Andean Cosmovision: Chakra. According to Gordon (2014), “chakras are the cultivated fields in the high Andes. They are daughters of Pachamama” (p. 20). The pachamama is “the consciousness of the planet earth” (Gordon, p. 20). Being in harmony with the pachamama is the core of the Andean Cosmovision. Thus, in this picture, Serafina’s smile conveys an absolute contentment because she feels her connection with the pachamama. Her smile is what Gordon calls “a smile from the heart of the pachamama” (p. 45). She is conscious of the land as the land is of her. Serafina is emotionally attached to the land and is grateful for the material and spiritual connection between herself and the land.

As I previously mentioned, the Andean Cosmovision helped me to acknowledge participants’ feelings of enjoyment, protection, and safety when being in the heights (Apus). However, in addition to the ways this perspective facilitates reflections on participants’ positive meanings of being Andean women, this viewpoint allows me to explore participants’ feelings of safety about the heights in a different direction. I argue that participants’ use of high-angle views in the pictures might be not only related with
positive feelings of Andean people regarding the heights, but also with feelings of
detachment from urban spaces and experiences of social exclusion.

The ambivalence of the connotation of high-angles deepens understandings about
living in the peripheral hills in Lima; this ambivalence also relates to participants
experiencing social exclusion in both material and symbolic dimensions. My aim is not to
romanticize the life of these women in the cerros limeños, but to increase my
understanding of participants’ Cosmovision in the contexts (suburban and urban spaces)
in which they are currently living.

The cerros limeños are physically new margins of the city. For most of the urban
population in Lima, the cerros limeños are synonymous with poverty, delinquency, and
marginalization, where the incipient residential constructions of displaced persons are
located as the result of forced displacement and voluntary migration. The women’s
houses in the cerros limeños are shacks made of scraps of wood, iron, and cardboard.
Their houses are continuously in danger of collapsing and at risk of overflowing during
heavy rains.

Besides the public image of poverty associated with the cerros, the space is
associated also with contemporary facts of urban violence. For example, when crime is
reported in the settlement of Cantagallo in Lima, the police do not even show up
(Susarina, 2014). According to Susarina, “in Cantagallo the criminals from Rimac often
come at night to rape the women and steal the belongings of the inhabitants knowing that
they do not have to fear the police in this part of town. This poses a major risk on the
lives of the women” (p. 1). Consequently, the absence of members of police forces
increases illegal activities in the area because criminals know police do not keep watch
over the cerros. The rise of urban violence in the cerros has created a negative public
image of the displaced communities that live in this area. Dwellers of these
neighborhoods are frequently isolated and stigmatized by inhabitants in Lima.

Based on the public image of these communities and participants’ photographs, I
argue the use of high-angles in the pictures also might suggest participants’ emotional
distance from Lima to observe urban space and its surroundings. By using high-angles,
participants in the mountains detach the body from the city, and gain a strategic position
to see the world and locate (or maybe dislocate) themselves above the city. From the
peripheral hills in Lima, participants had their first visual contact with the city and
created tension between the urban (Lima) and suburban (the hills) where they live.

However, while emotionally and physically detached from urban spaces,
participants’ Andean Cosmovision (connection with the pachamama) encourages them to
remain connected to the cerros. Despite the socio-economic problems, delinquency, and
the difficult geographical conditions of the cerros, participants struggle for making the
cerros limeños livable spaces through farming and agricultural practices. Nevertheless,
the cerros limeños are not the ideal spaces for agricultural and farming practices. As
Lozano (2014) notes:

Sunless days have a negative effect on displaced communities accustomed to the
life in the sierra. The weather in the sierra is cool and bright; the landscape is full
of nature with wide spaces and leafy trees. But in Lima, sunny days are scarce
every year, the sky is gray and Lima has only two seasons: Winter and summer.
The weather in Lima is humid, cold, and rainy in winter. After raining, the hills are full of mud. (p. 67)

The geographical characteristics of the cerros limeños are not suitable conditions for farming practices. Since Lima is located in a desert, participants and their families struggle to get the material and financial resources to create a suitable environment for livestock in the cerros. Besides the lack of the appropriate conditions for agricultural practices, these women live constantly with the risks of torrential downpours and the ensuing floods.

However, beyond the conditions of the cerros limeños, participants hold firmly their Andean values of caring for nature and being attached to the land (Pachamama). They have overcome these difficulties by creating their chakras for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals. For these women, the cerros limeños have the connotation of home. Tuan (1977) emphasizes the intimate dimension of home:

It may be plain, lacking in architectural distinction and historical glamor, yet we resent an outsider’s criticism of it. Its ugliness does not matter; it did not matter when we were children, climbed its trees, and pedaled our bikes on its cracked pavements. (p. 145)

For participants, the cerros limeños are home today. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, participants prefer to bear the difficulties of the city rather than considering the possibilities of returning to the villages where they experienced terrorism. Thinking on returning to the sierra is problematic for these women.
To conclude, I believe the pictures that illustrate the Andean Cosmovision are
women’s counter-narratives of the cerros limeños. Through these images, participants
answer back to dominant discourses that symbolically and materially marginalize
displaced communities of the peripheral hills. These women do not portray themselves as
vulnerable and helpless beings, but subjects eager to embrace the affection they feel from
nature (despite the difficulties) and protect their little loved ones. The women’s pictures
and narrations of the cerros contrast with dominant narratives of the city of “the
marginal” and “the poor.” In these pictures, the women question the outsider’s criticism
about the “ugliness” of their houses while emphasizing why living in the heights is
important to them: Quechua communities value care, mutuality, and connection with
Nature and the Cosmos.

Home: Making Urban Spaces Livable Spaces

Moving from participants’ uses of high-angle and extreme long shots of the
peripheral hills, I focus my gaze on pictures that use close-up shots to record visually the
women’s meanings of home in the cerros limeños. Participants’ pictures of their homes
depict the domestic realm as a site where their most affectionate and encouraging
memories of the sierra are currently materialized. I illustrate participants’ homemaking
practices by: pointing to how they photograph their chakras at their home and
demonstrating how they use the furniture inside their houses as synonyms of intimacy
and affection in private spaces.

Tuan (1977) emphasizes, “Home or home base are intimate places to human
beings everywhere. Each culture has its own symbols of intimacy, widely recognized by
its people” (p. 147). In this sense, Quechua women’s constructions of chakras at their homes might be considered one of the symbols of intimacy of these communities.

Venturoli (2009) explains how individual and collective identities of Quechua communities are profoundly connected with the sacred and productive dimensions of the chakra. For that reason, Quechua people acknowledge gratefully that the pachamama provides the conditions to develop agriculture practices. By performing their roles as farmers in Lima, participants have gained not only the possibility to support their families in the city, but also the opportunity of being social agents committed to the preservation of collective values in their communities.

When I asked participants to photograph spaces in Lima that reminded them of their native community in the sierra, Margarita, Justina, and Juana chose to photograph livestock, which they have at their homes in the cerros. Margarita was the first participant to share with me photographs of some of her farm animals. She talked about the photograph (see Figure 27) with feelings of excitement and joy. Margarita said: “I feel happy taking this picture because I like animals. For that reason, I photographed my patitos (little ducks).”

*Figure 27. “My little ducks.” (Margarita)*
Although Margarita smiled timidly when talking about this picture, I noticed that she proudly claimed her ownership over her ducks. Her answer made me remember another story that she told in the focus group. She had talked to me about her work as an animal caretaker during the armed conflict. Thus, I asked her: “Margarita, do you find any relation between this picture and your work as animal caretaker in the sierra?” She answered:

We had animals and terrorists used to steal our best animals. I remember those moments when I took this picture. I said myself: “they [guerrilla and soldiers] stole my animals, but now they will not do it anymore.” Yes, yes, this is what I thought when I shot picture with the camera. (Margarita, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Margarita’s commentary demonstrates she was really excited by saying aloud to me her thoughts when taking this picture. In addition to this photograph, Margarita had another picture of her patitos (see Figure 28). As Margarita explained, in this photograph the little ducks are eating:

I like to feed my patitos. I remember a day during terrorism time when I was giving food to my animals and suddenly terrorists came. I was scared and I threw the food and ran away to the mountains. When I came back, I realized that they had stolen my animals. I remembered that moment when I took this picture. I started to cry just remembering the day in which I was feeding my ducks and they stole my patitos. I do not believe they will steal my animals again. That’s what I remember, señorita. (Margarita, personal communication, December 18, 2014)
As a Quechua child, Margarita grew up knowing the importance of respect and compassion for life in all its forms. Margarita’s deep love for nature, particularly her ducks, is expressed in feeding them. This attitude of respect for animals’ life became part of every child in the sierra. In her narration, Margarita communicated her compassion, kindness, love, and respect for her animals. According to Bolin (2006), “this attitude is further supported by the belief that animals belong to the deities” (p. 33). For that reason, Margarita is concerned about her animals; she wants them to be happy so she treats them well. From childhood on, she learned to care for animals and give them love and respect in everyday life. Margarita’s concern is related with one of the features of the Andean Cosmovision, reflecting on how animals “cannot survive without human protection, and they recognize equally that humans cannot survive without [them]” (Gordon, 2014, p. 42). Margarita’s commentary demonstrates how she sees the world as a place in which living beings interact in a mutual and beneficial relationship.
Like Margarita, Juana shared a photograph of her lorito (parrot), which narrates a memory directly connected with her life in the sierra. Juana started her narration as Margarita did: “I took this picture because I like animals.” Margarita and Juana shared a sense of joy and pride for livestock. Pointing out the picture (see Figure 29), Juana told me:

This is my tree. Each morning, pajaritos (little birds) come to visit my lorito and whistle songs. This reminds me of my hometown. In the sierra, each morning my lorito and pajaritos scream, sing, and shout. That’s why I took this picture. I am a lover of animalitos (animals). (Juana, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Juana’s picture and narration suggest that she relates the sounds of little birds with peaceful moments when being a child in the sierra. Her picture captures not only a visual image but also records “sounds” of her past (whistler birds), which she relates with a natural environment (her lorito and plants) that she has created in the cerros today. Juana’s photograph invites one not only to observe what is present (her lorito and plants), but also to imagine the sounds of the nature, which are not literally recorded in this picture.
Justina also chose to photograph livestock that she has at home (see Figure 30). She did so to demonstrate the affection and care she feels for her animals and the ways they are part of her everyday life. Justina said:

I raise chanchos (pigs) in three pens. I cook sancochado (to cook tubers in water) for them. When I am too concerned with my own preoccupations, I go to spend time with my animalitos (animals). So, I entertain myself feeding my animals and talking with them. I like my animalitos. (Justina, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Justina enhanced the narration about her role as animal caretaker taking a picture of the tanks where she stores water for her pigs (see Figure 31). Justina explained: “I use this water to cook and feed my animals. When the weather is too hot, I bathe my animalitos.”

Listening to Justina I noticed the ways her photovoice and the other participants’ stories are mainly about the ways they love, take care, and respect livestock in Lima as they used to do in the sierra.
In regard to this caring behavior, Venturoli (2009) notes Quechua communities identify and embrace elements in the landscape that are “sacred” and work as connectors between the past and a new form of collective identities (p. 48). Participants’ accounts denote the love, gratefulness, and respect they have toward pachamama. Since they give thanks to pachamama for the natural resources, they wisely manage the reserves of minerals and land. They also know these resources belong to all living beings in the world. For that reason, they share water and food with the animals. Reverence for natural elements is a core value of the Andean Cosmovision, which helps these women, be mutually connected to the land (chakras).
In the next picture, Justina wanted to emphasize her daily routine when taking care of her pigs and exclaimed (see Figure 32):

Look! In the other picture, they were sleeping; it was 7:00 AM. In this picture, I woke them up because I was leaving. I had to feed them much earlier than I usually do because I was coming back home very late. I do not like them to spend the day without eating. (Justina, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Figure 32. “Feeding my animalitos.” (Justina)

In these photographs (see Figures 30, 31 & 32), I noticed how Justina randomly decided that she wanted to visually narrate a short story about her routine as animal caretaker. In doing so, she determined a sequence to tell this story. For example, the pigs wake up at 7:17 am; then she prepares their food and the pigs eat their food at 7:25 am.

Justina’s account about her devotion for caring for her animalitos also included facts of the difficulties she faces when affording the pens. According to Justina, she has to pay thirty soles (10USD) per each pen and three soles (0.9 USD) for each tacho (water
tank). According to socioeconomic conditions in Peru and the situation of displaced communities, these amounts are too high for displaced people like Justina. Despite the high costs, Justina has decided to pay for the pens and the water tanks. Justina explained to me that this is one of the limited ways she can help her husband with household expenses: “My husband’s salary is not enough to pay bills.” Justina’s response reflects on the economic limitations that the displaced population must face in Lima when trying to overcome conditions of extreme poverty and life in unsafe settlements.

As I mentioned before, Quechua communities have a strong attachment to the land; they believe the land is able to provide what they need to survive. Thus, Andean communities find in farming and agriculture practices their “daily bread.” Quechua populations maintain an intimate cultural and economic connection with the land. For that reason, Justina’s comment suggests that performing her role, as animal caretaker is the most suitable way to support her family’s needs.

Moreover, I believe Justina sees her three pens not only as a contribution to her family economics but also as an “intimate/subjective” space where she can talk to herself and remember her pleasant memories of the sierra. Justina told me that in the sierra she and her family had chanchos (pigs) too, but they were smaller than these. During her life in the sierra, Justina learned to have compassion for animals and to care for animals. As I mentioned before, participants expressed how they learned to take care of and respect their animals during their childhood in the sierra. This kind of affection is a practice that they continue performing in Lima today. When referring to living creatures, women frequently use diminutives (e.g. paticos, chanchitos, perritos, and animalitos). This
suggests that using a sense of “smallness” is a manifestation of affection and participants’ language to express gentle feelings for living creatures.

In addition to using the “smallness” when referring to livestock, participants used the same sense of affection when talking about pictures of furniture inside their houses. Justina said: “This is my mesita (dining table). At this mesita, my husband, relatives, and I meet to talk, hang out, and have lunch together.” (See figure 33)

![Figure 33. “My mesita.” (Justina)](image)

Also, Rosa photographed a table, but she gave a different meaning to her picture (see Figure 32). Rosa told me she wanted to photograph the table to show some of the personal items she has at home, such as pots, matches, and water bottles. During our conversation about this picture, Rosa focused on the water bottles to emphasize how she “suffers” a lack of drinking water every day.

In another picture, Rosa photographed her bed to show that it represents a peaceful and comforting space for her at home (See figures 34 & 35).
These three pictures (figures, 33, 34 & 35) brought out the emotional dimension of inanimate objects in participants’ everyday life. By photographing these objects, participants were able to provide specific and concrete details about their routines in private spaces. Each of these pictures communicates participants’ subjectivity in private spaces. Rosa and Justina found meaning in concrete objects like their dining tables and bed, in the objects’ materiality that they can perceive, touch, and see.
Regarding the notion of “smallness,” Feller (1984) explains that the use of diminutives is one of the ways the Quechua language has influenced Spanish in Peru. Specifically, Feller explains how the sense of “smallness” is not only a grammatical issue, but also communicates a particular conception of the world from the Quechua perspective. In Feller’s words: “the rich supply and frequent use of diminutive form in Peruvian Spanish suggests that the expression of emotional traits in the fashion of affection and togetherness is much in family life” (p. 186). Based on Feller’s explanation of diminutive forms as expressions of care and intimacy, the use of “smallness” might be connected with the Andean Cosmovision. The Andean Cosmovision does not mean that observing the world from the heights is synonymous with “superiority,” nor does it mean that being on the ground is related with “insignificance” or lower position. In contrast to this perspective, the Andean Cosmovision concerns itself with the “little ones” through a caring and loving gaze regardless the distance. Therefore, I believe participants’ use of “smallness” might be considered as a manifestation of the Andean Cosmovision when referring to their affection and care toward every form of living beings, domestic objects, and spaces.

In short, participants’ homemaking practices demonstrate how positive and loving memories of the sierra materialize in the form of what they call chakras and corrales (pens). The creations of these small-cultivated fields and/or spaces where they raise livestock suggest how the participants’ roles as animal caretakers have affected the alteration of gender roles. By being farmers, the women have become breadwinners at their homes. While husbands and ex-husbands have faced difficulties finding jobs in the
city, women’s work at home has signified the main source of income of their families. Therefore, for displaced populations “housing is either a workshop or a store, a contribution to the urban fabric; it also changes its functions according to the needs of dwellers” (Sáez, Calderon, & Roch, 2010, p. 77). Chakras have made of participants’ houses not only a productive economic space, but also a space of memory where the women re-enact Quechua traditions in the land. The construction of chakras represents the ways participants might be considered as social agents that preserve Andean values of affection and attachment to the land.

**Complexity of Home: Always Homeless?**

The next set of participants’ photographs strongly contrasts with the previous pictures that depict home as a pleasant space where warm memories of the sierra are materialized. In the next pictures, participants represented home as an unsafe settlement for three central reasons: first, participants’ homes are constructed in flooding zones, where during rainy seasons, the water of the Huaycoloro river washes away dozens of straw shacks; second, their houses lack potable water which constantly brings health issues and complicates women’s work as animal caretakers; and finally, experiences of domestic violence give to private spaces the connotation of dangerous and unsafe spaces for the women and their children.

Participants of this project live in a shantytown in the cerros of Lima in shacks made of scraps of wood, iron, and cardboard. Most of them built their houses in the mountains on the periphery in Lima. They live with the constant fear that their houses might collapse because of ground failures and weather conditions, especially during rainy
seasons. When explaining the next photograph (see Figure 36), Juana said (personal communication, December 18, 2014):

This is Huaycoloro (name of a stream), which flows close to our neighborhood. I live on the orillita (edge-diminutive). I do not like to live close to Huaycoloro because I live scared of flooding and landslide. That’s why I took this photograph. I do not like this place.

Me: Juana, can you tell me a little more about what it means to live close to Huaycoloro?

Juana: During rainy seasons, the river bank floods. So, I am afraid Huaycoloro can make my house disappear.

Me: So, you are mainly scared of landslide. Is that correct?

Juana: Yes. For that, we are asking the government for embankment to protect our homes near Huaycoloro. If we lose our homes, we do not have another place to go.

Figure 36. El Guaico. (Juana)
Juana photographed Huaycoloro to demonstrate one of the main concerns that face the displaced population by living in the periphery in Lima: The threat of losing their homes because of the flooding.

Regarding this concern, the other women in the group also expressed their fear that their homes might collapse because of the construction materials (e.g., wood and cardboard). For example, Justina’s photograph (see Figure 37) and narration of it reveal the struggle she has faced to literally get a few blocks to construct a stable house for her and her family members:

This is my house. I live there, señorita. I have many memories of living at this house. I say myself “how long am I going to live here?” Others live in stronger houses than mine. When I usually sell one of my pigs, I buy my ladrillitos (blocks) one at a time because I hope to build a better house some day. When I look at this photograph, I think about the day when I will have the money to start to construct my house with these blocks. I want to have a solid house where my family members live together there. I want to construct a room for my granddaughters. (Justina, personal communication, December 18, 2014)
Justina’s reference to the desire of having firm houses is a frequent theme for other participants. Serafina and Rosa shared their pictures (see Figures 38 & 39) of their houses and concurred on their expectations of someday living without the anxiety of losing their houses. Serafina said:

I live there, señorita. This is my casita (house). I see my house in this picture and I think when will be my house be better? I want to cultivate different kinds of plants to make my house beautiful. (Serafina, personal communication, December 18, 2014)
For Serafina, a better house not only means a solid construction but also a better house means surrounded by plants, trees and flowers, in other words, by nature! She gives significance to what is aesthetically relevant for her: The ornamental features and planting trees, which might embellish her house.
The next two photographs (see Figures 40 & 41) illustrate how the lack of potable water is always an issue for the women. By taking pictures of water tanks, participants narrated how they have lived without running water in the cerros in Lima. Serafina said:

I do not have water at my home. I have to buy water. I use a hose to water my plants and bathe my dogs. I suffer a lot without water. There are people who have water at their homes and they are not concerned about this, but I do not have water and I live thinking about lack of water. (Rosa, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

Figure 40. No water. (Serafina)

Like Serafina, Juana also took a picture of water tanks and explained to me:

I took this picture because where we live we suffer a lot without water. We have water only once per week. Moreover, pipelines are sometimes damaged and we have to wait more days without water. There is a big water tank, but it only stores water for two weeks. (Serafina, personal communication, December 18, 2014)
Serafina and Juana’s pictures explicitly frame water as the central focus on their
discussions. In doing so, they reflected on the ways displaced communities in Peru have
to endure water scarcity.

*Figure 41. Water tank. (Juana)*

Finally, Margarita’s photograph and discussion of her home provided a different
approach to the ways that home might be portrayed as an unsafe space to live (see Figure
42). Margarita explained to me (personal communication, December 18, 2014):

This is my home. I have really bad memories of this place. Many things happened
with my children’s father. When I photographed this place, I felt really bad. I do
not want to be there.

Me: So, can we say that you don’t feel safe there?

Margarita: No senorita, I think he might come in at any moment to hurt me again.

I do not have another place to live.
Margarita creatively draws the audience’s attention over the door. By placing the door as the central element of the picture, she invites the viewer to look at the door and see through it. In doing so, an audience might interpret the door as the entrance and exit of her “bad memories” of domestic violence. As a member of the audience, by looking at the door, I can imagine the violence Margarita has endured at home. Taking the picture outside the house suggests Margarita’s intention of assuming emotionally distance, and physically. Her answer to my question (“can we say that you don’t feel safe there?”) demonstrates that home is not a safe space for Margarita.

To continue her narration about what home means to her, Margarita shared with me one picture that registers a “safe” space where she used to hide herself from her ex-husband’s aggression. In the next picture, I learned where Margarita spent one night when her ex-husband kicked her out of the house (see Figure 43). Margarita showed me:

In this building, it is located the water storage tank in our neighborhood. We use to come here with small containers and connect a hose that carry the water from
the tank. So, one day my ex-husband beat me, I hid there with my children. Also, I remember that in the sierra we had the same kind of water storage tank and we hid in that space when terrorist came to the village. (Margarita, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

After an episode of domestic violence in Lima, Margarita chose to protect her self and her children in a similar space where she used to hide during terrorism in the sierra. In Margarita’s photograph, unpleasant memories of the conflict and contemporary traumatic memories intersect powerfully in the same image.

Figure 43. Water storage tank: A safe space. (Margarita)

Margarita’s pictures and narrations demonstrate the ways embodied memories are not only about the past, but also the ways the body performs these experiences in the form of contemporary memories. In this sense, Trigg (2012) explains “we carry places with us” (p. 11). Spaces are habituated in our bodies. The body becomes accustomed to spaces and re-enacts certain behaviors, “so part of our experience of places is solidified by repetition and regularity” (Trigg, p. 11). Thus, Margarita’s narration implies how
when finding holes and/or caves in the city, she relates them with safe spaces because of her memories of protection in the sierra during the conflict. When “camouflaging” her body in those spaces after experiencing domestic violence, Margarita is re-enacting bodily patterns of the past.

Based on Margarita’s pictures and stories, I noticed how she depicts “homelessness” in two senses: In the context of the conflict and in experiences of domestic violence. Blunt and Dowling (2006) explain: “homelessness is not simply the absence of home, but overlapping feelings and constructions of being at home and not at home” (p. 126). When in the sierra during the conflict, Margarita experienced home as a stressful space, which she must leave in order to survive. Today, when experiencing domestic violence, Margarita re-experiences what it means to be at home and not at home. As Blunt and Dowling point out, “domestic violence is also a significant cause of homelessness for women” (p. 126). According to Margarita’s narrations, her experiences of home cannot be related with feelings of comfort and security inside her “houses,” but with situations of violence and abuse in these spaces.

My exploration of the pictures in terms of spaces started with the meanings of the Andean Cosmovision (Gordon, 2014) and how this perspective has determined participants’ modes of seeing the world in terms of mutuality and protection. The Andean Cosmovision encouraged me to problematize the use of high-angles in the pictures by highlighting the women’s emotional and physical detachment from urban spaces. Moreover, I presented participants’ intimate gaze of their homes as sites of pleasurable memories in the form of chakras, and also as spaces of family income, which has
transformed gender roles in the city. In addition to these positive meanings of home, I reported participants’ representations of home as a complex space. I end this chapter by showing images that denounce the socio-economic difficulties of displaced communities, and then presenting participants’ pictures that narrate their first encounter with the city in the Plaza de Armas in Lima.

Quechua Women’s (Dis) Encounters in/with Urban Spaces

Participants not only focused their gazes in their homes but also in their homes’ surroundings to register what matters to them. Besides photographing meaningful private spaces, participants also took pictures to describe their relationship with other spaces in their neighborhoods and the city. Berta’s photograph captured a central issue in the communities in which participants live. She photographed garbage to denounce how community members do not care about the neighborhood (see Figure 44). Berta said:

I took a picture of this place because people throw garbage there. I do not like this because this is our neighborhood, the place where we live, and we have to keep it clean. (Berta, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

Figure 44. Garbage in the neighborhood. (Berta)
Besides trash in the neighborhoods, participants mentioned crime and delinquency as another major theme in their neighborhoods’ pictures. Participants photographed several places to narrate how delinquency has been as a significant factor that has determined their relationship with urban spaces in Lima. Serafina’s story of the next picture narrates an event, which she experienced as an unwelcome encounter with a “pickpocket” (see Figure 45). Serafina said:

Even though in this street there are many pickpockets, I use to walk in this street anyway. But, one day I was walking and I noticed that a taxi was following me. So, I started to walk faster and I felt that someone ripped my carterita (purse). I wanted to scream, but I couldn’t. (Serafina, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

Figure 45. Pickpockets. (Serafina)

Marcela took the next photograph (see Figure 46). This picture was accompanied by a story from Marcela’s uncle. Marcela explained to me:
I photographed this street because I remember something really bad that happened to my uncle there. One day, he was walking down the street and a gang attacked my uncle. They threw a stone at my uncle’s head. (Marcela, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

Figure 46. “Gang.” (Marcela)

In addition to the last picture, Marcela had another photograph, which she related with an experience of delinquency in her neighborhood (see Figure 47). Marcela commented: “I don’t like this street. This is a gang street. It has this graffiti. At night, gangs meet there to smoke drugs and steal. During Saturday afternoon, they do gang fights.”
In response to these pictures’ narrations of crime, Juana expressed in the next photograph how the dogs have become guardians that warn them about the presence of delinquents in the neighborhood (see Figure 48). By referring to dogs, which used to wander around the street, Juana said: “They are our guardians. There are a lot of gangs and thieves in the street. So, dogs alert us to danger.”

Juana’s narration and picture made me remember the foucs groups when the women mentioned how the dogs used to bark, warning them of the arrival of terrorists. For that reason, I asked Juana: “Is there any relationship between the picture and the story you just told me and the barking dogs in the armed conflict?” Juana said: “Yes, there is! The dogs alerted us during those years.” I asked: “And now, when you hear the dogs barking, what do you think?” Juana answered: “The same thing. Dogs alert me.”
In addition to spaces that represent fear or evoke anxious feelings for participants, they also photographed other spaces that they relate with pleasant emotions, such as protection, safety, and enjoyment. Marcela illustrated some of those emotions by photographing a significant space in the neighborhood where she came after terrorism. She explained to me her picture in this way (see Figure 49):

When I came from the sierra to Lima, I came to this street. My uncle’s house is close to this street. I took this picture because this street reminds me of my teenage years. I came to Lima when I was 9-years-old. I used to play, run, and hang out with my friends in this street. When I came, this street was very different; I mean the street is paved now. So, it looks better. I remember when I came to Lima to live with my uncle and cousins. Even though they are my relatives, living with them was not the same as living with my parents. I used to cry a lot when remembering my parents and siblings. I said to myself “because of
terrorism I came here.” That was my frequent thought when I sat in that street.

(Marcela, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

Marcela pointed out the photograph again and said:

Look at this part where there is sand. Well, in that space, there was a murito (small wall); I used to sit over there and look at down the hill. I do not know, maybe I was hoping anyone would come and say “hello.” Maybe I was waiting for someone. I used to have that feeling. (Marcela, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

My interpretation is that, for Marcela, this street is significant in two ways. On the one hand, Marcela’s story of this picture suggests she associates this street with pleasant memories of being a child enjoying the freedom to play, walk, run, and explore the neighborhood. On the other hand, Marcela said how this street is a place where she used to think and “cry a lot when remembering [her] parents and siblings.” Therefore, for Marcela, this street became a site of continuous meditation about the uncertain fate of her parents and siblings in the sierra during the armed conflict.

Marcela gave me more details about this street. She explained to me that the street is on the top of a hill. Thus, when she sat down on the murito (short wall), she had a complete view of the whole neighborhood. Listening to her description of the street and her daily practice of sitting, observing, and waiting on the hill, I thought this narration is very similar to her story in the focus group about the ways she hid in the mountains and witnessed violence against her parents during terrorism. In the focus group, Marcela told me how she and her siblings silently watched and waited for their parents in the
mountains. Therefore, her narration of the early years in the cerros of Lima sitting down and waiting for someone, who could eventually greet her, made me think that maybe Marcela was keeping the faith for her parents or siblings could come one day to Lima while she was sitting in the murito (short wall).

![Figure 49. El Murito. (Marcela)](image)

In the next picture, Marcela photographed another street in her neighborhood to represent her feelings of safety in this space (see Figure 50). Marcela said: “This is the street where I live. In this street, I feel safe because I know my neighbors and they know me. So, it makes me feel safe.”

![Figure 50. A familiar street. (Marcela)](image)
Marcela had two more photographs in which she related her memories of the landscape of her village in the sierra with the visual image she has of the cerros today. Marcela explained to me (see Figure 51): “This picture makes me remember the place where I was born. In my village, there were hills and huaycos (rivers) too. The difference is that in my village the river ran through both sides.”

*Figure 51. Hills and rivers like my village. (Marcela)*

Then, Marcela shared with me another photograph with a different perspective of the neighborhood (see Figure 50). Marcela started her narration saying:

In my village, there was a plaza. I took this picture because I thought this part of my neighborhood is very similar to the plaza in my village. What is missing in this image is the fair we had in the village. But the buildings are like the houses in my village. It brings back memories of my village. (Marcela, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

Marcela’s pictures illustrate how in the past and present artistically intersect in one image. Her narration of the photograph provides the visual references to evoke her
memories of the past in the present. Although in Marcela’s picture, as viewers we cannot see the river, the hills, the fair, and the plaza that she talked about, we are able to use our imagination to re-create the presence of these elements through her picture and story.

Figure 52. La Plaza. (Marcela)

Gregoria shared with me her meanings about the next picture (see Figure 53) in this way: “This space is close to where I live. These plants remind me of my village and what I lived in the sierra. That’s why I took this picture.”

Figure 53. My neighborhood. (Gregoria)
In the next two pictures, Gregoria decided to photograph two other specific spaces in her neighborhood: A park and street. Referring to the first picture (see Figure 54), she told me: “I live close to that park. People call this park pobre (the poor), but anyway I like this place. So, I decided to take the picture.” Gregoria also took another picture close to her house (see Figure 55). She said: “This place is also close to where I live. A long time ago, this street was not covered with pavement, but now, this place looks better.”

*Figure 54. Pobre. (Gregoria)*

When narrating this picture, Gregoria expressed her pride and emotional attachment toward her neighborhood. However, it surprised me that in each narration of the pictures Gregoria said: “this space is close to my house,” but she did not photograph her house. In other words, Gregoria’s house is absent in her pictures and narrations, but she uses other spaces, which she appreciates, to mention her house.
Like in Marcela and Gregoria’s stories, I could see in Serafina’s photographs how past and present intersect in one image. In this sense, Serafina’s story of the photographs also recreates visually her memories of the past. Talking about the next picture (see Figure 56), Serafina said:

I use to walk there. This is close to my home. This wall and the stairs are similar to my village. My mother had plants like these in her chakra (small farm). For reason that, I wanted to take this picture. I like to be there. Mis vecinas (my female neighbors) houses are close to this area. This is my space because I feel good every time when I walk here. So, I say “This is my chakra, I am in my village.” When I look at the rocks, I remember the space where I worked when I was a little girl. Sometimes my children tell me: “mom, are you going to cry?” and I tell them “I’m in my chakra. Thank God and the heaven who brought me here!” (Serafina, personal communication, December 19, 2014)
Figure 56. “I am in my chakra.” (Serafina)

In the next picture, Serafina explained to me that the significance of this space is not only the memories of her village but also the friendship of her paisanas (friends) (see Figure 57). She said:

I use to hang out with my paisanas (friends) here. We talk and take care of each other, asking if we are doing well or not. I am always with my paisanas and family. One of my paisanas knows how to sew chompas (sweaters), so, we gather to sew and talk. (Serafina, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

Figure 57. “My neighbor and paisanas.” (Serafina)
Meanwhile, Margarita decided to represent some of her pleasant memories of the sierra, photographing a rosebush in the park (see Figure 58). She told me: “These are some flowers in a park close to my home. I liked this plant because in my village I had my own garden. I love gardens. This is a rosebush.”

Figure 58. The rosebush. (Margarita)

Margarita had another picture of a different park where she takes time out to reflect. She said (see Figure 59):

This is another park. When I am concerned or I have problems, I used to come here. When my ex-husband kicked me out of my house, I came here. There is a casita (small shelter) in this park, but you cannot see it in the picture. Well, I hid in this casita when my husband beat me. When my vecinas (female neighbors) passed by the park, they told me: “Margarita! You are here again. Did el hombre miserable (the miserable man) kick you out? Where did you sleep?” My vecinas knew my story and when they
saw me in the park, they took for granted my ex-husband had kicked me out of the house. (Margarita, personal communication, December 18, 2014)

*Figure 59. The park. (Margarita)*

Discussing the relevance of meaningful spaces in their particular neighborhoods, Catalina chose to photograph the church in her neighborhood as a safe space to seek faith and create a sense of community (see Figure 60). Catalina said (personal communication, December 19, 2014):

This is the parish of Santa Rosa: Our parish. I use to meet here with my family and other community members. We built it. When we came to this part of Lima, there was no parish. So, on Sundays, we used to congregate in a small space of worship. I feel this is a space that belongs to everyone. We started to put together the rocks 26-years-ago.
Me: Catalina, the people who constructed the parish with you, are they also displaced people?

Catalina: Yes, They are. We worked together. That place was awful. It was only dust and sand, but we constructed this place together. I remember that while the men were putting the rocks together, women were preparing sandwiches and drinks.

Figure 60. The parish of Santa Rosa. (Catalina)

Catalina’s story of the construction of the parish illustrates the ways she and her community members and regained a sense of belonging by building this space in Lima. The construction of the parish positively influenced both community social identity and notion of self-efficacy. Specifically, Catalina highlights how displaced individuals were able to create the church as a space on their own. By constructing the church, Catalina and the other members of these communities were actively choosing to transform the space in which they were forced to live in Lima into a livable space.
Quechua women have actively participated in the reconstruction of the social life of displaced populations in Lima in multiple ways. By being part of the construction of churches and being active members of local organizations, these women have entered into the public realm and navigated possibilities for them and their children. In this respect, Venturioli (2009) noted how, as a result of violent times and socio-economic crisis, Quechua women became part of churches, which worked to develop social programs that favor the displaced population in Peru.

Quechua women like Catalina have become the first members of social and political associations in Lima rather than men. By becoming attached to organizations, such as churches, participants have gained new status not only in the family, but also in the community. In relation to such individuals’ affiliation with social organizations, Mead (1967) explains how being part of communities promotes fundamental attitudes in individuals’ sense of belonging. Specifically, religious institutions encourage “fundamental attitudes of human beings toward each other as kindliness, helpfulness, and assistance” (Mead, p. 258). For that reason, Quechua women, like Catalina, who are part of religious or social groups, highlight their commitment of working actively for generating strategies of mutual support among members of displaced communities.

Besides the parish, Catalina photographed a park in her neighborhood in which there is a llama that reminded her of days when she used to work carrying her daughter on her back (see Figure 61). Catalina expressed:

This is the park of Monte Verde in my neighborhood. It is a huge park with a playground for children. This is a llama, which accustomed to be in this park. I
took this picture because years ago, this was not a park but a huge field. I remember that every morning I used to run through this park to get the bus at 3:00 am. During those years, I worked as an informal vendor in the streets. I ran through the park carrying my daughter on my back. I have always worked because I did not want to be economically dependent on others. I always gave my mother what she needed; I always asked her, “mom, what do you want? A blouse, a skirt? Let’s go get something for you!” (Catalina, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

Figure 61. Llama in the park. (Catalina)

When telling me her story of the picture, I thought that Catalina’s intention of this picture was registering her memories of this space more than the ways the space looks today. I realized she wanted to register her past routines when she was a young mother working in Lima’s streets as an informal vendor. Again, participants used the photographs to represent past events and provide visual references to evoke their
memories. Catalina’s next picture is an example of the ways photovoice can also stimulate the representations of memories and provide new insight to those reminiscences (see Figure 62). When photographing the cerros in Lima, Catalina said:

This is the cerro (hill). I live in the hill in San Juan de Bringancho. My area is considered zona roja (“red zone”)\(^\text{16}\) because we are associated with terrorist groups. Years ago, the cerro was not very crowded and you could see that there were not many houses. But, today, many people have come to the cerros to get a house. Do you understand me? So, there are many poor people living in these houses in the cerros. All these people came from Ayacucho, Quispillacta, and Cangallo because they lost everything. In our villages there was too much violence. I remember that every morning Sendero (Shining Path) hoisted its red flag in the top of the cerros. Sometimes we were going to sleep and the next morning Sendero’s flag was over there. (Catalina, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

In her narration, Catalina is referring, first, to the time in which peasants came from the sierra to the cerros in Lima and how she witnessed the visual transformation of the landscape as result of the displacement. She claimed that she was present at the moment in which these communities started the process of territorialization in Lima. Second, Catalina is pointing out a specific practice of Shining Path in urban scenarios (hoist the flag), which symbolically represents the moment when violence came to Lima.

\(^{16}\) Zona Roja (Red Zone) is an area that experiences high levels of violence in an urban area. Governmental institutions usually are the ones responsible for assigning this term to an area.
When finishing her explanation about the meanings and memories of the cerros, Catalina wanted to mention another space in the flat area of the cerros. Catalina photographed a chicken restaurant where she hangs out with her children (see Figure 63) She said: “Down the cerros, there is a polleria (chicken restaurant). I took a picture because my children like to go there.”
Catalina’s last photograph is her favorite one (see Figure 64). The photograph registers a significant landmark for Catalina. The picture serves as reference point to identify the entrance to the area where she bought a land a couple years ago in Lima. In her narration, Catalina provided details about how she got this meaningful picture (personal communication, December 19, 2014):

This is the main entrance to Camarca. This is a bus stop and an area that is a wholesale market in Lima. We called it mina de oro (goldmine) and I like to be there with my children. Do you see? My son and my grandson are too in this picture (laughs).

Me: Catalina, what does it mean this picture to you?
Catalina: In this picture is my son, who is 24-years-old. He did not want me to get divorced from my husband. So, we frequently have many disagreements.

Sometimes, I tell my son: “One day, I will have my own land again because I had land, but I lost it” and my son says: “You lost everything because you are a sonsa (idiot).” What happened is that when I came to Lima, I lived with my sister. Because she is very jealous with her husband, I decided to leave her house. Then, a cousin helped me to look for a land, which had 240 meters of area. I started to work to pay for this terrain and I told my mother: “Mom, when I get married, I will give this land to you.” One day, my sister told my mother that she wanted this terrain and my mother told her, “no, this is your sister’s terrain.” And I thought even though my sister and I came from the same mother, we have different hearts.

I can never know my sister’s intentions. So, my sister started to look for ways to get the house. When I got married, I left my house to my mother because I promised her I would. Years later, my mother died and my sister took advantage of this situation. She went to a government office in Lima and presented documents that said my mother left the custody of our two younger siblings to my sister. Based on this documentation, a government officer determined my sister had the right over the house. Because I was having many troubles with my ex-husband, I asked my sister: “Rosa, can I live in that house again?” and she told me: “No, you have a marido (husband). You must stay with him.” My sister just ignored my request, and told the government officer: “because I am the legal custodian of my siblings, I have to be in charge of this terrain. Please, you don’t
have to pay attention to this woman (referring to Catalina). I want this terrain for
my siblings.” Three years later, she went to the land title office in Lima to register
the house in her name, but not my siblings’ names. And what about me? I have
nothing. For that, my son used to tell me “you lost everything, because you are a
sonsa (idiot).” One day, I learned that there were some terrains for sale in this area
(Catalina pointed on the photograph) and the requirement was to pay 200 soles
(US$65). And my other son gave me the money and I registered my name to have
one of these terrains. It is a small area almost 120 meters of area, but no matter. I
finally have a cabaña (cabin) there. I like it. Close to my cabaña is the
cemetery. I like to go there too because it is a peaceful space.

Me: So, can I say that the importance of this picture with the big sign:
“Cajamarca” is because behind this sign you finally have your own terrain?

Catalina: Yes, for that reason I photographed this space.

Generally speaking, Catalina’s narration of her photograph illustrates how Catalina
continues the struggle for having a terrain on her own. During terrorism, both armed
groups (soldiers and guerrillas) forced her family to abandon their lands. Catalina came to
Lima to live with her sister, but living with her sister meant a lot of tension or both of
them. When Catalina got a terrain, she decided to give it to her mother while she was
alive. This might be considered as a symbolic act of “giving back” to her mother
something that she lost during the armed conflict. It is a way of personal “reparation” to
her mother. However, giving the terrain to her mother provoked another conflict with her
sister because it generated a familiar struggle, which meant that Catalina lost her terrain.
Catalina’s son considered the fact of losing this terrain as a result of Catalina’s lack of common sense to wisely realize her sister’s negative intentions.

Despite these tensions, Catalina proudly reported she finally has her own terrain. Based on Catalina’s story, this picture captures one of Catalina’s personal accomplishments in Lima. Besides having her own business (see Figure 3 at the beginning of the chapter), Catalina wants to visually and emotionally frame Cajamarca’s entrance as a space, which materializes one of her most personal achievements: Having her own terrain. Also, this space talks about Catalina’s everyday life in Lima, the ways she moves in urban spaces, and the meaningful dimension of these practices in Lima.

Catalina’s discussion with her sister illustrates Venturoli’s explanation (2009) about how one of the social consequences of forced displacement is disarticulation of the family. Since family members were separated in different moments and circumstances, they lost their sense of mutuality and support when searching lands to re-construct their houses and chakras.

Figure 64. “I have my cabañita.” (Catalina)
In the next group of photographs, participants represented what they consider are their special spaces in Lima. These spaces refer to participants’ early years in Lima and past moments that they shared with their loved ones. I have organized these pictures in two central groups: Plaza de Armas and parks.

Figure 65. Childhood and the plaza. (Berta)

When talking about the Plaza de Armas in Lima, Berta explained to me that the plaza is a significant space for her because the kind of activities that she used to do with her children. Berta said: “I like to be in the Plaza de Armas. When my daughters were very young, we always used to come here to take pictures and have lunch” (see Figure 66 above) Gregoria also photographed the Plaza de Armas because this space is connected with her first days in Lima when she fled from the armed conflict in the sierra (see Figure 65). Specifically, she remembered how she learned to work as an informal vendor in the city in the plaza. As Gregoria explained to me:
I came to this space when I left the sierra. During those years, I was in the plaza many days. The plaza was full of informal vendors and I learned from them how to work. For that reason, I took this picture. I learned to work in the Plaza de Armas. (Gregoria, personal communication, December 19, 2014)

Figure 66: Working in the plaza. (Gregoria)

Like Gregoria, Marcela also learned to work in the Plaza de Armas. Talking about the next picture, Marcela said (see Figure 67): “The first day I came to Lima, my uncle brought me to the Plaza de Armas to work. I always remember that when I come with my children here. Also, the red flowers remind me about the sierra.”
Donatella and Rosa (see Figures 68 & 69), with the other participants, photograph the Plaza de Armas as a special space in which they remember the earlier years in Lima. In the plaza, they started new routines and experiences in urban spaces.

In addition to the photographs of the Plaza de Armas in Lima, Rosa and Catalina took pictures of two parks in Lima. They wanted to frame spaces in which they shared enjoyable moments with some of their loved ones.
Rosa wanted to take a picture in a park where she and her mother used to hang out (see Figure 70). Rosa remembered how her mother enjoyed this park. Rosa told me she wanted to take more pictures of this park, but she could not do it because impede walking through the park today.

Catalina also has a space that she enjoys with her grandchildren (see Figure 71). She said (personal communication, December 19, 2014):
This is El Paso de la Muralla. When I have time, I come here to hang out with my three grandchildren. Years ago, I came to see an Andean singer: Victoria de Ayacucho, Sawya. During those years she was not too well-known, but since she became very famous on the radio, she does not come here to sing. Now we have to pay to listen her. She sings music about sentiments (feelings).

Me: I see you like Andean singers a lot.

Catalina: Yes, I like them. I like many Andean singers, for example, Carlos Prado, Manuel Chaprado and Antologia. My favorite song of Antologia is “Mi Chiquitin” (Tiny). The song says something like, “Mi chiquitin, I hope when you grow up do not forget neither your name nor me” I have five beautiful children, who I profoundly love. I would give my life for them. In fact, I have given my life for them and I do not want them to forget that. No matter what, I will always be with them.

Figure 71. El Paso de la Muralla. (Catalina)
For Catalina, this park is not part of her daily activities, but is a special space where she performs more than one identity. In this park, she is not only a grandmother hanging out with her grandchildren but also a woman who enjoys connecting her emotions with leisure activities held in the park. Moreover, in her narration of this picture, Catalina highlights her identity as an Andean and Quechua woman. She clearly empathizes with the lyrics of these songs that Andean singers have interpreted in this place.

In this chapter, I have presented women’s pictures and their stories about three meaningful spaces for them: the periphery cerros in Lima, their houses constructed in the cerros, and La Plaza de Armas in Lima. Participants’ pictures about these three spaces eloquently represent participants’ memories and the ways the memories they have are materialized in Lima. Also, these photographs illustrate the meanings of being a Quechua woman coming from the Andes Mountains.

Broadly speaking, participants’ pictures represent the ways they have transformed a space in Lima where they did not choose to live to a livable space for them. Since in Lima the women frequently are facing different forms of social exclusion, the only spaces they consider “livable” are those which they have constructed by their own and emotionally appropriated them; for example, the chakras in the peripheral hills.

I believe participants do not attempt to manage “appearances” in these pictures or idealistic representations about their lives and communities. In other words, they did not try to create “perfect” pictures to proclaim romantic or “exotic” images of the indigenous bodies living in enchanted spaces with happy and harmonious families. Their pictures
attain certain equilibrium between denouncing social exclusion and claiming their willingness and agency to overcome such difficulties.

Mantilla (2009) notices the Peruvian conflict “had transformed gender roles as women assumed responsibility for family survival and for dealing with the displacement of entire populations” (p. 137). By assuming the role of breadwinner and performing as leaders in religious and social organizations, women have gained certain status in their families and communities.

In conclusion, the photovoice project illustrates how the use of a visual method is an appropriate way to communicate participants’ inter-relatedness among the body, spaces, and emotions. As Davidson and Smith (2007) claim, emotions reside in both bodies and places. Participants’ pictures meaningful highlight the ways bodily boundaries are interrupted when re-encountering stressful memories in spaces. Specifically, through photovoice, I could grasp those emotional meanings that participants could not easily communicate with words: Their feelings for spaces. Tuan (1977) observes, “intimate experiences are difficult but not impossible to express” (p. 147). The use of photographs made possible the communication and expression of such feelings and embodied memories of the conflict and their intersections with everyday practices in Lima today.

In Chapter 5, I reported the results of the photovoice project that demonstrate the third subsidiary research question: How do Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima? I present the photovoice project as a continuation of the conversation of the focus groups, enhancing my descriptions and interpretations of women’s embodied memories. While
Chapter 4 describes Quechua women’s embodied memories in relation to their lives in the sierra and contemporary spaces, the photovoice enhances those memories by highlighting participants’ subjectivities. I organized Chapter 5 using two themes that emerged from the photovoice project: The Quechua female body remembers, and carving out a space for their own. Both themes provide evidence to increase the responses to subsidiary questions two and three. Participants’ photographs movingly illustrate the central connection between the film and women’s embodied memory (“the fear of disappearance”) by representing the absences/presences of the female Quechua body in the conflict and in contemporary spaces in Lima. Moreover, their pictures demonstrate how Quechua women draw upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives by performing agentic practices (e.g., as informal vendor and farmers) to overcome socio-economic difficulties in their communities.
CHAPTER 6: THE MILK OF SORROW AND THE COMMUNICATION OF EMBODIED MEMORIES

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the ways Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and Shining Path. In order to answer the primary research question, I proposed three subsidiary questions. In Chapter 3, I did a thematic analysis to respond the first subsidiary question: How does The Milk of Sorrow illustrate Quechua women’s embodied memories of political violence from the 1980s-1992 conflict in Peru? In doing so, I identified three central themes: The use of Quechua songs in the story, the re-creation of problematic representation of women’s traumatic memories, and the relationship between women’s embodied memory, and women’s spaces. The thematic analysis of the film provided me with ideas to answer the second and third subsidiary questions.

In doing so, in Chapter 4 I presented the results of the focus groups, which respond to the second subsidiary: How do contemporary Quechua women discuss their embodied memories of political violence from the conflict? The results of the focus groups suggest that participants discuss their embodied memories of the conflict by referring to the threat of disappearance/abduction, the ways they re-define safe spaces, and indicating the meanings of the bodies and/in contemporary spaces. In general, when participants discussed their embodied memories of political violence they evoked the ways they “camouflaged” their bodies in the sierra and the ways they re-enact these memories in contemporary spaces when facing stressful situations, such as domestic
violence. Moreover, the women stressed how their identities as Quechua individuals have
signified that Peruvian population in urban areas associates them with representations of
terrorism, violence, and poverty. However, in contrast to narrations of social exclusion,
participants also explained to me how the use of Quechua language sometimes generates
sense of belonging and pride of their communities.

Finally, to answer the third subsidiary question about how Quechua women draw
upon these embodied memories as they negotiate their contemporary lives in the hills
outside of Lima, the responses in Chapter 5 are related with how they perform “agentic”
practices (e.g., as informal vendors and farmers) to overcome the socio-economic
difficulties as heads of household of their families. In doing so, the women enter into the
public realm not only as breadwinners for their families, but also as civic leaders that
reclaim rights for their communities in local organizations (e.g., churches and political
organizations). When reflecting on their contemporary lives in the peripheral hills in
Lima, the women compared the landscape of the movie (the hills outside of Lima) with
the rocky terrain in the sierra where they hid themselves to avoid guerrillas and soldiers
seeking to make them desaparecer. The women re-think their relationships with the land
with their emotions toward the heights; participants re-connected their current roles as
animal caretakers with pleasurable memories of their lives in the sierra before the armed
conflict.

The responses of these three subsidiary questions facilitated the transition from
the empirical dimension to a conceptual development that I present in this chapter to
directly address the primary question: How Quechua women communicate embodied
memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and Shining Path? In order to respond this question in Chapter 6, I argue how *The Milk of Sorrow* makes possible the exploration of memories of political violence in Peru within the Quechua female body.

To develop this argument, I rely on Marks’s (2000) use of a theory of embodied visuality to examine the film-viewing process as “an exchange of two bodies” (the viewer and the film). Marks’s examination thoughtfully searches for places where the body and culture intersect. In so doing, she provides a valuable mean of investigating the ways embodied memories are reenacted by the body in everyday life practices and cinema’s potential in the mediation of these memories. In other words, Marks’s idea points to a methodological challenge in researching embodied memories about the ways researchers learn how others’ memories are embodied and used in their encounters in contemporary spaces.

I start the chapter by analyzing participants’ sense experiences with the film based on Marks’s (2000) work of the film-viewing process (seeing, recalling, and comparing). Second, drawing on Marks’ understandings of the film-viewing process as “an exchange of two bodies” (the viewer and the film), I discuss how the film is an extension of the female body to the extent that encourages participants to see the relationship between the self and the world. The ways the *Milk of Sorrow* inspired participants to connect the film’s story with their own experiences of terrorism are what suggests individual and memories of the conflict are re-enacted by/through the body. In this sense, memory is an embodied process, not merely intellectual, but also a bodily sensation.
In other words, the intersections between the film and women’s embodied memories imply attending to the ways sense experience in cinema helps us to find culture within the body (Marks, 2000). Since my goal is the exploration of women’s embodied memories, my analysis draws on a phenomenological perspective to examine participants’ responses to the film. In doing so, I consider how participants’ embodied memories can make a valuable contribution to a shared memory of political violence in Peru. I do not deny the potential of semiotics and cultural studies to analyze cinema, but I concur with Marks (2000) that these “approaches cannot take into account the embodied nature of the cinematic viewing experience” (p. 149). I am interested in exploring the body as a source of meanings rather than seeing the body as a passive object inscribed with meanings.

**Embodied Spectatorship: Seeing, Recalling, and Comparing**

Drawing on a phenomenological perspective, Laura Marks’s (2000) work emphasizes the embodied nature of the film-viewing process. In her work, Marks reflects on how film-viewing process involves not only vision and intellect, but also a multisensory experience. In this sense, “film is grasped not solely by an intellectual act but by the complex perception of the body as a whole” (Marks, p. 145). From this perspective, the body is not a passive object that consumes a film’s meanings, but an active source that produces meaning from the cinematic experience.

By noticing the active qualities of the body in the film-viewing process, Marks (2000) points out how embodied spectatorship implies the viewer’s “attentive recognition” (p. 147) of the image on screen. In this sense, Marks suggests that the notion
of “attentive recognition” is a participatory idea of spectatorship in which a viewer creates an object for perception. In order to explain how the body actively participates in the film-viewing process, Marks identifies three central actions in the cinematic experience: Seeing, recalling, and comparing. In Marks’s words: “we move between seeing the object, recalling virtual images that it brings to mind, and comparing the virtual object thus created with the one before us” (p. 147). Therefore, the film-viewing process evokes a viewer’s memory and creates an object as a result of the cinematic experience. In other words, film-viewing process is a multisensory experience that engages all sense perceptions related with past and present.

Because the film-viewing process is a multisensory experience that activates audience members’ sense of memories, cinema has the potential to evoke a sense of memories of one’s/others’ bodies. As a result of the cinematic experience, Marks (2000) identifies the emergence of an audiovisual image, which is not present on the screen, as an “unknown body” (Deleuze, 1989). The idea of the “unknown body” suggests the ways the film’s story inspires the viewer to create an image of their own body and others’ bodies that are not explicitly visible on the screen; the images emerge from the viewer’s act of seeing the story, recalling his/her past experiences, and comparing both the film with his/her memories. My interpretation is that the “unknown body” might be metaphorically related with one’s/others’ bodies that is under the skin and emerges when seeing a virtual object on the screen, recalling past performances, comparing virtual objects with memories, and creating “a new/another body” beyond the film’s story, one that might be located in cultural practices.
This process of re-creating the past, present, and future are intimately related with the potential of imagination in memory. After all, dealing with memory implies a consideration of the role of imagination. Kirby (1991) notices, “imagination is difficult to separate from memory because it shares a similar phenomenal structure” (p. 25). Following this, Kirby says “an imaginative projection” helps us to fill out “the gaps left vacant by recollection” (p. 25). Through imagination we “re-construct” the past, multiply its possibilities, and “make present the world in its absence” (Freeman, 2010, p. 54). Imagination helps us to make present what is missing (“an unknown body”).

Therefore, by considering the interplay between memory and imagination, I claim that the film became central to the mediation of individual and shared memory of the conflict because participants were able to: Re-construct their individual and social past, make present “unknown bodies” (their bodies and others’ bodies) that are missing in the movie and in a national history, and reflect on the ways those memories are re-enacted through the body in the peripheral hills in Lima.

By emphasizing the viewer’s capacity to create (and imagine) what is not present in the film (“the unknown body”), Marks (2000) stresses the active role of the viewer in the cinematic experience. In other words, the “unknown body” is latent in a viewer’s mind and emerges when confronting (and seeing) with the “story world” (Branigan, 1992). Thus, “the unknown body” is a compelling interplay among images, memories, bodies, and their absences. “The unknown body” is not evident in the “story world,” but is a result of a viewer’s own creations to make visible what is invisible on the screen. Certainly, the questions I asked during the focus group interviews, as well as the
directions I provided for the photovoice project, also encouraged the women to connect their experiences to the film. As I discovered during both parts of this study, however, the women easily drew upon their own embodied memories as we discussed how their experiences (both historical and contemporary) reflected those depicted in the film.

In this project, *The Milk of Sorrow* encouraged women to communicate their own interpretations/creations of an “unknown body” that is not evident in the film’s story. In doing so, new meanings of the film, memories of the conflict, and participants’ self-representations emerged in our conversations. In the next pages, I analyze participants’ sense experiences with the film based on Marks’s (2000) work on the film-viewing process: Seeing, recalling, comparing and creating “an unknown body” that is not present in the film’s story. I illustrate participants’ film-viewing process through the creation of “two specific bodies” that inspired the women to recall what they lived during terrorism: Fausta (the central character) and her mother’s corpse (Perpetua). In each of these examples, I aim to demonstrate how by seeing a virtual object (body) in the film, participants were able to recall their past experiences in the sierra and compare what happens in the movie with their personal experiences. By comparing, I mean not only resemblances between the film and the women’s experiences, but also points of disagreements in which participants contradicted the movie.

*The Fear of “Ser Desaparecidas” and the Creation of “The Camouflaged” and “The Masked” Bodies*

As I mentioned in previous chapters, when seeing Fausta’s sorrow and introverted behavior in the film, participants recalled the anguish they lived when being
afraid of ser desaparecidas in the 1980s. Fausta’s character encouraged the women to talk not only about this terror, but also the ways they used to hide their bodies in the sierra to avoid guerrillas and soldiers made desaparecer. By seeing Fausta’s sorrow in the film and recalling their own fear, participants explained “the milk of sorrow” as a fear of disappearance rather than understanding “the milk of sorrow” as a disease transmitted from the mother to the baby via breast milk. Participants’ meanings of “the milk of sorrow” seemed reasonable to me because they were not babies in their mothers’ wombs during that time, but they were children witnessing extreme violence in the 1980s in the same physical space with their mothers. Indeed, participants’ ages determined how they experienced the armed conflict, watched the film, and narrated their experiences of the conflict.

Although participants expressed they had not seen anything about the movie before or the disease, they agreed to explain how they share Fausta’s trauma, which they believe, is communicated through the mind and the body. When seeing Fausta bleeding from her nose, some participants asked themselves “why?” and other women responded to them that it was because of the fear of being desaparecidas. Thus, participants compared Fausta’s symptoms of being scared with their own body pain (e.g., cramps, headaches, and joint pain) and with the psychological trauma they have today (“estamos traumadas”). I think this is an interesting reading that participants did of the disease because the movie primarily depicts the consequences (both biomedical and cultural) of the disease in the body and does not exclusively refer to psychological explanations of

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17 Marcela was the only participant who said her husband mentioned to her about the theme of the movie, but she has not been seeing the movie before.
posttraumatic experiences (PTSD). The fact that the women use a psychological language (“estamos traumadas”) and explain the symptoms of the trauma both in the mind and the body might be related with the psychological attention that some participants have received to overcome the post-traumatic experience of the conflict.

By seeing Fausta’s introverted behavior, participants recalled guerrillas and soldiers’ performances during the armed conflict. When explaining the reason for Fausta’s fear of ser desaparecida, some participants agreed by claiming that Fausta was scared that “they” (guerrillas or soldiers) would abduct her. As I mentioned in the previous chapters, at the beginning of the conversation about guerrillas’ and soldiers’ performances, participants were reluctant to explicitly say who “they” were. However, their reluctance to openly have a conversation that differentiates each group does not mean the women did not create their own perception of these bodies (guerrillas or soldiers). The women’s use of “they” precisely demonstrates their desire of metaphorically detaching their bodies when referring to guerrillas and soldiers. Thus, the movie encouraged women to recall both groups as “masked bodies” that generated terror and confusion during those years.

By seeing Fausta’s sorrow, participants were able to recall their fear of being desaparecidas and the confusion guerrillas and soldiers generated to them. The intersection between the character of the film and the women’s experiences encouraged them to create new objects of perception (“unknown body”) that are not present in the
movie: Their bodies as little girls\textsuperscript{18} hidden in the sierra (“the camouflaged body”\textsuperscript{19}) and guerrillas and soldiers’ bodies (“the masked body”). Interestingly, a little girl does not play Fausta’s character in the movie, but her body language (e.g., avoiding others’ contact and introversion) reminded some participants of their own corporeal language of fear and how their body looked like in the 1980s when they experienced fear of potential disappearance.

Similar to the movie in which the filmmaker does not explicitly portray the presence of guerrillas and soldiers, participants’ narrations resisted openly identifying who the perpetrators of violent events were. Thus, the movie and participants’ narrations continue reproducing the tensions of absence/presence when referring to “the masked bodies.” In the movie, the absent presence of guerrillas and soldiers is communicated through Fausta’s disembodiment when encountering strangers in public spaces. In the same way, by seeing Fausta’s performance, participants recalled how guerrillas and soldiers’ confused behaviors provoked in them a sense of detachment and disembodiment from “the social self” and “the social world.”\textsuperscript{20}

\textit{Perpetua’s Corpse and the Creation of the “Disappeared” Bodies}

The representation of Perpetua’s corpse (Fausta’s mother) in the movie inspired participants to recall other instances of the armed conflict and create their own

\textsuperscript{18} See Juana’s pictures of her daughter (see Figures 4 & 5), which suggest the representation of Juana’s body as a little girl during terrorism.
\textsuperscript{19} See pictures the rocks and the trees (see Figures 6 & 7) that re-create the scenarios in which participants hid during the armed conflict in the 1980s.
\textsuperscript{20} Some participants told me how they avoid physical contact with others in public spaces. Moreover, participants’ detachment to “the social world” might be illustrated with the photographs of the hills that demonstrate participants’ feelings of being physical and emotionally detached from Lima (see Figures 21, 22, 23, 24, & 25).
perceptions regarding others’ experiences after watching the film. After seeing Perpetua’s corpse in the movie, participants recalled the corpses of their loved ones (“the disappeared body”) and the frustration they felt because guerrillas and soldiers prohibited them from burying the corpses. Moreover, the depiction of the corpse stimulated women to talk about how guerrillas and soldiers did public judgments in the plaza, torturing their parents, relatives, and local leaders to death.

Because participants frequently regretted the impossibility of having a grave where they could go to visit their loved ones, one of the women questioned the fact that Fausta left her mother’s corpse in the sea instead of burying it in a grave in her village. By seeing the way Fausta left her mother’s body in the ocean, this participant compared Fausta’s action with her own desire of having a space where she could continually commemorate the memory of her loved ones and the impossibility of doing so.

Thus, Perpetua’s corpse triggered participants’ memories to recall and create an “unknown body” (e.g., corpses of relatives, neighbors, and local leaders) that were not present in the film. In doing so, participants enhanced the conversation by mentioning experiences of public judgments and tortures and relating these memories with the depiction of the mother’s corpse in the film. In short, by referring to the corpses of relatives that are not represented in the film, participants create, made visible, another “unknown body:” “The disappeared body.”

Participants’ viewing process of the film demonstrates how seeing certain objects in the movie (Fausta and her mother’s corpse) inspired them to recall traumatic memories of the conflict and encouraged them to create new objects (bodies) of perception.
(“unknown bodies”) that are not present in the film: “The camouflaged body,” “the masked body,” and “the disappeared body.” *The Milk of Sorrow* motivated participants to recall and create reflections about these “unknown bodies” which are “inscribed” in women’s embodied memories, but “absent” in the film. The women’s creations in the film-viewing process demonstrate how both the film’s story and participants’ accounts intersect each another in what Marks (2000) calls “an exchange of two bodies” (the viewer and the film) to enhance understandings of the culture within the body.

The Encounter Between the *Self* and the *World*

In order to provide an insightful analysis about the ways the film and participants’ experiences overlap to increase understandings of women’s embodied memories and their contemporary lives in the hills in Peru, I draw on Marks’s (2000) notion of the sense experience in cinema as “an exchange of two bodies:” The viewer and the film. According to Marks, “cinema spectatorship is a special example of this enfolding of self and world, an intensified instance of the way our perceptions open us onto the world” (p. 149). By approaching cinematic experience as one which stimulates our reflections of being in the world, Marks stresses the interactive character of the film-viewing process in which cinema not only “touches” the viewer, but the viewer also “touches” cinema by creating a virtual object that is not present in the story world (“an unknown body.” The idea of “reciprocal touching” increases interpretations of the cinema spectatorship in terms of “a mutual permeability and mutual creation of self and other” (Marks, p. 149). In other words, “the reciprocal touching” in a cinematic experience facilitates the exploration of the relationship between the self and the world. Such examination of the
place in which the self and the world meet points to a methodological challenge in researching embodied memories about the ways researchers learn how others’ memories are embodied and used in their encounters in contemporary spaces. To understand how Marks’s ideas of the “exchange of two bodies” assist researchers to study how others’ memories are enacted in daily encounters, I consider how the film triggered participants to see the self in the world. That is to say, I aim to see how ideas of the film-viewing process as “an exchange of two bodies” helps to explain the dynamic interactions between The Milk of Sorrow and participants’ embodied memories of the conflict.

I begin by claiming that the notion of mutual permeability (“exchange of two bodies”) sees the viewers as active subjects eager to actively participate in the cinematic experience. In Marks’s (2000) words, “rather than witnessing cinema as through a frame, window, or mirror, the viewer shares and performs cinematic space dialogically” (p. 150). The viewer transcends from a mere state of contemplation and isolation in cinema to a condition in which he/she dialogues with the film through his/her own experiences. Thus, a consideration of the embodied nature of cinematic experience increases the possibility of seeing spectators as active subjects eager to communicate and create their own responses to the film in relation to their individual and collective condition of being-in-the-world.

Participants’ exchanges with the film (using Marks’ terms) might be explained through the ways the film’s depictions of the hills in Lima inspired participants’ to recall their memories in the sierra and compared these images with their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima. Participants’ comparisons between the hills in the film’s story
with their experiences of living in the hills inspired me to explore how the women’s memories are embodied and used in their daily encounters today. Here, I want to stress how the film elicited participants to see the self in the world.

When participants referred to the meanings of living in the heights, ambivalent feelings of being present and absent emerged from their narrations. The interplay between absences and presences when referring to the hills’ portrayals in the film’s story should be seen in two directions: Participants’ memories of terrorism (past) and their contemporary lives in the hills outside of Lima (present). First, watching Fausta’s daily commutes in the peripheral hills triggered participants’ memories of being hidden in the sierra during the armed conflict on two different senses. On the one hand, according to participants, Fausta lives scared of ser desaparecida. They related Fausta’s fear with their experiences of being hidden in the sierra and witnessing from the heights how guerrillas and soldiers exercised extreme violence over their parents’ bodies while they remained covert behind trees or rocks. In their narrations and pictures, participants made present the landscape in the sierra that covered their bodies, one that currently is absent, but re-created through their stories and photographs of rocks and trees. In doing so, participants materialized through photography memories of the conflict and captured the images of spaces where they currently live in Lima.

Therefore, the strategy of camouflaging the body demonstrates the interplay between absences/presences of embodied memories. Although participants were hidden (absent) from guerrillas and soldiers’ gazes, they remained present as witnesses of the conflict from the highlands. On the other hand, participants’ memories of hiding the body
in the sierra evoked the women’s feelings of safety because they trusted in the sierra’s properties to effectively camouflage (protect) their bodies from guerrillas and soldiers. As participants disappeared of their own agency through camouflage, they remained connected to the land, to their feelings of safety, and desires of surviving despite the extreme violence they lived through and witnessed. Trigg’s (2012) explanations are useful to understand participants’ experiences of being hiding and experiencing the ambivalence of presences/absences. Trigg explains, “hidden from sight, the body constitutes an experiential foundation that is absent to appearances yet visible to the subterrean world, whose entrance is barred by volition” (p. 292). For participants, being absent meant intentionally hiding the body to avoid guerrillas and soldiers from seeing them and taking them away from their parents. However, while hiding in the sierra, their bodies remained visible and closely connected to the “subterrean world.”

Second, the movie’s depictions of the peripheral hills inspired the women to reflect on their lives in the cerros limeños today. Their current relationship with the cerros also features the ambivalence of being simultaneously present and absent. As I discussed in Chapter 5, when participants reflected on the meanings of living in the peripheral hills in Lima they fluctuated between feelings emotional attachment and feelings of distance and detachment from the space.

The frequent use of high-angles in the pictures was the visual clue that called my attention to the women’s ambivalence about living in the heights: Feelings of both safety and social exclusion. The photographs and their narrations of the pictures suggest a
poignant form to communicate their relationship between *the self* and *the world*, which I explored based on the notion of Andean Cosmovision (Gordon, 2014; Webb, 2012).

When embracing positive emotions of being in the hills, participants related those feelings with the safety they experienced in the sierra when hiding themselves in the 1980s. Moreover, feelings of emotional attachment are related with the women’s reenactments of their roles as farmers, which they learned from their parents before terrorism. When seeing their animalitos in the pens that they built in the cerros limeños, participants felt confident by saying they are no longer scared by the prospect of guerrillas and soldiers stealing their animalitos again.

In contrast with feelings of emotional attachments, participants associated images of the hills outside of Lima with the social exclusion they received from the city and national government. For participants, displaced communities that live in the cerros do not receive state support and are frequently stigmatized as terrorists. For that reason, participants’ narrations suggest that displaced communities living in the hills are absent from policies of social inclusion that aim to improve the quality of life in these communities in Peru. Despite feelings of exclusion, participants’ accounts and photographs demonstrate how they reclaim being present, for instance, when posing confidently in front of the camera and suggesting through their body language: “I am here and I own this space.” This is a way of re-claiming not only their presence in the world, but also the presence of displaced communities in public discourses.

My point is that the movie’s portrayals of the hills outside of Lima evoked Quechua women’s embodied memories of the conflict and the ways memories are
embodied and used in their contemporary spaces. Said differently, the film triggered participants to see the self in the world. When participants reflected on the meanings of being in the world, feelings of being present and absent and the materialization of these emotions in the hills in Lima arose in their descriptions.

The ideas of being present and being absent are intimately intertwined with each other in the notion of embodied memory. For that reason, it is difficult to classify participants’ embodied memories in either/or categories of presences or absences. Embodied memories are both presences and absences, which might suggest certain “ambivalence” in my interpretation of participants’ experiences. The absence/presence notions compellingly complicate women’s stories, but it is an interesting tension, which enhances multiple readings of participants’ experiences. I do not attempt to solve such “ambivalence” in this study, but I celebrate its possibilities.

I embrace the ambivalence of presences and absences in embodied memories because I find in their seeming “contradiction” the opportunity to illustrate that situated knowledges are possible. According to a feminist standpoint, although knowledge is always partial, it does not mean that knowledge “cannot be general, but (…) exactly how general any knowledge claim can be, needs to be established” (Ranazanoglu & Holland, 2004, p. 66). In doing so, in this study, I have reflected on the ways that participants’ contradictions help me to avoid universalizing the discourses of their experiences, but also helps me to connect ideas and their memories in specific contexts where they lived during violence and re-enact these memories in the cerros.
By exploring participants’ embodied memories in terms of absences/presences, I have presented the ways the film triggered participants to see the relationship self in the world. Undeniably, The Milk of Sorrow is an extension of body existence to the extent that the movie encouraged participants to reflect on the ways the conflict has influenced their meanings of being-in-the-world in terms of absences/presences in the cerros and urban spaces. The close interaction among the film, its representations of the conflict, and participants’ responses demonstrate Marks’s (2000) notion of “exchange between two bodies” (the viewer and cinema), which helps me to find culture within the body. As I mentioned before, the exchange between “two bodies” emphasizes the roles of the viewer to create what is not present in the film. By creating what is absent in the film’s story, participants increased the possibilities of other meanings and contradictory ideas that resist universalizing definitions of women’s experiences during the armed conflict.

Acknowledging the ambivalent meanings of being present and absent increased my ability to see participants’ experiences as situated in specific contexts. In doing so, I learned to avoid universalizing descriptions of women’s experiences and navigate among their similarities and differences. Instead of seeing the ambivalence of presences/absences as “obstacles” to my research, I incorporated their potentials to my analysis to increase understandings of women’s embodied memories in contemporary spaces. In line with a feminist standpoint, I was reminded that knowledge is always partial knowledge in local, regional, and global grounds. Seeing participants’ accounts as situated knowledges helped me to avoid oversimplification of their narrations and appreciated their cultural complexities.
In order to develop the argument that I proposed in this chapter about how *The Milk of Sorrow* makes possible the exploration of political violence in Peru within the Quechua female body, I have used Marks’s (2000) reflections of the film-viewing process (seeing, recalling, and comparing) to highlight the viewer’s capacity to create his/her own perception (“unknown body”) from his/her personal experiences. To do so, I understood the viewer (participants) as a subject, who actively interacts with the film’s story in a relationship that Marks calls “an exchange of two bodies” (the film and the viewer). In general, Marks’ ideas of the ways cinema assisted me in locating culture in the body helped my examination of how *The Milk of Sorrow* prompts memories of terrorism within the female body.

Both the film’s story and participants’ accounts represent the female body as a central narrator of terrorist times. In doing so, the female body’s memories of the conflict are not obliterated into the private realm, but are part of a public concern. In these narrations, the female body becomes an active subject of public debate. The recognition of the active qualities of the female body when narrating history might be explained with Casey’s (1984) notion of the habitual body. For Casey, the habitual body has its own history and memory, which “is at once quite private and very much repressed” (p. 31). However, despite the habitual body being considered private and repressed, “it is a material condition of possibility for the open discussion that is part and parcel of public memory proper” (Casey, p. 31). Related to Casey’s definition, Mitzal (2003) and Connerton (1989) explains the body is the main ‘container’ of habitual memory, which
“can be seen as a practice of representation that enacts and gives substance to the discourse of collective memory” (p. 80). Thus, the body can be considered as places where the individual and the public dimension of memories meet.

By considering the habitual body as a material condition of public memory, I highlight the body’s features and conditions within which open dialogue and debate can happen. My point is that attending to the body as a site where private and public memories intersect signifies the possibility of starting conversations in which subjects’ experiences (Quechua women’s rapes) are not private concerns, but part of the public arena. In this sense, stories, such as *The Milk of Sorrow*, which portrays the body as a site where private and public memories meet, open discussion in which what happened to the body is a matter of individual and social re-vision. In this sense, the Quechua female body’s experience becomes a public concern. This means, for instance, reflecting on rape as war of weapon not only as a private experience of a group of women, but also as a social and oppressive artifact that aimed to destabilize the social life of Quechua communities.

The relevance of highlighting *The Milk of Sorrow* as a counter memory of terrorism implies thoughtful consideration of the fact that “cinema has become central to the mediation of memory in modern cultural life” (Grainge, 2003, p. 1). In this sense, I want to insist that research regarding the relevance of historical films in society helps us to examine not only what people remember (even what they have forgotten), but also “how social groups project themselves toward the future” (Narvaez, 2006, p. 66). Individuals’ projection to the future implies an act of creation. As I mentioned at the
beginning of the chapter, the film-viewing process evokes the viewer’s memory and creates an object of perception as a result of the cinematic experience. Thus, the film-viewing process helps individuals apprehend not only the past and the present, but also to re-create the possible!

Final Thoughts

To present again the fundamental question in this research—How do Quechua women communicate embodied memories of political violence from their experience during the conflict between state forces and guerrillas? —I have shown that a general answer, based on participants’ responses and my own interpretations, is by re-enacting memories of the past, such as the fear of ser desaparecidas and protecting, detaching, or hiding themselves when experiencing similar situations in current times (e.g., domestic violence or social discrimination in the public realm). In addition, Quechua women communicate memories of the conflict by preforming the role as farmers, which they learned from their parents before terrorism and keeping Quechua language as a vital value of their social identity.

The use of the film in this project inspired participants to connect the film’s story with their lives by seeing the female character (Fausta) embodying in the film their own fear of disappearance during terrorism. No single image in the film captures this fear; the whole film is about this feeling. Fausta’s body was the place where the women concentrated their attention and personal concerns regarding their memories of the conflict. Watching Fausta’s body language encouraged participants to verbally and visually communicate not only the fear of disappearance, but also the ways they used to
hide their bodies in the sierra to avoid guerrillas and soldiers make them desaparecer ("the camouflaged body"). Consider, for instance, that some of participants expressively took photographs to represent how their experiences of the conflict determined their feelings of being “absent” and “present” in the cerros limeños today. Participants’ narrations and pictures thoughtfully demonstrate how the film became an extension of participants’ bodies’ existence to the extent that the movie motivated each participant to see the self in the world.

By watching the film, participants found themselves recalling and comparing filmic images with their own experience of political violence. When asked what makes filmic images memorable, Casey (1981) responds:

I need not recall the details of a film for it to be fully memorable. I must just remember some of its images, not even necessarily the most moving ones: images of single shots will suffice, so long as they move me to remember them. (p. 259)

In this research, single shots of Fausta’s body sufficed to evoke not only participants’ sorrow, but also their shared memories of the conflict and connect these memories with their individual and social experiences of being a Quechua woman displaced in Lima.

In the film, what it is memorable for participants is what is significant according to their own experiences. The relationship between what participants considered memorable filmic images and their own experiences of terrorism (“an exchange between two bodies”) made visible what is absent in the film. In doing so, participants created objects for perception not only regarding the past (“the camouflaged body,” “the masked body,” and “the disappeared body”), but also contemporary stories about the social
struggles of displaced communities in the cerros today. In short, the film communicated to participants a representation of the conflict, the women saw this depiction, and recalled what happened to them in the 1980s; then, participants compared the film’s representation of terrorism with their own memories, and created their perceptions of the conflict through narrations and photographs.

Participants responses and pictures demonstrate how the women perform agentic practices to face domestic violence, enter into public spaces to work (e.g., informal vendors) and overcome socio-economic difficulties, challenge dynamics of social exclusion that generate living in the peripheral hills in Lima, and involve themselves in political, social, or religious organizations to reclaim the rights of displaced communities in the city.

In this project, I learned how to navigate among the challenges of the ways others’ memories are embodied and used in their encounters in contemporary spaces. Specifically, by researching Quechua women’s embodied memories of the 1980s-1992 violence, I learned not only about their particular experiences, but also how women’s embodied memories function in other post-conflict societies. To do so, the use of a theory of embodied visuality enhanced my possibility of exploring participants’ responses of the past from the perspective of the body. Inspired by the notion of embodied memory, I considered how the body is not a passive object, but a source of meaning, which re-enacts and re-creates the past. Thus, I committed myself to explore participants’ bodies as active sources that “answer back” to a national history and respond to the film’s story by
making visible what is absent. In short, I witnessed the potential of a theory of embodied visuality that emphasizes the body as a creator of absences!

Finally, based on the embodied nature of cinematic experience, I explored in this research the potential of the film-viewing process as "an exchange of two bodies." In doing so, I learned how ten Quechua women metaphorically “touched” the film story and the film “touched” them. The women actively questioned the film, re-created meaningful narrations, and elicited opposing interpretations that challenged me to navigate among their struggles and experiences of being Quechua women, Andean subjects, daughters, mothers, grandmothers, farmers, informal vendors, and compelling narrators of the complexity of a national history.

This project is a research about the ways the body communicates memories. In doing so, I used a historical film (The Milk of Sorrow) as a starting point to have a conversation with ten Quechua women, who experienced political violence in Peru (1980s-1992). The central finding is how participants explained “the milk of sorrow” disease as the fear of being disappeared. Rather than listening to their mothers’ memories of terrorism (like the central character of the movie did), participants vividly recorded and accumulated in/through the body what happened during those years. By watching the film, participants were able to discuss and visually communicate their fear of being disappeared, the meanings of safe spaces, their contemporary lives in Lima, the meanings of the female indigenous body in the conflict as well as their emotional meanings for the hills outside Lima.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX: EXAMPLE LIST OF QUESTIONS – FOCUS GROUPS

Introduction: We’d like to thank you all for making the time and coming alone today. In this project, we are working with the ways the film *The Milk of Sorrow* evokes women’s embodied memories of political violence in Peru (1980s – 1992). We are interested in learning how you understand the movie, and the ways the film encourages you to think about your community and your neighborhood, and how you move in those spaces. We would like to start with a two-minute presentation from each of you, your name, your age and where you come from.

Thanks very much. What we’d like to do now is to watch the movie and then we are going to talk about the movie.

I have very general questions, which will help us to start the conversation about the movie.

➢ What do you like and/or dislike in the movie?

➢ What do you think about the title? Have you heard about ‘the milk of sorrow’ disease before? Do you think a mother can pass her suffering to her child via breast milk?

The use of Quechua songs in the story

➢ How do you feel about the use of Quechua and Spanish language in the film? Did you like or dislike it? Why?

➢ Why do you think the mother and the daughter communicate in Quechua?
Do you consider yourself as a Quechua speaker? Why? What does it mean to you? Do you remember any specific song or part of the songs? What does it mean to you?

Prompt: Does anyone have anything they’d like to add to that? Can we talk about this idea a bit further?

The representation of women’s traumatic memories

- What do you learn from the mother’s song at the beginning of the movie? What do you think you can add to that song?
- Do you communicate your memories about those years with others? How? To whom? If you do not communicate your memories with others why not?
- What do you think about Fausta’s action of inserting the potato into her vagina to avoid rape?
- Why do you think Fausta decides to remove the potato from her vagina?

Prompt: Has anyone else had a similar experience? Does anyone have a different reaction?

The relationship between women’s embodied memories and spaces

- What do you think of Fausta’s behavior in public spaces (e.g., encountering or avoiding touching others)?
- Do you think there are real reasons to be scared in Lima nowadays? Could you explain me your answer?
- Do you enjoy walking in your neighborhood and outside of it? Why?
Prompt: Can you give me an example of what you mean? Does anyone else share that view?